

Society and Nation in Transnational Processes in Europe

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Edited by

Ralph Schattkowsky and Miloš Řezník

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INTRODUCTION

RALPH SCHATTKOWSKY AND MILOŠ ŘEZNÍK

The modern nation is the historically grown organization form of society. The question of nation in Europe in the nineteenth century has been posed and answered, but the basic conditions of its existence change and the national question can be asked again.

The question of nation is therefore again the centre of attention. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, in the succession states the right to self-determination of nations is demanded as the basic principle of the modern international law and is considered the basic law for the creation of a sovereign state. Also, in the conflicts outside Europe, “nation building” is seen as the best way to create solid structures of states and maintain durable pacification of the whole regions. However, the actuality of the historic phenomenon of the nation determines the processes of internationalization as the European unifying process, or globalization in general, which visibly goes against this organization principle of the modern society, making the nation apparently unnecessary, replacing it completely and contributing to further stigmatizing it. At the same time, though, under the conditions of transnational processes of societal self-organization, the term “civil society” is gradually becoming more significant. Even more remarkable is the fact that the civil society paradigm of the process of modern nation building is rarely used explicitly in the nationalism research. Such a basis would be very suitable as a pattern of clarification for the role of democracy and power in nationalism and the relation of the individual to the large group. Without doubt, the modern nation is an organizational form of the modern mass society, serving the existing conditions, objectives and attributes of the civil society. It realizes the promise of solidarity and community which the nation makes so attractive to the masses, and has an effect on identity formation. Without those structures of the civil society, self-organization as the implementation of national thought is unimaginable, and the self-organizational obligation to the nation brings the feeling of community and mobility potential for that durability which makes the national societies function. Through the necessary comparison with the individual

life project, a spectrum which satisfies the necessities for security of an individual develops. Understanding the necessity and the possibility of the designability of the society through the idea of nation and the functionality of civil society determines the strength and stability of the national movement. As a result, feasibility is considered as a considerable element of civilization.

Under these basic conditions it must be asked how the national behaviour, perception and identities change or adapt, and how the society and state react. The answer is not only essential for the self-perception of large groups, but also decides the project of Europe.

This fourth volume of the Copernicus Graduate School Studies is devoted to these problems. Scientists of different generations and countries have developed interdisciplinary perspectives with historic, political scientific, cultural scientific and law bases in the categories of “identity,” “strangeness” and “self-presentation,” questioning the reasons, effects, possibilities and in the end the necessity for the nation.

PART ONE

IDENTITIES

CHAPTER ONE

NATIONAL ORDER BY MEANS
OF SOCIETAL DESTRUCTION:
WEST PRUSSIA BEFORE THE FIRST
WORLD WAR

RALPH SCHATTKOWSKY

The modern research on nationalism has oriented itself to identities. With this broad historical and cultural approach it opened up a large spectrum of social science questions.¹ Also, the use of the category of civil society in reference to the modern nation in Europe belongs here. Both notions are often interpreted as twins that “intimately belong to each other.” Jürgen Kocka rightly points out that “the historical findings [are] more complicated.”² The fact that the civil society has been constructed by politics even as a counter-draft to nation is due to a link between nation/nationalism and the “Age of Extremes.” It does not confuse the social sciences because in the analysis of the relation of society and nation there is an enormous potential for explaining the role of democracy and violence in nationalism as well as the relation of individuals and large groups.

Undoubtedly, modern nation is an organisational form of modern mass society that uses the living conditions, objectives and attributions of civil society. During the process of the formation of a modern nation, integrative and disintegrative society forming processes emerge. They can weaken the society thoroughly while a dysfunction of the society is by no

¹ R. Schattkowsky, “Nationalismus in Ostmitteleuropa: Tendenzen und Aufgaben der Forschung,” in R. Schattkowsky, M. G. Müller (eds.), *Identitätenwandel und nationale Mobilisierung in Regionen ethnischer Diversität: Ein regionaler Vergleich zwischen Westpreußen und Galizien am Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2004), 1–27.

² J. Kocka, “Zivilgesellschaft in historischer Perspektive,” in *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen* 16 (2) (2003): 29–37, here 36.

means a component of the concept of national movements. Even in regions with ethnic diversity, the functionality of society is a fundamental element of strategy and legitimacy in the process of the formation of national large group identities. At the same time, there arises the question over the rights of autochthonous societies on a territory. Here emerges an area of tension in which new national societies with their own territorial claims come into being. There grows a conflict potential that sustainably shapes the character of nationalisation, even from a historical perspective. Considering all structural comparability, there are serious differences in those processes of societal rearrangement which Miroslaw Hroch has repeatedly pointed out.³ Surely, those differences are determined by the way in which power is exercised. However, they are subject to certain significant socio-economic premises and external influences.

The Prussian East serves as a model region where the process can be comprehended only through a differentiated concrete observation of the historical landscape.⁴ Hitherto, the perspective of the German policy towards Poland was predominant and there is a large literature on its concrete implementation and impact.⁵ Less considered are the questions concerning the processes of nationalisation among the Polish population. Even with the impact of the aforementioned methodical premises, it is about extracting its development from the shadow of the discriminatory policy of the state and a mere reflective depiction. It is also about comprehending it as an original process with generalizable dimensions. Although encouraging foundations have been built both at the micro and macro levels in the works of Peter Böhning and Mathias Niendorf,⁶ one

³ Recently, Hroch presented his theses in a very compact way in the article M. Hroch, "Programme und Forderungen nationaler Bewegungen: Ein europäischer Vergleich," in H. Timmermann (ed.), *Entwicklung der Nationalbewegungen in Europa 1850–1914* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1998), 17–29.

⁴ W. Conze, "Nationsbildung durch Trennung: Deutsche und Polen im preußischen Osten," in O. Pflanze (ed.), *Innenpolitische Probleme des Bismarck-Reiches* (München-Wien: R. Oldenbourg, 1983), 95–119, here 101.

⁵ W. Molik, "Die preußische Polenpolitik im 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts: Überlegungen zu Forschungsstand und Perspektiven," in H. H. Hahn, P. Kunze (eds.), *Nationale Minderheiten und staatliche Minderheitenpolitik in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Oldenbourg Akademieverlag, 1999), 29–40.

⁶ P. Böhning, "Agrarische Organisationen und nationale Mobilisierung in Westpreußen," in W. Conze, G. Schramm, K. Zernack (eds.), *Modernisierung und nationale Gesellschaft im ausgehenden 18. und 19. Jh.* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1979), 161–176; P. Böhning, *Die Nationalpolnische Bewegung in Westpreußen 1815–1871* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1973); P. Böhning,

needs to turn more intensively towards nationalisation in terms of the functionality of the whole society. Attention also needs to be paid to timeframes and regions. Not only can they induce a comparison but they are also convenient for explaining the specific character of a modern nation, just as the high phase and mass phase do.

At the core of the traditional observation of the Prussian east there is the Province of Posen. This heartland of the Polish historical statehood has a high traditional importance and an overwhelming Polish population. After 1793 the national society of nobles was present, and along with the Polish clergy and Catholicism were bearers of the Polish national idea. Already in 1848, Posen was an example of processes of social division and disintegration under national emblems. Compared to this, West Prussia is not unambiguous. Different cultural circumstances are more widespread there and perhaps are more disordered. This also refers to the state tradition that is broken for Germans and Poles and cannot be understood directly, as for instance in the Province of Posen. The south of the province, a separate unity from 1878 onwards, was a relatively closed area of Polish settlement, whereas the west and the northwest was German with a German urban culture. However, the picture has been shaped by an ethnic mixture of inhabitants, among them a small percentage of Jews.⁷ In the western part of the province to the coast are the Kashubs. They have their own language and culture and constitute about 10% of the population.⁸ Under the significant

“Westpreußisches Polentum und polnische Nation: Zur Außenorientierung der nationalpolnischen Bewegung in Westpreußen vor der Reichsgründung,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 20 (1971): 78–94; M. Niendorf, *Minderheiten an der Grenze: Deutsche und Polen in den Kreisen Flatow (Złotów) und Zempelburg (Śępólno Krajeńskie) 1900–1939* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997).

⁷ H. Boockmann, *Ostpreußen und Westpreußen: Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas, Vol. 1* (Berlin: Siedler, 1992); E. Opgenoorth (ed.), *Handbuch der Geschichte Ost- und Westpreußens, Teil 3: Von der Reformzeit bis zum Vertrag von Versailles: 1807–1918* (Lüneburg: fibre Verlag, 1998); S. Hartmann, “Zu den Nationalitätenverhältnissen in Westpreußen vor dem Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 42 (1993): 391–405; B. Jähnig, “Die Bevölkerung Westpreußens um 1900,” *Westpreußen-Jahrbuch* 42 (1992): 5–22; M. Wojciechowski, “Nationalitätenverhältnisse in Westpreußen zu Beginn des 20. Jh.,” in M. Wojciechowski, R. Schattkowsky (eds.), *Historische Grenzlandschaften Ostmitteleuropas im 16.-20. Jh. Gesellschaft-Wirtschaft-Politik* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1996), 75–96; M. Wojciechowski, “Deutsche, Polen und Juden in Westpreußen in den Jahren 1877–1920,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte Westpreußens* 15 (1997): 121–137.

⁸ J. Borzyszkowski, “Die Kaschuben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert zwischen Polen und Deutschland,” in H. H. Hahn, P. Kunze (eds.), *Nationale Minderheiten und*

influence of the Poles from Poznań (Posen), by 1863 a belief system⁹ of national identity had been reinforced among the elites of West Prussia, where the nobles were far less represented than in the neighbouring province. That belief system perceived as its task an almost systematic implementation of “organic work” to create their own society structures with a national character.¹⁰ Academic associations, farmers’ associations, cooperatives and the beginnings of banking were expressions of a modernisation process that announced a substitution of elites through the creation of a middle class.¹¹ It had its own dynamics as a fundamental requirement for the national mobilisation of masses linked with the programme of creation of a “*społeczeństwo*” (society).¹²

From this perspective, the foundation of the Reich was certainly not a turning point for the development of the Polish national movement. It was neither a point of departure for the movement, nor was it directly

staatliche Minderheitenpolitik in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert (Berlin: Oldenbourg Akademieverlag, 1999), 93–98; J. Borzyszkowski, “Kaschubische Mythen: Kaschuben und ihre Identität,” *Nordost-Archiv. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte. Neue Folge. Heft 2: Pommerellen-Preußen-Pomorze Gdańskie. Formen kollektiver Identität in einer deutsch-polnischen Region VI* (1997): 729–757; F. Kluge, “Ein vielfach verändertes Kaschubenbild: Neuere polnische Forschungen zur Kaschubei und ihren Bewohnern,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 43 (1994): 71–81.

⁹ On the significance of personal belief systems of respective decision makers, cf. V. D. Volkan, *Das Versagen der Diplomatie: Zur Psychoanalyse nationaler, ethnischer und religiöser Konflikte* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 1999), 16.

¹⁰ J. Borzyszkowski, *Z dziejów pracy organicznej na Pomorzu* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1979); J. Borzyszkowski, *Inteligencja polska w Prusach Zachodnich 1848–1920* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1986); P. Böhning, *Die Nationalpolnische Bewegung*, 186 and foll.; W. W. Hagen, “National Solidarity and Organic Work in Prussian Poland, 1815–1914,” *Journal of Modern History* 44 (1972): 38–64.

¹¹ J. J. Kulczycki, “Social Change in the Polish National Movement in Prussia before World War I,” *Studia Historica Slavo Germanica* VI (1977): 113–137; S. Wierchosławski, *Elity polskiego ruchu narodowego w Poznańskim i w Prusach Zachodnich w latach 1850–1914* (Toruń: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1992), 40 and foll.

¹² H. U. Wehler, “Polenpolitik im Deutschen Kaiserreich,” in H. U. Wehler (ed.), *Krisenherde des Kaiserreiches 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1979), 184–202, here 192; D. von Oppen, “Deutsche, Polen und Kaschuben in Westpreußen 1871–1914,” *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 4 (1955): 157–223.

mentioned in its structures and programmes.¹³ Anyway, the year 1871 had an essential importance for the conditions of nationalisation since the established nationalism of the Reich directly and thoroughly influenced the attitude of the masses that were supposed to be nationalised. The Polish deputies reacted with incomprehension and disappointment. Already before the foundation of the Reich they asked: “What ... do we have in common with a federation created on a national basis, that is encompassed by a collective German bond, that shall represent collective German interests ... that shall strive for a collective German objective?” They perceived themselves as being “only forced” members of the new Reichstag.¹⁴ With good reason, the Poles feared that the German national state, not sufficiently considering other national concerns in the Reich, would see the more and more expressed national interests of Poles as hostile and perilous and would treat them as such. Thus, the “*Kulturkampf*,” launched directly after the foundation of the Reich, had a significant anti-Polish component that was expressed first and foremost by a restrictive policy towards the Polish language and a grasp on the “national key position of the Polish clergy.”¹⁵ Intentionally or not, the denomination of these actions as “*Kulturkampf*” gets to the heart of the matter. It was directed not essentially against the foundations of the Polish nationality. It was no longer about the annexation of territories, as in the times of the feudal-dynastic policy of partition. It was about a national unification in terms of dissolution of cultural identities and homogenization according to a German national pattern.¹⁶ The Germanisation policy, often aggressive and striving for assimilation, had to be understood by the Polish-speaking population as a direct attack on their core identity.¹⁷ The rigid approach to the Polish clergy, that enjoyed a

¹³ This is definitely a point of contention in the literature, S. Wierchosławski, *Polski ruch narodowy w Prusach Zachodnich w latach 1860–1914* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980), 9; P. Böhning, *Die Nationalpolnische Bewegung*, 187.

¹⁴ H.-U. Wehler, *Sozialdemokratie und Nationalstaat: Nationalitätenfragen in Deutschland 1840-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1971), 109 and foll.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁶ W. Conze, *Nationsbildung*, 96; W. Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918. Band II: Machtstaat vor der Demokratie* (München: C.H.Beck, 1998), 254.

¹⁷ The term is highly conceptualized and persuasive for historical research by V. D. Volkan, *Das Versagen der Diplomatie bei Erklärungsversuchen aktueller Konflikte verwandt*, as well as by G. Saifa, “Volkstumsbewußtsein als Ursprung von Feindschaft und Haß?,” in J. Albertz (ed.), *Was ist das mit Volk und Nation? Nationale Fragen in Europas Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Freie Akademie, 1992), 249–259, here 252.

high affinity and an extraordinary authority among the population, was perceived in the same way.¹⁸ The state measures fundamentally shook the world of the Poles, especially as they were apt to liberate it from its small-scale identification and question the existing social relations.¹⁹ Thus, the Prussian state grossly breached its duty of care that had been placed in the foreground of its policy towards Poles. It not only alienated itself from the Polish population but also raised the question of their loyalty. It was to be even more disastrous since the Poles as a mass in West Prussia had up to this point few difficulties with self-perception as Prussian Poles, or even Polish-speaking Prussians without Polish nationality. A Polish community, in whatever form, had barely existed. In March 1885, the expulsion policy towards approximately thirty thousand Poles of foreign citizenship and the subsequent creation of the Settlement Commission—that was supposed to implement a “Germanisation of the land” and break the spine of the Polish nobles as bearers of the national ambitions—definitely destroyed the necessary minimum canon of inter-human rights and duties that gives large cultural groups the ability to coexist.²⁰ The actions against Poles were then stylized as “a struggle for survival,” whereas the “Polonisation of the German East” was presented as an existential peril for the Reich and the German nation. The “negative integration”²¹ of Poles into the German national state, launched by dubious legislation, was a particularly exclusive treatment in comparison with other national minorities in the Reich, such as in Alsace-Lorraine. The fundamental maxim was a resistance to the Polish claims for territory, and as such was a defence of integrity of the national state bound together by blood and iron. This exalted title made any long-standing arrangements impossible, and with its historical legitimation it was a reassurance of identity and a disciplinary measure.²²

Before the Polish nation constituted itself in modern terms, it was made as such by the policy of the Reich. Even if nationality had been defined almost exclusively in cultural terms, it was thereafter filled with political affirmations and claims that transmitted contradictions of principles.

¹⁸ K. Wajda, “Społeczeństwo polskie i Kościół Katolicki na Pomorzu a państwo pruskie w latach 1860–1914,” *Studia Pelplińskie* 16 (1985): 99–123.

¹⁹ M. Niendorf, *Minderheiten an der Grenze*, 135; W. Conze, *Nationsbildung*, 98.

²⁰ R. Lindner, “Einleitung,” in R. Lindner (ed.), *Die Wiederkehr des Regionalen: Über neue Formen kultureller Identität* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1994), 7–12, here 9.

²¹ H.-U. Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1973), 96–100.

²² W. Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 263.

Those could be dismantled only by a full defeat of the enemy, i.e. by a dissolution of nationality.²³ A typical reciprocal exchange of psychosocial mechanisms of resistance emerged,²⁴ shaping the face of nationalism, though it did not constitute the interactive moment as its fundamental mechanism of motion. The chance for an individual to present themselves as identical was limited since the cultural environment and, to an increasing degree, the fundamental economic situation were questioned. With its concept of opening toward the population, the Polish national movement was an opportunity to protect identity as a requirement for successful social interaction. It took over the representation of the cultural characteristics of Poles, was a guarantee of the protection of the religion and it created its own social structures that not only promised an orientation on solidarity but that also managed to satisfy direct social concerns. This reveals a development that Eric Hobsbawm described as the “double phenomena of nations.” They “are in fact constructed essentially top-down, though they cannot be understood correctly if they are not analysed bottom up as well, i.e. against the background of premises, hopes, nostalgias and interests of small people that are not necessarily national and still less nationalistic.”²⁵ Increasingly, it was the Polish elites, acting as representatives of the Polish nation, in whose activities the Poles saw a guarantee of the protection of their interests and the social-structural factor, giving them a possibility to preserve their identity apart from their subjective conditions. Therefore, the Prussian state appeared in the decisive place as a mediator between the masses and the elites. In the view of the Pole-unfriendly environment, the reference to the Polish nation had to be compatible with its identity concept and the interpretation of the opportunities for action and aims.²⁶ This induced it to abandon traditional references and orient itself nationally, i.e. to take over political identity patterns that were no longer compatible with their social and regional identities. This inevitable and apparently existential link

²³ M. Jeismann, “Was bedeuten Stereotypen für nationale Identität und politisches Handeln,” in J. Link, W. Wülfing (eds.), *Nationale Mythen und Symbole in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Strukturen und Funktionen von Konzepten nationaler Identität*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), 84-93, here 89.

²⁴ H.-J. Wirth, *Vorwort zur deutschen Ausgabe von V. D. Volkan, Das Versagen der Diplomatie bei Erklärungsversuchen aktueller Konflikte*, II and foll.

²⁵ E. Hobsbawm, *Nationen und Nationalismus: Mythos und Realität seit 1780*, (München: Campus Verlag, 1998), 21 and foll.

²⁶ L. Krappmann, *Soziologische Dimensionen der Identität: Strukturelle Bedingungen für die Teilnahme an Interaktionsprozessen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1973), 10 and foll.

created a destructive basis for a nationalisation of the masses and a mobilisation for conflict between nationalities. For centuries, national differences, or rather cultural otherness, had given no reason for a fundamental disruption of the neighbourly relations between Germans and Poles.²⁷

The nationalism of the Reich, acting aggressively through the Prussian policy towards Poles, pursued its nationality struggle first by virtue of its state presence and local authority. Up to the 1880s it did not manage to stir up nationalism among large masses, and is a constant cause for criticism of the “lethargy of the Germanity” and overdrawing the activities of the “Polonism.” On the other hand, one cannot forget that the Prussian state pursued its nationalistic policy *ex officio* in the solid frame of undoubted statehood. Thus, its dependence on the large support and legitimation of the masses was not so high as in the case of a lack of statehood. As opposed to the Prussian state, there was a deeply elitist Polish national movement that had created organisational framework conditions and mechanisms only in order to gain a foothold among the masses. In West Prussia, this took place initially through the close cooperation with Polish national groups from Posen. Increasingly, though, there emerged in West Prussia associations whose specific forms were to be groundbreaking for the social and economic system of Polish society in the Prussian partition territory and beyond.²⁸

Since the suppression of the uprising in 1863–4, the German authorities in West Prussia had been observing the creation of the religious, spiritual and material foundations of Polish nationality, pursued by nobles and the Catholic Church. Those foundations were strengthened “through a strict dissociation of the Polish population.” The “mania for the continuity of a Polish nationality” was spread by the Polish newspapers *Gazeta Toruńska* and *Przyjaciół Ludu*, as well as in associations that used the Polish language according to their statutes.²⁹ The creation of social structures with national character and the related inclusion of broad Polish social classes could be seen first of all in agrarian associations, many of which were founded in West Prussia parallel to those in Posen. Every year, delegates from the Province of Posen and representatives of the Russian partition territory took part in general assemblies in Thorn. The orientation

²⁷ M. Niendorf, *Minderheiten an der Grenze*, 197.

²⁸ P. Böhning, *Die Nationalpolnische Bewegung*, 187; S. Wierzosławski, *Polski ruch narodowy*, 55 and foll.

²⁹ *Polizeibericht aus dem Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder vom 4. März 1876*, in Geheimes Staatsarchiv Berlin-Dahlem (GHStA), I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 12, Bl. 28 and foll.

towards labour as a guarantee of progress and an arm in the national struggle, as well as complaints on the policy of the government, whose language regime would violate the given rights and hamper the progress, were central to the speeches held mostly by Polish nobles with political mandates.³⁰ Already by the middle of the 1870s, a stable financial system was established inside Polish society. Not only did it create the backbone for the creation and strengthening of a Polish middle class, it also offered opportunities for saving deposits and cheap credit for a large Polish population. The core of this system comprised cooperative banks and so-called advance payment societies. Twenty-four cooperatives in West Prussia were headed by a patron nominated by the clergy. Members of those cooperatives were predominantly Poles, whereas the business language was Polish. The allocation of cooperation sites emphasizes their Polish character. There were twenty in the district of Marienwerder and four in the district of Danzig. Cooperative banks and advance payment societies were headed almost exclusively by nobles. In the boards, a number of clerics could be found. The membership in the advance payment societies means that ordinary people also deposited their savings there.³¹

One of the most prominent incidents of Polish national emancipation was the activity of the Polish Society of Sciences and the construction of the “Museum Thorn.” Founded in 1875 by the Polish deputy to the Reichstag Działowski, it was supposed to serve as a gathering place for the Polish intelligentsia. The subsequent chairman and leading power of the Polish national movement, manor-owner Łyskowski from Mileszewo, gave a summary of the activity of the society in a declaration on May 28, 1878 as follows: “in the chain of Polish associations, the Society is a key item that aims at encouraging the Poles to be active towards the community, because the Poles need to survive a struggle not only against the German element hostile to them, but they also need to struggle against the government.”³² Those first efforts for a centralisation of the Polish national movement in West Prussia led to the foundation of an “own house.” The museum in Thorn was supposed to be an expression of the fact that the Polish nation had an unquestionable right to exist. It would serve the nation by collecting and presenting national remembrances in a

³⁰ *Bericht über den landwirtschaftlichen Tag der Polen in Thorn vom 11. Februar 1885*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 5, Bl. 1.

³¹ *Bericht aus Thorn über die polnischen Volksbanken vom 29. Februar 1876*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 12, Bl. 35 and foll.

³² *Hier und im weiteren Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Marienwerder vom 25. September 1886*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 4, Bd. 2, Bl. 12 and foll.

scientific way. On the other hand, it was to be a place for gathering together at any time. It was regarded as “shelter for all Polish associations and assemblies.”³³ The Polish press described the house as Polish national creation determined to gather the Poles, “to warm them up for the Polish national cause ... and also to support the middle classes of the population.” Finally, in 1882 the *Dziennik Poznański*, referring to the opening of the “Museum Thorn,” stated “that West Prussia can feature the same attributes of national development as Posen.”³⁴ The economic base of the house was a stock company whose members were Polish nobles, landowners, lawyers, physicians, editors and craftsmen as well as five Germans and a Jew.³⁵ Moreover, all Poles in Greater Poland and Galicia were obliged to care about the maintenance of the house. At the ceremony laying the first stone, the chairman of the society made a case that “the name of this house may protect it from national hatred.”³⁶ The overwhelming surveillance of the Prussian police forced the chairman of the society to write a letter to the district president of Marienwerder on March 9, 1883, pointing out that the house had also been used from the beginning by Germans and the percentage of German shareholders had grown to 10.³⁷ Also in the following years, German associations were often guests in the Museum Thorn. Even the Prussian military used to hold festivities there. That was acknowledged by the police authorities with some alienation because the participation of Germans in the Museum Thorn was considered to be unreasonably supportive for the Polish cause, as well as damaging to the Germans. A disappearance of the whole enterprise was therefore desirable.³⁸

In spite of the unmistakable concept of a people nation and the efforts to gather the Poles in organised structures with national ambitions, the Polish national movement remained elitist until the beginning of the 1890s. Intellectuals and freelance professionals had been more intensively involved. It was also they who shaped a national identity. In the elite change taking place, the attitude towards and within the modern nation

³³ *Polizeibericht aus Thorn vom 11. Januar 1883*, in *Ibid.*, Bd. 1, Bl. 246 and foll.

³⁴ “*Dziennik Poznański*”, March 13, 1881 quoted in *Ibid.*, Bd. 2, Bl. 15.

³⁵ *Polizeibericht aus Thorn vom 11. Januar 1883*, in *Ibid.*, Bd. 1, Bl. 246 and foll.

³⁶ *Polizeibericht aus Thorn vom 16. März 1884*, in *Ibid.*, Bd. 1, Bl. 271.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Bl. 252 and foll.

³⁸ However, in police reports it was imputed to Poles that they would tolerate Germans in the house only for economic reasons, since a bankruptcy would be unavoidable, cf. Police reports from April 20, 1885 in GHStA, I, HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 4, Bd. 1, Bl. 310 and foll., as well as from September 25, 1886 in *Ibid.*, Bd. 2, Bl. 12 and foll.

played a significant role. Therefore, the participation of masses was an integral component and the actual legitimation of the nation. The nobles withdrew, but they did not abandon their representative position in the national movement. Generally, within the leadership they compromised themselves by means of their attitude in the era of reconciliation and their loyalty towards the Prussian state.³⁹ Anyway, these processes were hardly perceived by the population, and there can be no talk of a nationalisation of masses or a national mass movement. The nationality conflict was held mostly between the Prussian state and Polish elites and it hardly changed the living together of people in the ethnically mixed territories. The crucial fact was that the enemy was the Prussian state or its representatives, if they were not considered as a nationless authority. As a cultural property, the German as a neighbour or inhabitant of the same town or region was not seen as an enemy, as the principle of distinction in large groups primarily due to confessional aspects was still valid. Language and cultural character were perceived and used secondarily as criteria of differentiation between the self and the other. The national agitation reached the masses only selectively and was associated only with a protest against the attempts of the state to infringe on their cultural identity, commonly denominated as “Germanisation.” Bringing to account all the deliberate and massive Germanisation attempts, in the self-image of the spirit of the time, this term, like Polonisation, refers to cultural-linguistic orientation and influence. At the same time, it points to a cultural state of uncertainty perceived as permanent. Who was Germanised or Polonised was generally determined by an alleged arbitration and not by the subject itself.⁴⁰ Anyway, this uproar was a deterrent attitude, had a thoroughly defensive character and it claimed guaranteed fundamental rights. While the settlement law from 1889 found little direct response, the restrictive language regulations from 1887 were a reason for mass demonstrations with an active participation of the national elite. Everyone was present—aristocratic politicians of moderate orientation such as Ślaski-Trzebeg and von Szaniecki-Nawra, the Polish clergy, the still restrained middle classes and the Polish intelligentsia represented by physicians and newspaper editors. The latter, along with the clergy, were the main speakers. Their agitation skills were able to gather a thousand representatives of “lower

³⁹ L. Bernhard, *Das polnische Gemeinwesen im preußischen Staat: Die Polenfrage* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1910), 150.

⁴⁰ W. Molik, “Procesy asymilacyjne i akulturacyjne w stosunkach polsko-niemieckich w XIX i na początku XX wieku. Stan i postulaty badań,” in W. Molik, R. Traba (eds.), *Procesy akulturacji/asymilacji na pograniczu polsko-niemieckim w XIX i XX wieku* (Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM, n.y.), 65–96, here 69 and foll.

classes” in Löbau on January 3, 1888.⁴¹ The thoroughly peaceful and even reconciliatory focus of the assembly appealed to the rights warranted to the Poles by the Prussian king and lamented their brute violation by the Prussian state government, which also endangered the Catholic faith. The speakers obliged the population to protect themselves against those measures and to face the injustice so “that the Polish language is cultivated as much as possible at home, in the family and the children are taught on one’s own with a tutorial of textbooks, whereby the appeal to a general strengthening of the Polishness bound together.”⁴²

By all the restraint and prudence to respect the law, in this phase basic patterns of agitation and a national behaviour appeared. They were then cultivated and represented what is commonly denominated as nationalism. The tendency to differentiate between nations was unmistakable, and segregation became an obvious component of the claimed strengthening of Polishness. For example, it was stated that the Polish population “was getting more and more accustomed to the idea that customers in the commercial life are divided according to nationalities.”⁴³

In the middle of the 1890s, the image changed. The bearers of the Polish national movement directed their attention to the work among the masses. They launched a process that encompassed an expansion of the national society aiming at the nationalisation of everyday life and its individual spheres. The significant elements of the structure were there, or at least were projected. They only needed to be expanded and oriented as far as the content is concerned. This new national policy found its most visible point of departure at the second assembly of Polish associations in Pelplin on July 8 and 9, 1894. Activists of the national movement met there to initiate a new order, a centralisation and an essential expansion of Polish associations in West Prussia. The central point was to include every individual and establish a patronage so that the social life could be concentrated on as many spheres as possible—from the cultivation of language and culture, to body fitness, to economic consolidation. The aim was to strengthen Polishness in every way and so become more resistant and independent. The economic aspect played an important role in Pelplin. It was about creating a powerful middle class in view of a stated “pauperization of the Polish people,” and the shift of part of the Polish

⁴¹ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Marienwerder vom 3. Januar 1888*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 11, Bd. 3, Bl. 2 and foll.

⁴² *Ibid.* and in the report from February 9, 1888, in *Ibid.*, Bl. 47 and foll.

⁴³ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Marienwerder vom 25. September 1886*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 862, Nr. 4, Bd. 2, Bl. 21.

nobles to the German camp.⁴⁴ Even if not all objectives of this exposition of Polish efforts for unification and community creation were achieved, a strong boom in Polish organisations was registered. The Catholics, the national group of the basis, comprised the backbone of this dense network of associations. Their basic organisational pattern was characterised by a great uniformity⁴⁵ and they offered a great deal of access. These very associations drew on the direct cultural needs of Poles and they provided everyone in small groups with concrete regional and personal references with opportunities for the reassurance of identity and representation of interests.

The implementation of the Pelplin decisions is indicative of a high organisational degree of national elites in West Prussia. Most leaders of associations were clerics or representatives of local intelligentsia. The organisational network was constituted by parishes. Statute objectives of the associations were the improvement of education, the preservation of moral values in terms of the Catholic Church, and the struggle against Social Democracy. These were supposed to be achieved by means of the cultivation of singing church songs, as well as speeches.⁴⁶ Surely, the activity of the associations did not have a national or political agitation in the foreground. Not only was it prohibited due to the surveillance of Prussian authorities, it would also have repelled the population. However, it frequently became apparent that the weal and woe of an association depended to a high degree on the involvement of the given leader.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the exclusive use of the Polish language and the commonality of cultural activity in increasingly hostile circumstances led to an important experience of being together. The conduct of those associations by Polish authorities, whose national orientation was undoubted, was an essential premise to experiencing and internalizing the nation through a cultural community and, in general, a spiritual authority. It was beyond any doubt that the actual objective of the associations consisted in developing a national consciousness of Poles as well as in obtaining a national identification by means of cultivation and conveyance of cultural core values. At any rate, the Catholic religion played a central

⁴⁴ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Danzig vom 31. Juli 1894*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47a, Fasc. Ia, Bl. 35–44r.

⁴⁵ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Danzig vom 12. Mai 1895*, in Ibid., Bl. 24.

⁴⁶ *Polizeibericht aus Thorn vom 8. November 1899*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 125 and foll.

⁴⁷ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums Danzig vom 15. August 1898*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 2, Bd. 1, Bl. 159.

role here.⁴⁸ Soon, this fundamental pattern led to the fact that Polish associations in West Prussia determined the way in which the national life of Poles was perceived outside.⁴⁹ Anyhow, the number of associations in the district of Danzig doubled directly after the Pelplin congress.⁵⁰ By 1900, in the district of Marienwerder, it had grown to as many as 103 with twenty-thousand members.⁵¹

The second pillar of a Polish national society in West Prussia was the expansion of economic associations and financial management organised due to cooperative patterns. In a close cooperation with banking institutions from Posen, on January 1, 1896 a Polish people's bank was opened in Danzig. The task of the "Bank Ludowy" was to "give industrialists and landlords ... credits that had been only difficult to obtain so far."⁵² The system of people's banks developed in the 1890s into a solid basis for a cheap credit economy that predominantly benefitted the Polish middle class. That system constituted a serious competition to the German economic life.⁵³ In a report sent to the Prussian ministry of internal affairs on January 27, 1901, the district president of Danzig had to assess that "in all fields of economic life ... the strengthening of Polishness is proved in a way that is geared for softening up of the German tradesman, craftsman and farmer."⁵⁴ Until 1901, the number of cooperatives, a basis for people's banks, had tripled. Their funding reserves had grown by forty times and the deposits accounted for 53.5 million marks.⁵⁵ Also in this field, clerics acted in leading positions, seldom as bank managers. They realized "successfully the publicly expressed tenet that the tasks of the clergy consist not only in supporting spiritual well-being but they also encompass

⁴⁸ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 23. Dezember 1897*, in *Ibid.*, Bl. 20.

⁴⁹ *Bericht des Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Westpreußen vom 6. September 1896*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 1, Bd. 1, Bl. 54.

⁵⁰ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 12. Mai 1895*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47a, Fasc. Ia, Bl. 138.

⁵¹ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Marienwerder vom 2. Juni 1900*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 376.

⁵² *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 5. Dezember 1895*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 1, Bl. 175r und Bericht vom 22. January 1897l, in *Ibid.*, Bd. 2, Bl. 57r.

⁵³ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 13. Februar 1900*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 324r.

⁵⁴ *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 289rf.

⁵⁵ *Bericht des Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Westpreußen vom 3. Januar 1902*, in *GHStA*, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 1, Bd. 4, Bl. 207.

supporting of the material progress of the parish members.”⁵⁶ The business language of the people’s banks was Polish and thus the participation of Germans in the cooperatives was excluded. Also, credits with reduced rates of interest were distributed almost exclusively to Polish farmers and craftsmen in order to maintain their property or even establish new settlements. There were also appeals to the Polish population to deposit their savings in Polish banks. Thus, economic advantage was a means of promoting the Polish community.⁵⁷ For a relative autarchy of the Polish economy, those efforts were complemented by the foundation of consumer cooperatives and warehousings.⁵⁸ Those were decisive steps towards a Polish national economy that not only adjusted itself to the economic boom experienced by West Prussia at the end of the nineteenth century but that also significantly codetermined the boom.⁵⁹ Nationalisation is connected here with competitive behaviour in socioeconomic fields,⁶⁰ whereas the coherence of nation and modernisation appears both as a result and a motivating force.⁶¹ Practically, modernisation counts as an inner principle of organisation of nationalisation. New social identities are created and have a national character from the beginning. The transition from “Who are we?” to “We are this!” is definitely fulfilled. This surely contributes to an increase in conflict willingness and reinforces the integrative character of the nationalisation process.

⁵⁶ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 13. Februar 1900*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 325.

⁵⁷ *Bericht des Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Westpreußen vom 12. August 1901*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 4, Bl. 63–68;

Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Marienwerder vom 27. Dezember 1897, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 2, Bd. 1, Bl. 89.

⁵⁸ *Bericht des Landrates aus Pr. Stargard vom 15. Januar 1900*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 4, Bl. 8 and foll.; *Bericht des Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Westpreußen vom 25. April 1900*, in *Ibid.*, Bl. 4–7.

⁵⁹ K. Wajda, “Drogi rozwoju gospodarczego Pomorza Gdańskiego w latach 1815–1914,” *Zapiski Historyczne* 39 (3) (1974): 177–194; K. Wajda, “Społeczeństwo polskie Prus Zachodnich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku: Skład społeczno-zawodowy,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne KUL* 35 (2) (1987): 332–344; K. Wajda, *Wieś pomorska na przełomie XIX i XX w.* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1964); K. Wajda, “Przemiany w polskim stanie posiadania ziemi na Pomorzu Gdańskim w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w.,” *Zapiski Historyczne* 37 (1972/4): 117–132.

⁶⁰ H. U. Wehler, *Krisenherde*, 196.

⁶¹ W. Conze, *Nationsbildung*, 98.

It also applies to the extension of communication structures.⁶² The role and influence of the Polish press was so great that the fundamental model of social realization of nation in the form of a system of associations was pushed back. At the turn of the century, the decrease in the activities of the associations can be explained by the work of press which occupied the fields of their existence and even partially substituted them.⁶³ In the course of the elite change, the more the democratic camp, or the so-called people's party, made the decisive concept of nationalisation out of their ideas on the modern nation, the more radical changes in the newspaper landscape in the Province of West Prussia could be seen. In both districts, shortly after the Pelplin congress, some new newspapers emerged holding themselves at a certain distance from the mainstream papers. On September 16, 1894 the *Kurjer Gdański* commenced activity. Its target groups were craftsmen and workers, and the editors used deliberately folksy language so that it could be understood by the peasantry. In reference to the Pelplin decisions, the newspaper perceived the rise of religiosity, the struggle against Social Democracy and the promotion of Polish national interests as its tasks.⁶⁴ Starting from October 1, 1894 the *Gazeta Grudziądzka* was published in Graudenz. What the editor of the newspaper Wiktor Kulerski managed to achieve was sensational and had no competition in terms of radicalism of national agitation. In a few years, the newspaper reached a circulation that even well-established newspapers could never have done. As an opinion-forming title, it encroached into the district of Danzig. There, it cornered the *Gazeta Gdańska* with over five thousand subscribers, and finally became the newspaper with the widest circulation among the Polish.⁶⁵ Kulerski implemented a modern communication concept that was oriented towards large masses. As far as

⁶² J. Banach, *Niemiecka polityka narodowościowa w Prusach Zachodnich w latach 1900–1914 w świetle polskiej prasy pomorskiej* (Toruń-Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 1993), 36 and foll.; J. Banach, "Zur Forschung über die polnische Presse Westpreußens in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 48 (1999): 226–238.

⁶³ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 27. Januar 1901*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 287.

⁶⁴ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 12. Mai 1895*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47a, Fasc. Ia, Bl. 134 and foll.

⁶⁵ T. Cieślak, *Z dziejów prasy polskiej na Pomorzu Gdańskim w okresie zaboru pruskiego* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1964), 112, 116; T. Cieślak, "Gazeta Grudziądzka (1894–1918): Fenomen wydawniczy," *Studia i materiały do dziejów Wielkopolskiego i Pomorza* 3 (2) (1957): 175–188; M. Stański, "Wiktor Kulerski i jego 'Gazeta Grudziądzka' pod zaborem pruskim," *Studia i materiały do dziejów Wielkopolskiego i Pomorza* 6 (1960): 125–152.

the fundamental items are concerned, he was only a little different from other editors of the new generation. Also here, the cultivation of the Polish language was in the foreground and so was the preservation of the Catholic faith as the “holy inalienable common property.” However, the newspaper was shaped more aggressively. It emphasised permanently and distinctly the equivalence of Polishness, the Catholic Church and nation. Everyone who did not comply unconditionally was seen as a traitor.⁶⁶ In the same way, the newspaper tried to win subscribers. It took literally compulsory forms when it was declared that no-one could be regarded as Polish “who did not subscribe and read a newspaper, despite the horrible time that we live under the Prussians,”⁶⁷ or that those who did not read “the best newspaper in Graudenz”⁶⁸ were only half-human. Finally, Kulerski enhanced the attractiveness of his paper by means of a “literally American advertising.”⁶⁹ The whole layout of the newspaper was oriented towards a high-level combination of national agitation with commercial requirements. The appeal to the readers was to win one thousand new subscribers for every week in which Kulerski, “as martyr of the Polish cause,” was imprisoned by the Prussian authorities. An extensive premium system, including an offer of accident insurance for subscribers, also attracted attention. An insert for children invoked the consistency of their Polishness and faith. Contests on subjects concerning Polish or biblical history oriented the readers towards national values and awards made them reflect upon it. At the end of 1897 Kulerski began the publication of the *Graudenzer Courier*, supposedly in direct competition with the “folksy” newspaper, and would gain votes for Polish candidates.⁷⁰ Eventually, the dense network of columnists and correspondents, most of whom were clerics staying close to the masses, determined the significant influence of the Polish press on the middle and lower classes. The numbers of subscribers were surpassed by those reading the German newspapers.⁷¹ In

⁶⁶ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Marienwerder vom 2. Juni 1900*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 347, 373 and foll. as well as von 21. August 1895, in Ibid., Nr. 47a, Fasc. Ia, Bl. 66 and foll.

⁶⁷ *Gazeta Grudziądzka* 109 (September 18, 1897), quoted in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 2, Bd. 1, Bl. 56r.

⁶⁸ *Polizeibericht aus Marienwerder vom 29. September 1895* in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 1, Bl. 104.

⁶⁹ *Hier und im weiteren Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Danzig vom 27. Januar 1901*, in Ibid., Bd. 3, Bl. 272 and foll.

⁷⁰ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidiiums Marienwerder vom 27. Dezember 1897*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 2, Bd. 1, Bl. 91.

⁷¹ *Bericht des Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Westpreußen vom 6. September 1896*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 1, Bd. 1, Bl. 182 and foll.

the district of Danzig, in the course of one year between 1899 and 1900, they increased from 5,140 to 7,886. In families and villages, the newspapers were distributed by hand.⁷² Their impact on an increasing national consciousness can hardly be underestimated. Thus, the Prussian authorities, that carefully observed all Polish pronouncements, directly attributed the fact that “now more than earlier it can be perceived everywhere that the very people who could speak German delight in speaking Polish with Germans and on the street, they substitute the previously used German greeting by a Polish one” to the impact of the Polish press, whereas in the population census in 1895, in the column of nationality, citizens wrote “Pole, Prussian subject,” instead of the required “Prussian.” Generally, the complaint that the press “continuously teaches the, as such, harmless Poles to feel themselves Poles as opposed to Germans”⁷³ was heard, making them believe “as if the Poles were the actual sovereign of this land.”⁷⁴

The influence of the newspaper editors grew enormously in the second half of the 1890s. Apart from their editing functions, they acted as founders of associations, first of all the popular ones, subsequently passing leadership to the local clerics. Mostly, they filled high positions in civil associations and were generally present in the society. In the summer months, Wiktor Kulerski ran the “Dom Polski” (“Polish House”) in Zoppot as a centre for activists of the Polish national movement from all partition territories.⁷⁵ Eventually, equally at the front line of the struggle of nationalities, they were subject to high attention and often intervention from the Prussian authorities, and in this victim role they enjoyed a high respect among the people.⁷⁶ In the perception of the national movement,

⁷² *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidioms Danzig vom 27. Januar 1901*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 272r.

⁷³ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidioms Danzig vom 22. Januar 1897*, in *Ibid.*, Bd. 2, Bl. 49 and foll. The district president from Marienwerder reported on August 5, 1896 that in the proceedings in front of the authorities, the knowledge of the German language had been repeatedly denied and translators needed to be called in, although the respective people spoke German, as has been proven (*Ibid.*, Bl. 15 and foll.).

⁷⁴ *Bericht des Regierungs-Präsidioms Danzig vom 23. Dezember 1897*, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 871, Nr. 2, Bd. 1, Bl. 22.

⁷⁵ S. Wierzchosławski, *Polski ruch narodowy*, 121.

⁷⁶ In a report of the district presidency Danzig from February 13, 1900, in GHStA, I. HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 870, Nr. 47, Adh. a, Bd. 3, Bl. 318, it was pointed out that the editors used to be regarded by the Polish countrymen as martyrs and thus the people espoused the Polish cause even more. See K. Wajda, “Świadomość narodowa chłopów polskich na ziemiach pod panowaniem pruskim przesłanki