

ARTICLES

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CONDITIONS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF TOWNS IN THE PROVINCE OF POMERANIA
IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Key words: Pomerania, Pomeranian towns, land development, economic life, classification of towns

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In the history of the Province of Pomerania the interwar period was characterized by the significant dynamics of changes. WWI changed the geo-political situation and West Pomerania became the frontier province facing all consequences connected with this fact, which concerned both the events after 1918 and before 1939. The most important change concerned the geo-political location resulting from the rebirth of the Polish state, which carried out its political objectives determined by the economic policy, tariff policy or railway tariffs. It should be underlined that the administrative and economic circles of the province started to see differences in economic interests of individual administrative parts of the province. However, it should be emphasized that the creation of the Polish state diminished the territory of the Province of Pomerania only symbolically (by 1,000 hectares). On the other hand, Poland gained several thousand hectares of the territory of West Prussia¹. Germany also had to face the reality. The geopolitical and economic situation of Germany, changed by the Treaty of Versailles, affected the economy of the Province of Pomerania, social changes and urbanization processes. The changes of the boundaries and the re-establishment of the Polish state started to be criticized in the economic

¹ Mieczysław WOJCIECHOWSKI, *Powrót Pomorza do Polski 1918–1920*, Poznań 1963, passim. About border issues, especially in the context of Pomerelia, comp. Stanisław SALMONOWICZ, *Podziały terytorialne i organizacja administracji w województwie pomorskim (1920–1939)*, [in:] *Historia Pomorza*, t. 5: (1918–1939). *Województwo pomorskie i Wolne Miasto Gdańsk*, cz. 1: *Ustrój, społeczeństwo, gospodarka*, ed. Szczepan WIERZCHOSŁAWSKI, Przemysław OLSTOWSKI, Toruń 2015, pp. 71–73.

circles of the Province of Pomerania after several years. Arguments used in the criticism were more ideological and political rather than economic². What is more, throughout the whole interwar period one may clearly notice certain internal censorship in the history of West Pomerania. The economy of Pomerania and society operated differently in the years of the Weimar Republic and in the times of the Third Reich³.

Here the question should be asked: whether in order to evaluate processes of urban changes one should maintain the classification of towns suggested for the second half of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century or maybe one should depart from it and make an attempt to create a new typology? Let us remind that for the period prior to WWI there are five categories of Pomeranian towns: 1) towns of harbours and trade, 2) medium-sized towns characterized by the importance of communication, trade and craft, 3) medium-sized towns characterized by the prevalence of administration, craft and trade, 4) medium-sized towns which played the commercial, craft and agricultural functions, 5) small towns with the prevalence of trade, craft and agriculture – in the literature sometimes referred to as dwarf towns⁴. In the discussion about the towns in the Province of Pomerania, one should take into account not only 73 towns of the province, which operated there at the beginning of the period, but also towns of the District of Piła [Schneidemühl] incorporated into the province in 1938.

To my way of thinking, in order to discuss the main conditions of the demographic processes in terms of the economic development of towns, one should focus only on 24 towns (Anklam, Barth, Białogard, Bytów, Choszczno, Dąbie, Demmin, Goleniów, Greifswald, Gryfice, Kołobrzeg, Koszalin, Lębork, Pasewalk, Piła, Pyrzyce, Słupsk, Stargard, Stralsund, Szczecin, Szczecinek, Świnoujście, Trzebiatów and Wałcz), which should be classified in the first three categories. The first category of port and trade towns there are: Szczecin, Stralsund, Greifswald, Barth, Świnoujście, Wolgast, Kołobrzeg, Darłowo and Ustka. The importance of Ustka to a large extent depended on the economic

² Comp. Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Wpływ zmian granicznych na wschodzie Niemiec po pierwszej wojnie światowej na gospodarkę prowincji nadgranicznych w ocenie Andreasa Hessego*, *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* (further cit. PZP), R. 19 (48): 2004, nr 3, pp. 47–58.

³ Comp. general considerations in the treatises included in: *Pommern zwischen Zäsur und Kontinuität: 1918, 1933, 1945, 1989*, hrsg. v. Bert BECKER, Kyra T. INACHIN, Schwerin 1999.

⁴ Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Tendencje rozwojowe miast prowincji (zachodnio)pomorskiej w latach 1850–1918*, *Zapiski Historyczne* (further cit. ZH), t. 63: 1998, z. 1, p. 94. General remarks about the typology of towns comp. also in: Horst MATZERATH, *Urbanisierung in Preußen 1815–1914*, Stuttgart 1985, pp. 108, 138; Marjatta HIETALA, *Services and Urbanization at the Turn of Century. The Diffusion of Innovations* (Studia Historica 23; Societas Historica Finlandiae), Helsinki 1987, pp. 94–106.

situation of Słupsk. The second category consisted of medium-sized towns characterized by the importance of communication, trade and craft (industry) and included: Stargard, Pasewalk, Białogard, Szczecinek, Miastko, and Słupsk (with some reservations). Gryfice and Trzebiatów were characterized by the limited and specific significance in the field of transport (communication). The third category, the medium-sized towns characterized by the prevalence of administration, trade and craft (industry) included: Koszalin, Lębork, Anklam, Demmin and remaining towns which were the seats of the county district authorities. What should also be emphasized is the fact that some towns had features which allowed them being classified to both the second and the third category. Among towns which were situated in the territory of the Province of Pomerania in 1938 Piła should be classified in the third category, which was determined by its administrative functions; yet, Piła remained an important communication junction, the significance of which was growing. Wałcz and Choszczno were in a similar position; however, they were the seats of the county authorities and constituted communication junctions, but only on the local level. In the twenty-four towns suggested by me to discuss in this article there took place economic changes which affected demographic processes. Some of the towns changed their functions, losing their former character and developing other areas of economic life. What should be also addressed are the processes of the communization of towns and the development of the communal infrastructure, which resulted from the civilizational progress. The employment structure in industry and manufacture in the whole district in 1930 is another argument supporting the twenty-four towns being chosen to form a separate group. In this sector only 22.8% of workers were employed, while the average number for the Reich was 41.4%, in the districts bordered by West Pomerania lower indices were noted only in the Frontier March of Posen-West Prussia (Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen) (18.1%) and Mecklenburg-Schwerin (22.5%)⁵. The remaining medium-sized and smaller towns of the Province of Pomerania maintained their agriculture and craft industry character, which excludes them from the analysis.

⁵ *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, Jg. 49: 1930, p. 23. Comp. also: Donata von NERÉE, *Industrie und Handwerk in Pommern in der Weimarer Republik – ein Überblick*, [in:] *Pommern. Geschichte – Kultur – Wissenschaft. Pommern im Reich und in Europa*, hrsg. v. Horst WERNICKE, Ralf-Gunnar WERLICH, Greifswald 1996, pp. 364–365. The origin of such a situation in the context of the industrialization processes of Prussia in the 19th century is shown by: Hubert KIESEWETTER, *Industrialisierung und ausgebliebene Industrialisierung in Preußen*, [in:] *Pommern im 19. Jahrhundert. Staatliche und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung in vergleichender Perspektive*, hrsg. v. Thomas STAMM-KUHLMANN, Köln 2007, pp. 233–250.

DEVELOPMENT OR STAGNATION
IN THE YEARS 1919–1932?

The demographic situation of Pomeranian towns after WWI was diversified and to a large extent affected the economic process after the military actions had finished. One should incline towards the thesis appearing in older historiography that during the war big cities were affected much more heavily by general mobilisation and war economy than smaller towns⁶. This thesis was confirmed by the economic situation and the changes in the job market in Szczecin and other Pomeranian cities. The authorities of Kołobrzeg complained about the exceptionally hard condition of the city during and after the war. During the war a munitions factory operated in Kołobrzeg, which employed up to 3,000 workers. Moreover, in Kołobrzeg there was a military hospital with about 3,600 beds. Even some health resorts were taken over by the hospital. After the end of the war the hospital was closed down, but many of its patients remained in the city. That is why, the city authorities complained about the high number of unemployed – up to 2,000 people. The city was not able to provide proper housing conditions to everybody. From 1919 to 1924 only 67 houses including 336 flats were built. Hospitals and military lazaret houses operated during the war also in several other Pomeranian towns such as Szczecin, Koszalin and Pasewalk⁷.

During the interwar period Pomeranian towns did not extend their administrative areas, which did not mean that urbanization processes did not go beyond their frontiers. The municipal character was maintained by the industrial districts of Szczecin, in one of which – Podjuchy (while still remaining a rural commune) – in 1939 the number of inhabitants surpassed 10,000, which was equal to the number of inhabitants living in some county towns. One may talk about the extension of boundaries in 1939 only in reference to two towns. First, in April 1939, upon the decision of the high president of Greifswald the communes of Wieck and Elden were incorporated into the town. In October 1939, upon the decision of the Prussian government, the so called Grand Szczecin (Groß-Stettin) was created, the population of which increased at that time to over 380,000. Apart from several rural communes, it also absorbed two independent towns of Dąbie and Police⁸.

⁶ Jürgen REULECKE, *Städtische Finanzprobleme und Kriegswohlfahrtspflege im Ersten Weltkrieg unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Stadt Barmen*, Zeitschrift für Stadtgeschichte, Stadtsoziologie und Denkmalpflege, Jg. 2: 1975, Nr. 1, pp. 48–80; Hans MOTTEK, Walter BECKER, Alfred SCHRÖTTER, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte Deutschlands. Ein Grundriß*, Bd. 3, Berlin 1975, pp. 204.

⁷ Bundesarchiv Berlin (further cit. BA Berlin), Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 1699, pp. 38–39.

⁸ Mieczysław STELMACH, *Geneza „wielkiego Szczecina”*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. 3: 1806–1945, ed. Bogdan WACHOWIAK, Szczecin 1994, p. 527 f.; Joachim MAI, *Die Jahre der Weimarer*

After the end of the war the Pomeranian towns tended to maintain their economic (mainly industrial) potential rather than to extend it, which, to a large extent, affected the demographic processes.

Throughout all the interwar period in sea trade attempts were made for the Szczecin harbour to reach the transshipment capacity equal to the one prior to the outbreak of the war. In 1926 it amounted to 5.8 million tons, which constituted 93% of the pre-war turnover. It was not until 1936 that the turnover exceeded 8.3 million tons and was slightly higher than in 1913. In the subsequent years, in 1937 and 1938, the transshipment in the harbour exceeded 8 million tons, but it was somewhat lower than in 1936⁹. Many factors influenced the condition of the harbour. The administrative authorities of the province along with the economic circles (the latter – from the mid-1920s) started to repeat the argument that the most detrimental factor was the loss of their port hinterlands which were now part of the Polish state. Throughout the whole interwar period the port of Szczecin competed heavily with ports from the Polish customs area and frequently lost. Apart from the difficult competition with the ports of the Polish customs area, Szczecin had another rival – the port of Hamburg. Even in the field of the German Baltic trade, particularly in export, Hamburg reached a much higher turnover than Szczecin (in 1925 Szczecin catered for 37% of the total German turnover in the Baltic Sea, while Hamburg 51%). As far as import was concerned, the differences were not so big, but the supremacy of Hamburg was still noticeable.

The trade in goods of the remaining West Pomeranian ports was symbolic. In the mid-1920s five of them: Kołobrzeg, Ustka, Darłowo, Saßnitz and Stralsund transhipped over 300,000 tons. In 1930 the number did not exceed one million tons. The ports of the Koszalin District in 1933 reloaded symbolic quantities of goods: Kołobrzeg 136,000 tons, Darłowo 26,500 tons, Ustka merely 20,000 tons. They catered for the nearest hinterlands which were geographically situated in the same province¹⁰. That is why their belonging to the category of commercial port towns became symbolic and controversial.

The industry of Szczecin was marginalized after WWI. Industrial companies of Szczecin failed to become part of the new economic organizations (mainly in the fields of metallurgy, the shipping industry or machinery in-

Republik und der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur, [in:] *Greifswald. Geschichte der Stadt*, hrsg. v. Horst WERNICKE, Schwerin 2000, p. 130.

⁹ Extensive discussions about the development of the sea trade of Szczecin were conducted by: Bogdan DOPIERAŁA, *Kryzys gospodarki morskiej Szczecina 1919–1939*, Poznań 1963; Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Życie gospodarcze*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. 3, pp. 568–684.

¹⁰ BA Berlin, Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Nr. 9752, p. 237. See more: Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Handel morski i porty Pomorza Zachodniego w pierwszych latach II wojny światowej*, ZH, t. 55: 1990, nr 2–3, pp. 17–39.

dustry) despite the contribution of the capital from other regions of Germany. In the interwar period Szczecin stopped being the leading centre of the shipping industry. The development of the Hamburg-Bremen concern “Deschi-mag” caused the decreasing number of orders received by the Szczecin shipyards, which resulted in the closing down of the Szczecin shipyards of Vulcan, Osteewerft and the plant of Nüscke. Another shipyard – Stettiner Oderwerke limited significantly their production.

From the mid-1920 the authorities of the province or district, representatives of various economic organizations started to indicate what was, according to them, the main source of economic regress. To their way of thinking, what was to blame were the changes of the boundaries after WWI and the lack of the possibility to sell locally produced goods in the territories of Poland. The leader of such argumentation was the president of the Koszalin District Kurt Cronau. He wrote a statement in which he enumerated many negative aspects of the economy in the eastern part of Pomerania after the Polish-German boundary had been established. He pointed out, among others, the significant increase in the population in the Pomeranian towns from 1919 to 1926, which resulted from the influx of the so called optants. Cronau provided Lębork, where the population grew by over 25%, as an example of this phenomenon. The high index of the population growth occurred also in Miastko (14%), Słupsk (11.8%), Łeba (12%) and Bytów (almost 6%)¹¹.

Yet, Cronau's evaluation of the demographic processes is questionable. First of all, when his memorial was written (there is some difficulty in establishing the date of its creation, but it is assumed to have been written in 1926), the demographic situation of the district looked slightly different. In the years 1925–1933 the three biggest cities of the district – Słupsk, Kołobrzeg and Koszalin – experienced the population growth, but it resulted from both the high birth rate and migration rate. The population in Koszalin rose by 5.47%, 2.45% of which constituted the birth growth while 3.02% was the increase in the number of migrants. Kołobrzeg and Słupsk were characterized by a bigger increase in the number of inhabitants and a more significant influx of new settlers. The population growth of Kołobrzeg rose from 3.05% to 8.89%, which created the general population growth of 11.94%. The population growth in Słupsk increased from 3.32% to 5.60 %, which meant the augmentation

¹¹ Vorpommersches Landesarchiv Greifswald (further cit. LA Greifswald), Rep. 60, Nr. 1915, pp. 155–162. The text of Cronau's statement was also published by: Bogdan DOPIERAŁA, *Ekonomiczne i demograficzne problemy Pomorza Zachodniego w świetle niemieckich materiałów źródłowych z lat 1926–1932*, Poznań 1959, pp. 232–244; Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Pomorze Zachodnie w okresie od traktatu wersalskiego po klęskę III Rzeszy w 1945 roku* (Źródła do kaszubsko-polskich aspektów dziejów Pomorza Zachodniego do 1945 roku, t. 4), Poznań–Gdańsk 2006, pp. 121–129.

by 8.92%. In the deliberations concerning the years 1925–1933 one should also refer to some counties of the district. One rule was visible here. In all the counties the birth rate was high (from 5.84% to 9.70%), but at the same time a significant number of inhabitants tended to leave the counties due to migration processes. The positive balance of the migration movement was observed in the counties including bigger cities with the prosperous economy (Lębork, Białogard, Drawsko, Miastko)¹². Cronau's argumentation was inconsistent, which is best illustrated by the information provided by Sievers, the trustee of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce for the Koszalin District, juxtaposed with the data for other towns and counties of the district including also the previous period. In the general migration balance in 1926 the Province of Pomerania lost only 1.3% of the population in comparison with 1919. The most heavily affected by the population loss was the Stralsund district – 5.1%, while the Koszalin district lost only 3.7% of its population. The record-bearer was the municipal county of Greifswald, from which over 7,000 people emigrated, which constituted 21.1% of the whole population. The reason was probably a difficult economic situation of the town and the liquidation of several metallurgical and machinery factories. Those circumstances contradicted the rule that the municipal county and adjacent counties (in the case of Szczecin – the county of Gryfino, Randow and even Nowogard) should “benefit” from the potential of the great municipal agglomeration. In the deliberations concerning the demographic changes in the towns up to the mid-1920s one should also take into account a distinct situation in Bytów/Bütow, which was the town which absorbed the highest number of the so called optants. In the years 1919–1925 they constituted a group of 225–230 people. In 1926 other groups of optants arrived in the town. Within one year and a half from the beginning of 1925 to June 1926 there arrived 550 optants. They constituted a major problem for the town, not only in demographic and economic terms, but also politically¹³.

Analysing the situation of bigger Pomeranian cities one may observe that in the years 1919–1925 all of them experienced the positive migration balance (except Greifswald), which for Słupsk was tantamount to the growth by 6.8%, Stargard by 12.3%, Stralsund by 8.3% and Szczecin by 7.6%. Among the Pomeranian towns characterized by the positive migration balance there were Białogard (1.6%), Drawsko Pomorskie (0.5%), Gryfino (1.5%), Nowo-

¹² BA Berlin, Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Nr. 9755, p. 23 (the study included in: Bruno HEINEMANN, *Ostpommern. Bedeutung und Aufgabe*, Stolp 1936).

¹³ Dariusz SZUDRA, *Ludność pruskiej prowincji Pomorze. Przemiany w ruchu naturalnym i migracyjnym w latach 1914–1939*, Szczecin 2005, p. 102 f.; Józef LINDMAJER, *Bytów w okresie republiki weimarskiej i rządów faszystowskich (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Historia Bytowa*, ed. Zygmunt SZULKA, Bytów 1998, p. 300.

gard (3.0%), Pyrzyce (1.2%), the county of Randow (2.9%), the county of Rügen (2.2%), the county of Ückermünde (2.5%), the county of Usedom-Wollin (12.0%). In the subsequent census period for the years 1926–1933 big Pomeranian cities observed the positive migration balance from the lowest one in Szczecin (2.9%) to the highest one in Kołobrzeg (9%). It must be noted that in Greifswald the collapse in the migration rate was followed by its increase by 8.2%¹⁴.

The alarming facts provided by Cronau concerning the decrease in the economic potential of towns and entailing the growth in the unemployment rate, were confirmed by the economic circles. In Lębork, prior to the outbreak of the war among 19,000 inhabitants there were about 4,100 professionally active people. After the end of the war their number fell to 3,000 people. For example, when the war finished, the factory of matches had to dismiss 450 workers. Similar redundancies took place in Sianów (also in the factory of matches). The number of workers was also reduced in Koszalin and Warcin. In Lębork in 1933 there were 3,350 unemployed people. The limited production possibilities of the factories in the Koszalin district led to the decline of the local production. The phenomenon was observed in Kalisz Pomorski, Szczecinek, Bytów and Karlino. The fall in the production led to the emigration of highly qualified workers¹⁵. The authorities of the district willingly used the term “German peninsula surrounded by the Polish world”, insisting on being granted special privileges for particular fields of economic life and on the district being included in the action *Osthilfe*. However, it should be remembered that the Prussian state’s involvement in the economy of the province not always brought positive results. Such a situation took place in the case of the Stettin-Prussian Port Community established in 1923, from which the government withdrew in 1929 and concluded a similar agreement with Hamburg¹⁶.

In 1929 in the towns of the Koszalin district there operated 270 industrial plants. The biggest number of plants was in Słupsk – 62, Kołobrzeg – 43, Koszalin – 25, Lębork – 24, Szczecinek and Świdwin – 18 each. The geographical arrangement of wholesale trade was interesting. 358 commercial companies ran such an activity. The most important centre was again Słupsk – 73, fol-

¹⁴ More extensive deliberations were carried out by Dariusz SZUDRA, op.cit., s. 240–247; comp. also: *Wirtschafts- und verkehrsgeographischer Atlas von Pommern*, hrsg. v. Werner WITT, Stettin 1934, s. 25 f.

¹⁵ LA Greifswald, nr 1917, pp. 113–116 (here the study of Sievers, the trustee of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of the Koszalin District: *Die Gebietsverluste im Osten. Handel und Industrie im Regierungsbezirk Köslin*); BA Berlin, Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Nr. 9755, p. 51.

¹⁶ Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Powstanie Szczecińsko-Pruskiej Wspólnoty Portowej w 1923 roku*, PZP, R. 7 (46): 1992, nr 3, pp. 29–47.

lowed by Koszalin – 38, Kołobrzeg – 35, Lębork – 29, Szczecinek – 23 and Bytów – 18¹⁷.

The stagnation, or even regress of the economic life in the 1920s in Pomeranian towns was a common phenomenon. The press frequently informed about dismissals of workers relatively big industrial plants, which experienced a serious crisis. In November 1927 about 300 workers were made redundant in the factory Auto-Stoewer Werke in Szczecin. In 1928 redundancies of several thousand workers were expected in the shipbuilding industry. In the same year the high president of the district requested the Prussian Ministry of Home Affairs to provide assistance to inhabitants of Gołęczin (near Szczecin), which was predominantly inhabited by physical workers and their families. At the same time in Słupsk about 150 construction workers were dismissed. The factory of felt in Gryfino made about 200 people redundant. Several dozen of people were made redundant in the workhouse of the Szczecin airport. In Greifswald in the second half of the 1920s about 600 people were jobless. Earlier they had worked in the machinery industry and in the repair shops in the railway industry¹⁸. Here we may put forward a thesis that the economic collapse of many Pomeranian towns took place even prior to the world global economic crisis.

Emphasizing the economic collapse of the industrial production in many Pomeranian towns, one must notice factories which still were able to maintain good production results. It concerned mainly the capital of the province – Szczecin. The plant of J. Gollnow specializing in the construction of bridges and factory halls was particularly successful. The factory received many foreign orders, including commissions from the Soviet Union.

The change in the focus of the German economy to armament, which took place after the National Socialist German Workers' Party had taken over the power, gave rise to the extension of the smelter "Kraft" in Szczecin and the increase in its production potential. In Szczecin cement factories continued to be quite prosperous. They became part of the cartel "Norddeutscher Zementverband". Although it limited the magnitude of production, it provided the continuity of commercial orders, which allowed Szczecin to maintain the role of the leading industrial centre of the province despite the crisis and the collapse of the shipping production.

Prior to WWI the group of dynamically developing towns consisted of towns which were important communication centres (Stargard, Pasewalk). Af-

¹⁷ Kacper PENCARSKI, "Gospodarka miast rejencji koszalińskiej w latach 1918–1939", Słupsk 2012 (a typescript of the doctoral thesis in the library of the Pomeranian Academy), p. 351.

¹⁸ LA Greifswald, Rep. 60, Nr. 1917, pp. 29, 68, 73; Rep. 60, Nr. 2007, pp. 81, 97, 127; Volksbote, Nr. 266 of 12 November 1927; Volkswacht für Stettin und Provinz Pommern, Nr. 16 of 19 January 1928; General-Anzeiger, Nr. 353 of 21 December 1926; J. MAI, op.cit., p. 125.

ter the war finished, there were enough railway lines in Pomerania, because of which new railways lines were set up sporadically. In 1921 two rail connections were established – between Polanów and Korzybie, and in 1934 between Sławno–Polanów–Żydowo. The authorities of the Koszalin district insisted that the connections between certain towns be improved. It concerned mainly the connection between Koszalin and Piła or the connection between Piła and Słupsk/Kołobrzeg and Połczyn-Zdrój. The District Management of the Railway in Szczecin had some reservations concerning the unprofitability of some long distance railway connections e.g. between Kołobrzeg and Poznań or Wrocław. Important communication centres included towns from which railway lines went in four or five directions such as Szczecin, Stralsund, Białogard, Szczecinek, Pasewalk, Koszalin and Słupsk. At the beginning of the 1920s Sławno and Lębork joined this group. At the same time Grimmen, Pyrzyce, Kalisz Pomorski, Złocieniec, Płoty and Tribsee were communication junctions for 4 railway lines. After the boundaries of the province were extended in 1938, Piła joined the group of towns with railway connections running in four directions. Piła played a major role in the communication with the Polish territories¹⁹. The movement of goods on the railway routes in the 1920s was quite intensive despite the unfavourable economic situation. As early as 1924 in bigger towns of the Koszalin district transshipment of goods was bigger than in 1914. Before the outbreak of the world crisis in Kołobrzeg 224,000 tons were reloaded, which was 105,000 more than in the year 1924; in Koszalin – 218,000 tons – 99,000 more than in 1924; in Słupsk – 463,000 tons – 170,000 tons more than in 1924. High transshipment indexes were also observed in Białogard (116,000 tons), Szczecinek (112,000 tons) and Lębork (107,000 tons)²⁰. Thus, it may be concluded that the railway positively affected the economy of many Pomeranian towns – not only those which in the 19th century were important communication junctions.

Pomeranian towns, which were predominantly centres of regional or local trade, had to maintain connections with the local market, which could be done best by the development of the system of narrow-gauge railway – already established in Pomerania prior to the outbreak of WWI. However, it turns out that the interest of the towns in such connections and the activity of joint-stock companies exploited by the narrow-gauge railway, was limited and depended much on the region and time. In the Koszalin district towns were not interested in the financial support of the activity of the main companies of the narrow-gauge railway. The Kołobrzeg Narrow-Gauge Railway (Kol-

¹⁹ Andrzej MIELCAREK, *Transport drogowy, wodny i kolejowy w gospodarce prowincji pomorskiej w latach 1815–1914*, Szczecin 2000, pp. 103–104.

²⁰ K. PENCARSKI, "Gospodarka miast rejencji", pp. 139–149. General remarks about railway lines in Pomerania comp. in: A. MIELCAREK, op.cit., p. 156 f.

berger Kleinbahn A.G.), which operated in the county of Kołobrzeg – Karlino, was financed by the Pomeranian Province, the Prussian state, the landrat of the county, private companies and landowners. The narrow-gauge railway was connected with the system of railways in Resko and Gryfice. The Sławno Narrow-Gauge Railways (Schlawer Kleinbahn A.G.), which connected Sławno with its local market, also operated without the financial support of the town. The joint-stock company, which exploited the connected railways in the counties of Koszalin, Bobolice and Białogard (AG der Vereinnigten Kleinbahnen der Kreise Köslin, Bublitz und Belgard), also operated without the capital from the economic circles from those towns. The situation was similar in the Słupsk Narrow-Gauge Railway (Stolpetalbahn). On the other hand, the Starogród Narrow-Gauge Railway (Saatziger Kleinbahn A.G.) operating in the territory of the county of Starogard was supported by the significant financial contribution of the town²¹. One may pose a question here about the financial potential of the economic circles of the above-mentioned towns. To my mind, the lack of interest in the narrow-gauge railways resulted from their low capital capacity.

The situation changed after 1933. In 1939 the province had 1,651 kilometres of the narrow-gauge railways lines. About 35 million marks were involved in the joint-stock companies of the narrow-gauge railways. The capital mostly belonged to the counties (16.5 million marks), the province (9.5 million marks) and the Prussian state (7.6 million marks). In total, the Pomeranian towns invested about 1 million marks. The shares of the narrow-gauge railways belonged to: Starlsund, Greifswald, Stargard, Kołobrzeg (the latter two towns in the South-Franzburger Narrow-Gauge Railway; Franzburger Südbahn), Nowe Warpno, Gryfice, Trzebiatów, Resko, Białogard, Lębork and Szczecin. The most important narrow-gauge railway junctions became Anklam (four lines) and Trzebiatów, Gryfice and Jarmen (three lines each). The interest of the towns, including the one from the Koszalin district, in the narrow-gauge railway was the evidence of the fact that the towns appreciated its contribution to the development of the local and supra-regional trade. On the other hand, it must have resulted from the political pressure, the evidence of which may be the letter of Gauleiter F. Schwede-Coburg to Deutsche Reichsbahngesellschaft of December 1935, in which he expressed his concern about the weak condition of the economic life in some counties²². In Pomerania the railway remained the most important carrier since the condition of the inland navigation was poor. Apart from Szczecin, only Anklam could be regarded as the centre of the inland waterway shipping, which transported the significant quantity of goods.

²¹ K. PENCARSKI, "Gospodarka miast rejencji", pp. 159–166.

²² BA Berlin, Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 4171, pp. 469–103; Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 4166, pp. 49–50; Rechnungshof des Deutschen Reiches, Nr. 6202, p. 35, 44; A. MIELCAREK, op.cit., p. 104.

In other cases (e.g. transport to Darłowo in the Wieprza [Wipper] River or to Ustka in the Słupia [Stolpe] River) the inland waterway shipping was scarce²³.

One of the most important elements of the process of the urbanization of not only Pomeranian towns, but of their civilization progress, became the development of the communal infrastructure. It significantly improved the life conditions in the towns. Sometimes the communal infrastructure went beyond the boundaries of the town improving the life conditions of people living in the suburbs. It concerned mainly Szczecin. The creation of the communal infrastructure in the majority of Pomeranian towns took place in the second half of the 19th century and in the first years before the outbreak of the war. The pace of the communalization of towns was not the same in all the towns. The processes were much more rapid in big cities, mainly in Szczecin, while in smaller towns (including the so called dwarf towns) the backwardness in their development was observed.

The Pomeranian towns quickly started to construct the gas and water supply networks. A gas plant in Szczecin was set up as early as 1847. In 1858 a gas company was opened in Greifswald, and later in Kołobrzeg, Koszalin and Słupsk. Szczecin had the longest gas network among all the Pomeranian towns. The next three Pomeranian towns (Stargard, Słupsk and Stralsund) together had a few times shorter gas network than Szczecin. The gas supply in the Pomeranian towns prior to 1914 was much lower than in the towns of Greater Poland. The construction of the water supply network was much more complicated technically and financially. Before WWI not all Pomeranian towns were able to provide their inhabitants with water supplied from the municipal water distribution systems²⁴.

The situation of the electrification of Pomeranian towns looked very interesting. On the one hand, it had a major importance for the towns' development and substituted the steam industry with the electric systems. On the other hand, electricity made it possible to provide light to towns and flats. It could also be used to develop the tramway communication in bigger towns. In the Prussian state the issues connected with electrification and the production of electric energy were the responsibility of the local authorities and private investors.

²³ Józef LINDMAJER, *Przyczynek do monografii gospodarczej małych rzek Pomorza Zachodniego na przykładzie Wieprzy w trzecim ćwierćwieczu XIX stulecia*, Rocznik Koszaliński, nr 35: 1997, pp. 35–53.

²⁴ Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Rozwój urbanistyczny miast pomorskich i ich gospodarka komunalna*, [in:] *Historia Pomorza*, t. 4: (1850–1918), cz. 1: *Ustrój, gospodarka, społeczeństwo*, ed. Stanisław SALMONOWICZ, Toruń 2000, p. 468 f.; Franz SCHERER, *Stadtgeschichte von 1815 bis 1918*, [in:] *Greifswald. Geschichte der Stadt*, p. 119. General remarks about the development of the gas industry in Greater Poland see in: Miron URBANIAK, *Miejskie zakłady przemysłowe Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego. Gazownie*, t. 1: *Zarys dziejów*, Łódź 2011.

Prior to the outbreak of the war almost 2,000 communal units in Pomerania (towns, communes, manor districts) joined the electricity network, including 44 out of 73 Pomeranian towns. The electrification process was not interrupted in the first years of the war. After the end of the war, five energy plants (Ślupsk, Białogard, Maszewo, Szczecin and Stralsund) provided electricity to the Pomeranian province; they had the power transmission capacity of 10,700 kilometres. It must be noted that electricity companies acquired energy generated by local plants and sometimes from units operating beyond the boundaries of the province. In 1925 all the electricity plants were combined into one electricity company seated in Szczecin (Überlandzentrale Pommern A.G.). In 1924 all the Pomeranian towns, like almost 1,700 rural communes and almost 2,800 manor districts, were incorporated into the electric network. A year later electric power from the Szczecin base reached as many as 85 towns, some of which were situated beyond the boundaries of the province (Wałcz and Myślibórz). In 1932 electric power from the Überlandzentrale Pommern A.G. [Pomerania Electric Plant] was supplied to 95 towns, 2769 manor districts, 782 big industrial plants²⁵. The electric energy was distributed centrally by four branches of the electric company (Stralsund, Maszewo, Białogard and Ślupsk), where several power plants generating energy from coal operated. In the territory of the Koszalin District, hydro power plants were also exploited. The Pomeranian Province also received energy generated beyond its boundaries. The most important supplier of energy was the March Electric Plant (Märkisches Elektrizitätswerk A.G.). In the 1930s, among others, the high mayor of Szczecin Werner Faber was a member of the supervisory board of this plant. The issue of the plant's wanting to increase the charges for the electricity supply generated protests among its Pomeranian clients²⁶.

Remarks about the development of the communal infrastructure of Pomeranian towns lead to the conclusion that big and medium-sized towns were its main beneficiaries. In the second half of the 19th century they started to invest more rapidly in the communal plants, which was continued also after the end of WWI. In big towns of the province as early as the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries there appeared conditions to use electric power. Smaller towns and the so called dwarf towns did not become part of this process until the 1920s. The towns which had a developed communal infrastructure enjoyed better life conditions and became more attractive for the migrants.

²⁵ Broader remarks about the electrification of Pomerania see in: Paweł GUT, *Rozwój energetyki na Pomorzu w latach 1880–1945*, PZP, R. 31 (60): 2016, nr 3, pp. 43–65; Romuald NOWAKOWSKI, Michał BALCERAK, *Zarys historii elektryfikacji miast Pomorza Zachodniego na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, *Maszyny elektryczne – Zeszyty Problemowe*, t. 112: 2016, nr 4, pp. 131–138.

²⁶ BA Berlin, Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 4226, p. 10.

NEW CONDITIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1933

The period after 1933 differed significantly from the conditions of the development of towns during the Weimar Republic. The main changes in the functioning of the commune authorities took place at the beginning of 1934 on the basis of the act about the communal system (*Gemeindeverfassungsgesetz*) of 15 December 1933. The act standardized the legal system and practically did away with the local authorities as the form of citizens' participation in the life of the commune. The head of the municipal commune was the mayor or high-mayor, who held both the executive and the legislative power. The town council changed into an advisory body. In big cities and medium-sized towns the high-mayor or mayor was appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs having consulted the *gauleiter*. The treasurer was also appointed by the minister. The term of office of the commune authorities lasted 12 years. The remaining officials of the commune were appointed by the president of the district. Another advisory body, apart from the above-mentioned town council, was a new institution of the so called counsellors (*Beiräte*), who were respectable inhabitants of the commune appointed by the president of the district²⁷. They advised only in issues presented to them by the high-mayor or mayor. The reform departed from the model of the local authority of the commune originated in the mid-19th century and subordinated the local authorities completely to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP).

The economic situation of the Pomeranian towns after 1933 was different because economic factors were not the only ones which determined their development. It must be remembered that national socialists did not develop any economic doctrine or any economic policy. Their views were limited to the opinion that the state should regulate the main directions of the economic development maintaining the private property. One of the ways to steer the economy of the state were the so called economic plans. The government pointed out that one of the main aims of its policy was the fight with the unemployment²⁸. In the plan of the reconstruction of the Pomeranian economy, published in January 1934 in "Der Deutsche", its author – E. Jarmer, holding the function of the economic counsellor in the province's authorities, stressed that the gravity point in the process lay in the healing of the economic situation in

²⁷ Mieczysław STELMACH, *Ustrój i finanse miejskie*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. 3, p. 691; Paweł GUT, *Ustrój, administracja i podziały terytorialne pomorskich prowincji Prus w latach 1918–1939*, ZH, t. 81: 2016, z. 3, p. 94.

²⁸ Czesław ŁUCZAK, *Dzieje gospodarcze Niemiec 1871–1945*, Poznań 1984, p. 125; Wolfram FISCHER, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1918–1945*, Opladen 1968, p. 51. In reference to Pomerania comp. Przemysław JACKOWSKI, *Walka z bezrobociem przez rozbudowę infrastruktury komunikacyjnej i melioracje na Pomorzu w świetle prasy szczecińskiej 1933–1939*, PZP, R. 12 (41): 1997, nr 1–2, p. 129 f.

villages and sending there more unemployed inhabitants of towns²⁹. Thus, the authorities looked for solutions of demographic and social problems outside.

The tendency to control economic life was expressed also in the party apparatus's attempts to take over the control over economic organizations such as chambers of industry and trade and introducing the representatives of the NSDAP into supervisory boards of various companies, particularly those which were considered to be of strategic importance for the interests of the state. It turned out then that, according to the party authorities, well known representatives of the economic world failed to have adequate qualifications to run such organizations. A case in point is the statement of the party authorities in which they declared that they were unable to cooperate with the head of the Home Craftsmen Chamber for Pomerania (Landeshandwerkskammer für Pommern) only because of the fact that until 1930 he had been a member of the SPD. The new authorities declared their support for the development of craft suggesting the creation of the Credit Assistance Unions (Kredithilfsverband) in different towns. In Pomerania as early as 1934 such unions were set up in several towns such as Szczecin, Stargard, Greifswald, Nowogard, including smaller towns – Chociwel, Dobrzany and Suchań³⁰. The NSDAP found it difficult to subjugate the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Szczecin and to make the party's member, E. Fengler the Chamber's new head. However, the problem was solved when a new body called the Economic Chamber of Pomerania (Gauwirtschaftskammer für Pommern) was set up. It was the branch of the Economic Chamber of the Reich (Reichswirtschaftskammer), and it controlled virtually all the most important economic branches (except agriculture) and chambers of industry and commerce. Obviously, its head became the candidate put forward by the NSDAP³¹.

Opinions of the military circles, including the Military Inspection of Wehrmacht and the headquarters of the so called II Military Circle (Wehrkreisgebiet II) embracing Mecklenburg and Pomerania, constituted an important prerequisite for the development of industry at the mouth of the Oder

²⁹ BA Berlin, Reichslandbund. Pressearchiv, Nr. 2728, p. 184.

³⁰ LA Greifswald, Rep. 60, Nr. 1920, p. 105.

³¹ BA Berlin, Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Nr. 13306, p. 34; Nr. 9749, pp. 140–144. See more about taking over the control of the economic life by the NSDAP in: Uwe SCHRÖDER, "Zur faschistischen Kriegsvorbereitung im Regierungsbezirk Stettin von 1935 bis 1939", Greifswald 1985 (the typescript of the doctoral thesis in the collections of the University Library in Greifswald); Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Zabiegi NSDAP o kontrolę nad gospodarką Szczecina*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. 3, pp. 635–643. Comp. also: Kacper PENCARSKI, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne, druga wojna światowa (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Dzieje Koszalina*, t. 1: *Do 1945 roku*, ed. Radosław GAZIŃSKI, Edward WŁODARCZYK, Koszalin 2015, p. 307. General remarks about the policy of the Third Reich towards craft comp. also in: Heinrich August WINKLER, *Der entbehrliche Stand. Zur Mittelstandspolitik im Dritten Reich*, Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, Bd. 17: 1977, pp. 7, 31.

River and the establishment of new plants here in the second half of the 1930s. For them the territory near the mouth of the Oder River constituted a safe place for the location of strategically important investments since the area was situated beyond the reach of the air force of the enemy states: "The location of Szczecin, the main centre of trade and industry, in relation to the capital of the Reich, is particularly beneficial. [...] The arms industry operating here and other industrial plants are scattered all over the territory of the district, which guarantees their being safe from bombings, which favourably affects production processes. The area situated farthest from the west belongs to the territories of the Reich which are best secured against air raids" [trans. Agnieszka Chabros]³². In the similar vein, the port of Szczecin was commented upon: "in this military district the biggest Baltic port is situated. It plays the key role both in import and in export, but what is the most substantial part of its activity is the import of iron ore from Scandinavia. It constitutes its most important military-economic indicator" [trans. A.C.]³³.

The problem of the revival of the economy of the Pomeranian towns by military orders or the phenomenon of some industrial plants being subjugated to the military circles was visible in bigger cities. It concerned mainly Szczecin, Stralsund, Greifswald and selectively some other Pomeranian towns. The interest of the army often focused only on the part of the production of some plants. Such a situation took place in the Szczecin chemical factory Union, part of which (Oderchemie G.m.b.H.) was assigned for the military production for the army³⁴. The military circles expected concrete actions to be undertaken by the local authorities of some towns as it was in Kołobrzeg in 1936 when the representatives of the magistrate were invited to take part in a lecture prepared by the headquarters of the air force of the district II, which addressed the necessity to build an airport in Bagicz. Such demands were also sent from Luftwaffe headquarters. They expected the town to provide a certain number of workers and suitable telephone connections. The budget of the town was to receive 140,000 marks by way of damages³⁵.

Port towns expected the central authorities to support them in their development plans. In fact, the development plans concerned mainly Szczecin

³² BA Berlin, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht. Filmsammlung Nr. 6018, the study: *Kriegsgeschichte der Rüstungsinspektion des Wehrkreises II*. This opinion is also quoted by: Hans Werner RAUTENBERG, *Czas wielkich nadziei i klęski: w Trzeciej Rzeszy (do 1945 roku)*, [in:] *Pomorz Zachodnie poprzez wieki*, ed. Jan M. PIKORSKI, Szczecin 1999, pp. 323–225.

³³ BA Berlin, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht. Filmsammlung, Nr. 13433 (*Denkschrift über die wehrwirtschaftliche Bedeutung des Wehrkreis II – 1938*).

³⁴ Ibid., Rechnungshof des Deutschen Reiches, Nr. 5583, p. 7.

³⁵ Ibid., Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 1703, pp. 21–24.

owing to its strategic geographical location. In reference to the remaining towns an example may be the attempts to build an airport in Kołobrzeg or the investments in Ustka connected with the fact that the port of Ustka provided regular shipping services to East Prussia "Seedienst Ostpreußen". Transhipments in the ports of the Koszalin District in 1938 showed a slight upward trend and amounted to 230,000 tons in Kołobrzeg; 235,000 tons in Ustka; and 67,000 tons in Darłowo. Yet, the quantities were relatively small and indicated the weakness of the ports and their hinterlands³⁶. In this context, it should also be underlined that the Pomeranian towns competed with one another. The authorities of the Koszalin District along with the magistrate of the city put forward the project of the construction of a port in Koszalin. According to their plans, the town should be connected by Lake Jamno with the Baltic Sea. It was stressed that the new port in Koszalin would have better conditions for the development than the ports in Darłowo and Ustka. The authorities of the city in 1936 argued that the economic territory of Koszalin needed a port. The territory was to include also the potential hinterlands of the port extending down to Piła and Krzyż³⁷. This plan was rejected as impracticable in the 19th century and the fact of the economic and administrative circles' returning to it indicated their lack of knowledge.

In the analysis of the function of port towns of the Pomeranian Province one should concentrate on the fact that the authorities of some of them realised the changes in their economic nature and function. In Greifswald it was stressed that the town became the industrial and university centre while its significance in sea trade was declining. According to the local authorities, Kołobrzeg was becoming more of a health resort. In 1936, upon the German Commune Legislation, the authorities of the town wanted to change the name of the city into Seestadt Kolberg (the sea city). The name Ostseebad (the Baltic resort) Kolberg was not approved of. It is not possible to determine whether and when the city changed its name, but during the war the letter of the mayor of Kołobrzeg was sent with the following inscription "Das Ostseebad Kolberg". The authorities of Kamień Pomorski in 1937 insisted that the town be referred to as a health resort (Kammin Bad) in compliance with the function it played. 410 adults and 900 children were patients of this health resort³⁸. Irrespectively of the functioning of the ship owner Seedienst Ostpreußen, Ustka also changed its character. In 1939 the fishing fleet in this port diminished by 20 units

³⁶ K. PENCARSKI, "Gospodarka miast rejencji", p. 412.

³⁷ BA Berlin, Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 1694, p. 368. See more in: E. WŁODARCZYK, *Handel morski i porty*, p. 20.

³⁸ BA Berlin, Reichsministerium des Innern. Kommunalabteilung, Nr. 1700, pp. 33, 47; Nr. 1636, p. 23.

(from 65 to 45) in comparison with the year 1920, while the number of health resort patients grew. In 1938 Ustka was visited by over 3,500 patients³⁹.

In reference to the history of the Pomeranian towns in the 1930s a question arises whether the militarization of the Reich determined their character. Apart from producing munitions, the towns benefited from the extension of the local garrisons and the construction of new barracks. According to the census of 1939, the number of men doing the military service or working in factories shows that "old" garrison towns held the primacy. The county of Usedom-Wollin (where the important role was played by Świnoujście) stood out as the number of people doing the military service and working in factories amounted here to 6,243. Barth was another town with the high number of people involved in the military service (4,553). In Szczecin 3,154 people did the military service, while in Kołobrzeg 3,077. The towns of the former Stralsund District were more militarized since over 3,100 people in Rügen were involved in the military service or worked in factories. In Stralsund over 3,600, and in Greifswald almost 3,300 people were considered to serve for the army or to work in factories. More than 1,500 such people were recorded in Koszalin, Trzebiatów and Demmin. In Lębork there were fewer than 1,500 employees of the army. What is surprising is the low number of such workers in the frontier counties such as the county of Drawsko and Pomerania, and the county of Bytów. On the other hand, 1,235 people recorded in the county of Choszczno were deployed in Brzeziny and Zwarków. The analysis of the data concerning women doing the military service or the service in factories shows the highest number of females in Barth (1,031). In Lębork 301 women were involved in the service for the army, while in Bytów – 179⁴⁰. The degree of militarization of Pomeranian towns was high only in some of them. What is surprising, though, is the fact that the towns with the highest degree of militarization were not situated in the frontier territory bordering with Poland.

In 1939 no serious changes took place in the hierarchy of importance of the Pomeranian towns as significant centres of the economic life of the province. The capital city of the province, Szczecin, had the leading role. After the creation of the so called "Great Szczecin", in the city there were situated the most important (in economic and military-strategic terms) industrial plants

³⁹ Józef LINDMAJER, *W ramach państwa prusko-niemieckiego od początku XIX wieku do 1945 roku*, [in:] Józef LINDMAJER, Teresa MACHURA, Zygmunt SZULTKA, *Dzieje Ustki*, Słupsk 1985, pp. 109, 114; Zygmunt SZOPOWSKI, *Małe porty Pomorza Zachodniego do czasów drugiej wojny światowej*, Poznań 1962, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Detailed compilation see in: Dariusz K. CHOJECKI, Andrzej GIZA, Edward WŁODARCZYK, *Atlas Historyczny Pomorza Zachodniego*, t. 2: *Atlas gmin Pomorza Zachodniego w 1939 roku. Demografia – społeczeństwo – gospodarka*, Szczecin 2017, sheets (maps) no. 4 and 6.

including Hydriewerke A.G. Pölitz. Two main cities of the former Stralsund District, Stralsund and Greifswald, maintained their position. In the Koszalin District the major role was played by Słupsk, where there operated over 40% (40.1%) economic entities (395) belonging to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of the Koszalin District. Two other big towns of the Koszalin District, Koszalin and Kołobrzeg, clearly gave way to Słupsk. In the former there operated 249 companies belonging to the Chamber, while in the latter – 245. Other towns of the district were much less developed economically. For example, Bytów had only 74 companies. The dominant position of Słupsk was also confirmed by the size of transshipping of goods in the railway. In 1938 almost 400,000 tons were transhipped, whilst in the port of Kołobrzeg – 270,000 tons, and in Koszalin – only 200,000 tons⁴¹.

One of the most interesting elements of the history of the Pomeranian towns in the discussed period became the problems of the municipal housing. On the one hand, the magistrate tried to control the process and set up Offices for the Construction of Flats (Wohnungsbauamt); on the other hand, they gave their permission to conduct economic activity by housing cooperatives and construction companies, the aim of which was to satisfy the needs of various professional groups. In Szczecin there were five companies of this kind; in Koszalin at the end of the 1920s eight housing companies were registered, while in Słupsk – two. Similar institutions existed in several other Pomeranian towns, including Greifswald⁴². The Szczecin Housing Company (Stettiner Wohnstättengesellschaft m.b.H.) played a major role in the development of housing. It operated from 1928 and constructed houses in Szczecin, Drawsko, Grimmen, Saßnitz and Miastko. These houses were normally erected for office workers. After 1933 the company continued its economic activity despite changing circumstances. The biggest number of houses was built in Szczecin (e.g. in 1937 – 15 houses), later three houses in Saßnitz and one house in Drawsko, Grimmen and Miastko. In 1938 the company received the commission to build a house with four flats in Greifswald⁴³.

⁴¹ Karl-Heinz PEGEL, *Stolp in Pommern – eine ostdeutsche Stadt: ein Buch über unsere pomersche Heimat*, Lübeck 1977, pp. 189, 196; *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, Bd. 576 (*Die Seeschifffahrt im Jahre 1939*).

⁴² Mieczysław STELMACH, *Miejska administracja budowlana i struktury organizacyjne budownictwa mieszkaniowego*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. 3, pp. 537–542; K. PENCARSKI, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 330–333; Andrzej CZARNIK, *Lata republiki weimarskiej i III Rzeszy (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Historia Słupska*, ed. Stanisław GIERSEWSKI, Słupsk 1981, p. 348; Bernfried LICHTNAU, *Architektur in Greifswald von 1900 bis in die Gegenwart*, [in:] *Greifswald. Geschichte der Stadt*, p. 490 f.

⁴³ BA Berlin, Rechnungshof des Deutschen Reiches, Nr. 6382 (*Stettiner Wohnstättengesellschaft m.b.H. 1928/29 – 1941*).

The years 1933–1939 constituted the period of the revival of housing in Pomeranian towns. It resulted from the increased subsidies from the state. The government supported building houses, particularly in the suburbs. Entities undertaking the task of the construction of houses received low-interest loans from the state and had to become personally involved in the realization of the project. The settlement in the suburbs was organized by the Provincial Settlement Society (*Pommersche Heimstätte G.m.b.H.*). Its charter said that it carried out social and economic projects and its aim was to reduce the migration of people to towns. Moreover, it was also to support towns in solving their housing problems. The original capital of the Pomeranian company was high and amounted to 4.1 million marks. It should be underlined that military circles were frequent clients of the housing company, which built colonies of houses in garrison towns according to the rule that flats for officers should have higher standards than flats for non-commissioned officers. The housing company also realized the construction of houses for the personnel of *Hydriewerke Pölitz A.G.* The company received other commissions, including the ones for council flats⁴⁴. The development of housing in the Pomeranian towns served to stabilize the demographic-social situation, which influenced the economic development of the towns.

CONCLUSIONS

The above-mentioned considerations allow me to draw a few conclusions:

1. The development of the towns of the Pomeranian Province in the inter-war period confirmed the specific nature of the economic situation of the remaining eastern provinces. It was reflected e.g. in a slower pace of reforms than in other German territories. The economy of Pomerania was on the margin of general development trends. Many industrial plants located in Pomeranian towns were not part of German economic organizations which monopolized the market. Few exceptions concerned only some industrial plants located in the economic territory of Szczecin.

2. The specific nature of the development of Pomeranian towns was determined to a large extent by demographic processes taking place in the province, including migrations. The towns analysed in the article in the periods 1925–1933 and 1933–1939 did not observe the negative migration balance (except Wałcz for the years 1925–1933, and except Goleniów, Lębork, Pase-

⁴⁴ Ibid., Rechnungshof des Deutschen Reiches, Nr. 6288, pp. 1–2; Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin-Dahlem, XV. Hauptabteilung, Rep. 60, Nr. 209 (*Pommersche Heimstätte G.m.b.H. Provinzielle Treuhandstelle für Wohnungs- und Kleinsiedlungen. Geschäftsbericht 1936; Geschäftsbericht 1939*).

walk, Pyrzyce and Szczecin for the years 1933–1939). All the towns of the Pomeranian Province were characterized by the high unemployment rate.

3. Taking into consideration the typology of Pomeranian towns it must be stated that in comparison with the 19th century some of them changed their functions. However, some of them strengthened their character as trade and communication centres. Over 22% of the population earned their living working in trade and communication in Stralsund, Pasewalk, Szczecin, Stargard, Piła, Szczecinek and Słupsk⁴⁵. Greifswald stopped being a commercial port centre becoming more of an industrial town. Kołobrzeg also changed its character. Although it continued to be a port, it became more and more dominated by services connected with recreation and health. Ustka was another town which underwent this kind of evolution. Kamień Pomorski, which was formerly the centre of administration, craft and trade, could now also be included in the group of health resorts with some reservations. However, most changes referred to the category of communication centres. Apart from traditional communication junctions such as Pasewalk and Stargard, now important communication centres became Słupsk, Koszalin, Anklam, Szczecinek, Białogard. Miastko lost its communication role⁴⁶. Yet, it must be stressed that new communication centres were predominantly of local significance. The town which stood out clearly in this picture was Piła, incorporated into Pomerania in 1938, which on a larger scale also carried out international transport services.

4. In the period when the power was held by the NSDAP, Pomeranian towns did not receive any special stimuli to develop. The pace of their development continued to remain slower than in other German towns and cities.

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⁴⁵ Moreover: D. CHOJECKI, A. GIZA, E. WŁODARCZYK, *Atlas*, sheets (maps) no. 23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

CONDITIONS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWNS
IN THE POMERANIAN PROVINCE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Summary

Key words: Pomeranian province, Pomeranian towns, urbanization, economic life, typology of towns

The article analyses the factors determining the development of the towns in the Pomeranian province in the years 1918–1939. The author maintained the typology of the towns from the period prior to WWI. The author also poses the question whether some of those towns changed the function they had played in the 19th century.

The specific character of the development of Pomeranian towns in the period under discussion consisted in its new geopolitical and macroeconomic situation. After 1918 Western Pomerania became the frontier province. This situation determined the migration processes. The administrative authorities of the province indicated that it was also the reason for the economic stagnation. The author maintains that one may agree with the thesis about the migration processes being determined by the new political situation, but it should be rejected in reference to the economic development. The Pomeranian province after WWI found itself on the margin of Germany's economic life, which concerned both average-sized towns and the capital of the province – Szczecin. After the power in Germany had been taken over by the NSDAP and the military preparations had started, only some Pomeranian towns got the impulse to develop. The area which mostly took advantage of the policy was the territory of the so called great Szczecin. The pace of the development of the remaining towns was slower than in the case of other German towns and cities.

Some corrections should be introduced in the typology of Pomeranian towns for the discussed period. They concern mainly the weakening of the function of some ports such as Kołobrzeg and Greifswald. Some other towns started to play the role as communication centres important for the region – this group included Piła, which constituted a significant transport interchange of international importance, used mainly in the contacts with Poland. The deliberations included in the book indicate that economic changes in the towns of the Pomeranian province were very slow.

VORAUSSETZUNGEN FÜR DIE WIRTSCHAFTLICHE ENTWICKLUNG DER STÄDTE
IN DER PROVINZ POMMERN IN DER ZEIT ZWISCHEN DEN WELTKRIEGEN

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselwörter: Provinz Pommern, pommersche Städte, Urbanisierung, Wirtschaftsleben, Typologisierung von Städten

Der Artikel analysiert die Faktoren, die die Entwicklung der Städte in der Provinz Pommern in den Jahren 1918–1939 bedingten. Bei der Analyse wird die Typologisierung

rung von Städten aus der Zeit vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg beibehalten. Zugleich wird die Frage gestellt: Haben einige dieser Städte ihre Funktion geändert, die sie im 19. Jahrhundert erfüllten?

Die Besonderheit in der Entwicklung der pommerschen Städte im besprochenen Zeitraum bestand unter anderem darin, dass sie sich in einer neuen geopolitischen und makroökonomischen Lage befanden. Denn Westpommern wurde nach 1918 zu einer Grenzprovinz. Diese Situation beeinflusste in hohem Maß die Migrationsprozesse. Die Verwaltung der Provinz verwies darauf, dass sie auch der Grund für die wirtschaftliche Stagnation sei. Auch wenn man der These von der Beeinflussung der Migrationsprozesse durch die neue politische Situation zustimmen kann, so ist sie als Grund für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung zu verwerfen. Die Provinz Pommern befand sich nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg am Rande des deutschen Wirtschaftslebens. Das betraf sowohl die mittelgroßen Städte in Pommern wie auch die Hauptstadt der Provinz, also Stettin. Nach der Machtübernahme der NSDAP und dem Beginn von militärischen Vorbereitungen ergaben sich nur für einige Städte in Pommern neue Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten. Hauptsächlich profitierte davon das Gebiet des sog. Groß-Stettin. Das Entwicklungstempo der übrigen Städte blieb weiterhin langsamer als das von anderen deutschen Städten.

Bei der Typologisierung von pommerschen Städten für den besprochenen Zeitraum sollten gewisse Korrekturen vorgenommen werden. Sie betreffen vor allem den Rückgang der Bedeutung einiger als Hafen- und Handelsstädte, hauptsächlich Kolberg und Greifswald. Eine Gruppe anderer Städte gewann als Verkehrszentren an Bedeutung, aber nur als Verkehrszentren von regionalem Rang. Positiv hob sich in dieser Gruppe von Städten Schneidemühl hervor, das 1938 der Provinz angeschlossen wurde und das ein wichtiger Verkehrsknotenpunkt für internationale Verbindungen wurde, hauptsächlich mit Polen. Die angestellten Überlegungen lassen auf ein langsames Tempo der wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen in den Städten der Provinz Posen schließen, manchmal gar auf eine Stagnation.

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