

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15762/ZH.2016.69>

PAWEŁ GUT

(State Archive in Szczecin)

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE BALTIC REGIONS OF PRUSSIA IN 1918–1939*

Key words: Pomerania (Pommern), East Pomerania (Ostpreussen), the Frontier March (Grenzmark), the history of administration, the judicial system, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The end of the First World War on 11 November 1918 changed the Prussian rule over the Baltic lands within the united post-1871 Germany. On the one hand, there were territorial shifts in result of which reborn Poland and Lithuania gained access to the Baltic Sea, reducing some Pomeranian regions of Prussia. On the other hand, the Baltic regions remaining in Prussia and the Reich became part of the new political system of republican Germany and after 1933, like all of the German society, enthusiastically welcomed the Nazi rule of the Third Reich. This process, leading to the disaster of the second world war started by Hitler's Germany, in 1945 brought to an end German rule over significant parts of southern Baltic between the rivers Odra and Niemen.¹

* This article is an English version of the article which appeared in "Zapiski Historyczne", vol. 81, 2016. Translation was part of the task "The publication of 'Zapiski Historyczne' in the English language version, Vol. 81, 2016, books (zeszyt 1–4)" financed as part of the agreement 698/P-DUN/2016 with the resources of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education devoted to the popularization of science.

¹ About the position of Prussia in Germany in the years 1919–1939 see Stanisław SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy. Dzieje państwa i społeczeństwa*, Warszawa 1998 (ed. 2), pp. 394–429; Jan WĄSICKI, *Państwo pruskie na tle ustroju politycznego Rzeszy Niemieckiej w latach 1919–1947*, Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne, vol. 25: 1973, issue 3, pp. 161–219; idem, *Rzecz a kraje niemieckie 1914–1949*, Poznań 1977, passim; Gerhard SCHULZ, *Deutschland seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg 1918–1945*, [in:] Reinhard RÜRUP, Hans-Ulrich WEHLER, Gerhard SCHULZ, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Bd. 3: 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 1965, pp. 409–567; Hagen SCHULZE, *Preußen als Stabilitätsfaktor der deutschen Republik*, [in:] *Preußen in der deutschen Geschichte*, hrsg. v. Dirk BLASIUS, Königstein/Ts. 1980, pp. 311–328. See also: Christopher M. CLARK, *Prusy. Powstanie i upadek 1600–1947*, transl. Jan SZKUDLIŃSKI, Warszawa 2009, pp. 539–579; Heinrich August WINKLER, *Długa droga na Zachód. Dzieje Niemiec*,

The new republican system in Germany, which took shape after the revolution of 9 November 1918, preserved the federal system and although the federal states (Länder) lost their sovereignty to the Reich, they nevertheless retained significant powers in internal policy. The German states' power was restricted primarily in fiscal and tax matters, predominantly controlled by federal government, which became the most significant distributor of national income.² In the new republic Prussia continued to be the largest German province, however, its dominant political position was weakened and Reich's central government's strengthened. However, the rivalry between Prussia and Germany's federal government continued, which was the source of a permanent conflict between the largest province and central government.³

After 1918 the eastern regions of Prussia were referred to, both in politics and propaganda, as the "bleeding wound" of Germany, threatened by the expansion of Poland, aiming at further territorial gains in the German east. It was particularly evident in the case of the Frontier March (Grenzmark) and East Prussia (Ostpreussen),⁴ which was separated from the German mainland. The eastern fringes of the Pomeranian region (Łębork, Bytów, Słupsk) were considered to be endangered lands situated on the "bleeding" border.⁵

vol. 1: 1806–1933, transl. Viktor GROTOWICZ, Marta KOPIJ, Wojciech KUNICKI, Wrocław 2007, pp. 354–510; vol. 2: 1933–1990, transl. Krzysztof HUSZCZA, Viktor GROTOWICZ, Wrocław 2007, pp. 11–120.

² Werner FROTSCHER, Bodo PIEROTH, *Verfassungsgeschichte*, München 2014 (ed. 13), pp. 252–270; S. SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy*, pp. 397–398. About German fiscal administration Niemiec see Karl M. HETTLAGE, *Die Finanzverwaltung*, [in:] *Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte*, hrsg. v. Kurt G. A. JESERICH, Hans POHL, Georg-Christoph von UNRUH, Bd. 4, Stuttgart 1985 (further cit. DVG IV), pp. 177–201.

³ J. WĄSICKI, *Państwo pruskie*, pp. 165–181; Werner FROTSCHER, *Verwaltungsorganisation und Reichsreform*, [in:] DVG IV, p. 131; Ludwig RICHTER, "Der Nachteil liegt hier in System". *Preußen und das Reich zwischen 1918 und 1925*, [in:] *Preußens Weg in die politische Moderne. Verfassung – Verwaltung – politische Kultur zwischen Reform und Reformblockade*, hrsg. v. Bärbel HOLTZ, Hartwin SPENKUCH, Berlin 2001, pp. 397–428; Helmut KLAUS, *Der Dualismus Preußen versus Reich in der Weimarer Republik in Politik und Verwaltung*, Mönchengladbach 2006.

⁴ Erich MURAWSKI, *Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen und der Regierungsbezirk Westpreußen*, Berlin 1930 (ed. 2), passim; Tadeusz CIEŚLAK, *Pomorze Wschodnie w XIX i XX wieku ze specjalnym uwzględnieniem podziałów administracyjnych*, Olsztyn 1966, passim; Klaus von der GROEBEN, *Provinz Ostpreussen*, [in:] *Verwaltungsgeschichte Ostdeutschlands 1815–1945*, hrsg. v. Gerd HEINRICH, Friedrich-Wilhelm HENNING, Kurt G. A. JESERICH, Stuttgart 1992 (further cit. VO), pp. 227–236.

⁵ Bogdan DOPIERAŁA, *Tak zwane „niebezpieczeństwo polskie” na Pomorzu Zachodnim w dwudziestolecu międzywojennym*, [in:] *Szkice z dziejów Pomorza*, ed. Gerard LABUDA, vol. 2, Warszawa 1961, pp. 507–554; idem, *Wokół miejsca północno-wschodnich prowincji pruskich w polskiej syntezie dziejów Niemiec*, [in:] *Problemy metodologiczne dziejów Niemiec*, ed. Antoni CZUBIŃSKI, Poznań 1978, pp. 138–141; Kyra T. INACHIN, *Durchbruch zur demokratischen Moderne. Die Landtage von Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz und Pommern während der Weimarer Republik*, Küchenshagen 2004, pp. 176–185; eadem, *Nationalstaat und Regionale Selbstbehauptung. Die preussische Provinz Pommern 1815–1945*, Bremen 2005, pp. 255–352.

Despite numerous reforms launched by the federal government in the first years of the newly established republican system of Germany, Prussia managed to preserve many unique solutions in their political system. The system of administration varied not only throughout the German states but also in state and local administrations in various parts of Prussia, which lacked a unified system of government in rural and urban municipalities.⁶

Such state of diversity and of certain balance between Prussia and the Reich continued until the early 1930s. Later, as a result of the “presidential” rule of Paul von Hindenburg, Prussia, which did not want to yield to the pressure of Nazis and the Junker establishment, lost its internal autonomy. Following the president’s decree from 20 July 1932, Prussia was brought under central government’s control, unintentionally becoming a sort of heroic defender of democracy.⁷

The rule of a team of appointed administrators in Prussia facilitated the taking over of power in Germany by Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP after 30 January 1933. Soon afterwards the Nazis started to implement their own vision of the state, which consisted in the dismantling of the state-specific system and the standardization (*Gleichschaltung*) of all aspects of social and political organization. The Hitlerian laws from 1933–1935 destroyed the federal system of Germany (30 January 1934) and the administration in the states, including Prussia and its regions, was transformed into a hierarchical system controlled by Hitler as the leader of the German nation. In the end, after the mid-1930s, the Pomeranian regions of Prussia, although formally belonging to the province, became part of the centralized Nazi German state which was preparing for the conquest of Europe.⁸

In 1918–1939 the Pomeranian regions of Prussia consisted of Pomerania (Pommern), divided into the administrative districts (Regierungbezirk) of Stralsund, Szczecin, Koszalin, as well as East Prussia (Ostpreussen), divided into administrative districts of Królewiec, Gumbinnen/Gąbin, Olsztyn, Kwidzyn. The region should also include the province of the Frontier March Posen-West Prussia (Grenzmark Posen-Westpreussen), established in 1922, with the administrative

⁶ W. FROTSCHER, *Verwaltungsorganisation*, pp. 124–125. In Prussian towns there were 3 types of local administration, in the eastern provinces it was the magistrate system based on the system of two chambers (*Zweikammersystem*); Kurt G. A. JESERICH, *Kommunalverwaltung und Kommunalpolitik*, [in:] DVG IV, p. 493.

⁷ Arnold BRECHT, *Warum in den Abgrund? (1932–1933)*, [in:] *Preussen in der deutschen Geschichte*, pp. 335–348; J. WĄSICKI, *Rzecz o kraje niemieckie 1914–1949*, pp. 155–162, 197–214; S. SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy*, pp. 400, 404–405, 410–412; Edward JĘDRZEJEWSKI, *Hitlerowska koncepcja administracji państwowej 1933–1945. Studium polityczno-prawne*, Wrocław 1975, p. 92; Jost DELBRÜCK, *Reichspräsident und Reichskanzler*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 146–147; Ch. CLARK, op. cit., pp. 556–568.

⁸ Despite the liquidation of the federal system in Germany by the Nazis there remained a shadow of the Prussian state in the position of the prime minister held by Hermann Göring, and some offices with the predicative “Prussian,” e.g. the Prussian state archive (Preussisches Staatsarchiv), see S. SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy*, pp. 414–416. About the concept of the political system and the administration of Nazi Germany see Franciszek RYSZKA, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego. Rzecz o systemie państwa i prawa Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Wrocław 1985 (ed. 3), passim; E. JĘDRZEJEWSKI, op. cit., passim.

district of Schneidemühl. Its northern section became part of Pomerania (Regierungsbzirk of Piła).⁹

2. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POMERANIAN REGIONS OF THE PRUSSIAN STATE IN 1918–1939

2. 1. PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

2. 1. 1. THE OBERPRÄSIDENT AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The provincial administration was divided into two branches: local and state ones. The latter was represented by the Oberpräsident (i.e. the upper president), the authorities of administrative districts, starosts as well as authorities of general and special administration controlled by them. After the First World War the powers of the Oberpräsident were based on the regulations from 1825, 1875 and 1883.¹⁰ The Oberpräsident was a representative of the federal government in the state and supervised provincial administration whose competencies reached beyond the borders of individual administrative districts (Regierungsbzirk). He was a political official and secured political interests of federal government. In the first years after the establishment of the republican system, he was responsible for implementing it in provinces. It was of particular importance in the regions of East Prussia (Germany) where a significant part of bureaucracy, including high officials and social elites, continued to demonstrate monarchical sympathies.¹¹

Apart from the general administration, the Oberpräsident's prerogatives included the supervision over matters related to the administration of waterways, sea transport and sea coast (ordered by the central government of Germany), secondary and vocational education (forest and police schools) as well as agricultural administration. Some of these tasks were performed by subordinate provincial

⁹ In 1932 the Straslund region was done away with and its district was incorporated into the Szczecin region. The northern counties of the Frontier March (Piła, Złotów, Wałcz, Czluchów) were incorporated into the Pomeranian province as the Schneidemühl region. It was complemented by two counties Arnswalde and Friedeberg, excluded from Brandenburg (the Frankfurt region and two counties of the Koszalin region (Szczecinek, Drawsko). About the administrative divisions of the Baltic provinces of Prussia in the years 1919–1939 see Paweł GUT, *Podziały administracyjne pomorskich prowincji Prus w latach 1918–1939*, Szczeciński Informator Archiwalny, no. 20: 2007, pp. 89–102.

¹⁰ Horst MÖLLER, *Die preußischen Oberpräsidenten der Weimarer Republik als Verwaltungselite*, [in:] *Die preußischen Oberpräsidenten 1815–1945*, hrsg. v. Klaus SCHWABE, Boppard 1985, pp. 183–184; Heinrich Bernhard BÖHMEKE, *Die Verwaltung des Regierungsbezirkes Marienwerder 1920–1945*, Bonn 1982, pp. 47–50.

¹¹ In Weimar Republic the Oberpräsident was appointed by the Prussian government, see H. MÖLLER, *Die preußischen Oberpräsidenten*, pp. 184, 186; Hans BRANIG, *Die Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Pommern*, Baltische Studien N.F., Bd. 46: 1959, pp. 103–105; Horst MÖLLER, *Preußen*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 551–552; Stefan HARTMANN, *Ostpreußen und Regierungsbezirk Westpreußen*, [in:] *Handbuch der Geschichte Ost- und Westpreußens*, hrsg. v. Ernst OPGENOORTH, Lüneburg 1994, pp. 26, 29, 30; S. SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy*, p. 408; K. VON DER GROEBEN, op. cit., pp. 225–226.

authorities: waterways authorities (Wasserbaudirektion),¹² provincial school boards (Provinzialschulkollegium)¹³ or state agricultural authorities (Landeskulturamt).¹⁴ Moreover, the Oberpräsident supervised occupational associations: farmers, craftsmen, trade, medical and pharmaceutical associations as well as financial institution with state capital or institutions subsidized from public funds, e.g. annuity banks.¹⁵

Apart from the above mentioned, the Oberpräsident concentrated primarily on the control and supervision of the provincial government. It was done, among others, through leading the provincial council (Provinzialrat), which consisted also of one more representative of central administration appointed by the minister of internal affairs and 5 members of the provincial committee.¹⁶ Moreover, as state commissioner, the Oberpräsident, following the Prime Minister's decision to summon the Landtag, opened and closed its sessions.

The reforms after the First World War did not bring major changes in the system of provincial government, which was established by the provincial association (Provinzialverband). The changes concerned primarily the elections. The law from 3 December 1920 introduced democratic elections in place of the practice of choosing representatives from among the members of the regional diets and town councils. New representatives were elected by the inhabitants of the province every 4 years in universal, anonymous, equal and direct elections.¹⁷ The provincial

¹² Jürgen SALZWEDEL, *Aufgaben des Reichsverkehrsministeriums*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 270–272; H. KLAUS, op. cit., pp. 260–332.

¹³ Provincial school boards originally existed only in Królewiec and Szczecin. They were set up for the Frontier March in 1923. By 1923 the secondary schools had been supervised by appropriate offices from adjacent provinces, from Szczecin for the counties: Człuchów, Powiat Nadnotecki, Piła, Wałcz, Złotów; from Berlin for the counties of Skwierzyna and Międzyrzecz; from Wrocław for the counties of Babi Most and Międzyrzecz, see Jan WĄSICKI, *Prowincja Grenzmark Posen Westpreussen 1918–1933*, Zielona Góra 1967, p. 34.

¹⁴ Home offices of agriculture as home offices dealing with agriculture were set up in 1919 instead of general committees. For the north-eastern provinces of Prussia there were set up two such offices in Frankfurt Oder, which apart from Brandenburg included Pomerania and the Frontier March; and in Königsberg for Eastern Prussia. The offices were subordinated to the local Oberpräsident. In each province there operated offices of agriculture (Kulturamt), normally one for 2–3 counties, see. *Gesetz über Landeskulturbehörden. Vom 3. Juni 1919*, [in:] *Preußische Gesetz Sammlung* (further cit. GS), 1919, pp. 101–112; *Handbuch über den Preussischen Staat*, Jg. 1922 (further cit. Handbuch), pp. 124, 168.

¹⁵ H. MÖLLER, *Die preussischen Oberpräsidenten*, pp. 185–186; S. HARTMANN, op. cit., pp. 24, 31; Hans FENSKE, *Die Verwaltung Pommerns 1815–1945. Aufbau und Ertrag*, Köln–Weimar–Wien 1993, pp. 80–81.

¹⁶ H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁷ Elections to the Pomeranian landtag took place on the basis of the act of 3 December 1920, when the elections to a similar assembly took place in Eastern Prussia on the basis of the amended act of 7 October 1925. Internal rules of provincial dietines concerning the election of the authorities of the assemblies were also changed. The number of deputies was defined on the basis of the number of the inhabitants of the province. In the Pomeranian landtag in 1921 there were 71 deputies as against the previous number of 91 deputies. After the new general census of 1925 their number rose

government ceased to be an association of districts and cities with district rights and became a communal association of the inhabitants of the province, and the provincial Landtag a representation of all the inhabitants of the province.¹⁸

The sessions of the diets were held in the capitals of the province: Królewiec, Piła (until 1928 in Obrzyca) and Szczecin, where most executive authorities of local government were established. The local government was led by state starosts (Landeshauptmann) elected by the provincial diet for 6- or 12-year terms. The Landeshauptmann was in charge of the provincial committee and local government administration officials. The provincial committee (Provinzialausschuss) was the executive body of the local government and it prepared drafts of resolutions and statutes for the diet, as well as supervised their implementation after they were voted through. It consisted of the starost as well as 12 (13 since 1923) members in Szczecin and Królewiec and, since 1922, 8 in Piła, elected by the diet from among its deputies.¹⁹ The direct implementation of the decisions of the diet and committee, as well as the administration of the communal affairs of the province, was the responsibility of the state starost and the officials under his authority – state councillors (Landesräte) who supervised the departments of local government administration (in Szczecin there were 12 departments, in Piła – 10 departments), e.g. for social welfare (Landeswohlfahrtamt).²⁰

The provincial government was responsible for the administration of property and communal budget, managing hospitals and medical institutions, welfare services and services for the disabled, transport-related matters, electric energy supply, vocational schooling as well as the development of agriculture and industry, science, culture and arts. Some of the above were ordered by central government, to be enforced by local government. The Weimar Republic was the golden age of provincial government. After the First World War social welfare became particularly

to 76 only to fall down to 75 in 1929. In Eastern Prussia in the new political system in the landtag there were 87 deputies, and in the Frontier March only 30 representatives of the local community, see Landesarchiv Greifswald, Rep. 60 Oberpräsidium von Pommern, sign. 85, ch. 66–74; *Gesetz über die Neuordnung der kommunalen Verfassung und Verwaltung in der Ostmark. Vom 21. Juli 1922*, [in:] GS, 1922, pp. 171–177 (§ 7); *Fünfzig Jahre Provinzialverband von Pommern*, hrsg. v. Landeshauptmann der Provinz Pommern, Stettin 1926, pp. 3, 8–9; Kyra T. INACHIN, *Nationalstaat*, p. 275; J. WĄSICKI, *Prowincja*, p. 33; S. HARTMANN, op. cit., p. 26; Kurt G. A. JESERICH, *Die preußischen Provinzen. Ein Beitrag zur Verwaltungs- und Verfassungsreform*, Berlin 1931, pp. 76–89.

¹⁸ K. G. A. JESERICH, *Die preußischen Provinzen*, pp. 6–9; K. VON DER GROEBEN, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁹ *Gesetz über die Neuordnung der kommunalen Verfassung und Verwaltung in der Ostmark. Vom 21. Juli 1922*, [in:] GS, 1922, pp. 171–177 (§ 8). Moreover, in Kwidzyn until 1922 the Provincial Department for Western Prussia, and in Piła for the Poznań Province, see Handbuch, Jg. 1922, pp. 137, 157, 230, 245; J. WĄSICKI, *Prowincja*, p. 32.

²⁰ *Fünfzig Jahre Provinzialverband von Pommern*, pp. 12, 137–138 (Anlage 5); Georg-Christoph VON UNRUH, *Provinz Pommern*, [in:] VO, p. 618; Kurt G. A. JESERICH, *Provinz Grenzmark Posen-Westpreussen*, [in:] VO, p. 554.

important, including the care for children and youth. A network of welfare centres in counties was established for the purpose (Kreiswohlfahrtsamt).²¹

Moreover, in accordance with the constitution of the Reich from 18 August 1919 (Article 63, Abs. 1) and the Prussian constitution from 30 November 1920 (Articles 32–33) each province delegated one representative to the Reich's Council (Reichsrat) and a few to the Prussian State Council (Preußischer Staatsrat). To the latter body Pomerania delegated 4 representatives and 4 deputies, East Prussia 5 representatives and 5 deputies, and the Frontier March 3 representatives (and 3 deputies). They were elected by the diet of each province.²² Provincial associations also had an advisory capacity in the appointment of the Oberpräsident and presidents of the district authority (Bezirksregierung) (Article 86 of the Prussian constitution).

The 1932 regulations introduced by von Papen's government brought changes in the provincial government. In accordance with the directive from 3 September the Oberpräsident was the representative of central government in the province and supervised provincial economic, political, social and cultural development as well as the proper functioning of administration, law and state government. In order to achieve that, the Oberpräsident had the right to instruct authorities and issue directives aiming to prevent any negative developments. The official was also the leader of the provincial council. The new regulations eliminated the autonomy of school and agricultural administration as well. The provincial school boards in Królewiec, Piła and Szczecin as well as state agricultural authorities in Królewiec and Frankfurt (Oder) (for Pomerania and the Frontier March) were closed down and their competencies were transferred directly to the Oberpräsident, who established school and agricultural committees in order to administer them. Moreover, the Oberpräsident ceased to be an intermediary between the district authority and the central government with its ministries. The Oberpräsident was supposed to be again the government's commissioner in the province and the administrator in matters concerning more than one administrative district.²³

In the years of the Weimar Republic each of the three provinces mentioned above had its own Oberpräsident. Such state of affairs lasted until Nazi laws concerning the unification of administration and the prerogatives of the Oberpräsident were passed on 15 December 1933. In the Frontier March, after F. Bülow retired, his associate Hans von Meibom was appointed to the post for a short time.

²¹ *Fünfzig Jahre Provinzialverband von Pommern*, p. 43; G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Provinz Pommern*, p. 625; K. T. INACHIN, *Durchbruch zur demokratischen Moderne*, p. 146; eadem, *Nationalstaat*, pp. 273–274.

²² *Gesetz über die Wahlen zum Staatsrate vom 16. Dezember 1920*, [in:] GS, 1921, p. 90 (par. 1); Handbuch, Jg. 1926, pp. 104, 110–111; K. T. INACHIN, *Durchbruch zur demokratischen Moderne*, pp. 145–146; eadem, *Nationalstaat*, p. 274.

²³ *Gesetz zur Vereinfachung und Verbilligung der Verwaltung. Vom 3. September*, [in:] GS, pp. 283–293; § 1, 3, 4, 8; H. MÖLLER, *Die preußischen Oberpräsidenten*, p. 216.

However, since he was not supported by the Nazis, he was soon retired and the next Oberpräsident for the Frontier March was not appointed and his competencies were transferred to the Oberpräsident of neighbouring Brandenburg, who was also the Gauleiter for the frontier province.²⁴

After the Nazis took over there were more changes in the provincial administration, strictly connected with the idea of a unified and uniform nation and state led by a strong leader. First, apart from the Nazification of the bureaucracy, the provincial self-government was eliminated. New elections to the Landtags were organized on 12 March 1933 and later, following the regulations from 24 May and 17 July of the same year, the competencies of provincial diets were transferred to provincial committees and the former ceased to exist.²⁵ Soon afterwards provincial committees were also eliminated, in accordance with the regulations concerning the prerogatives of the Oberpräsidenten from 15 December, and the Oberpräsidenten took control of all matters of provincial communal administration. Afterwards, the administration of the provincial association and the state starost just implemented the directives of the Oberpräsident, who was the leader of both the state office and provincial authority (*Der Oberpräsident der Provinz – Verwaltung des Provinzialverbandes*).²⁶

The regulations from the end of 1933 confirmed that the Oberpräsident was the representative of central government in the province, responsible for its internal administration and control of all aspects of socio-political life (Article I). The Oberpräsident had two kinds of prerogatives. Some were related to the matters of state administration enforced by his office, whose structure was first extended in 1938 to 9 departments but reduced to 6 after the reorganization in 1939, although with numerous committees and subordinate offices. Other prerogatives concerned the communal matters of the province. In order to exercise his duties, the Ober-

²⁴ J. WĄSICKI, *Provincja*, p. 46; *Grundriss zur deutschen Verwaltungsgeschichte 1815–1945*, Reihe A: *Preußen*, hrsg. v. Walther HUBATSCH, vol. 2, part 1: *Provinz (Grossherzogtum) Posen*, bearb. v. Dieter STÜTTGEN, Marburg 1975; vol. 2: *Provinz Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen*, bearb. v. Walther HUBATSCH, Marburg 1975, pp. 104, 110; K. G. A. JESERICH, *Provinz Grenzmark*, pp. 571–575; Handbuch, Jg. 1934, p. 387.

²⁵ Despite the landtags' being taken over by the Nazis on the strength of the act of 24 May 1933, their competences were reduced (they were not allowed to appoint members of the Prussian state council, decrees of communal and political nature) to the benefit of the provincial department, see *Gesetz über die Übertragung von Zuständigkeiten der Provinziallandtage auf die Provinzialausschüsse*. Vom 24. Mai 1933, [in:] GS, pp. 189–190; *Gesetz über die Übertragung von Zuständigkeiten der Provinzial- (Kommunal-) landtage, der Verbandsversammlung des Siedlungsverbandes Ruhrkohlenbezirk und der Kreistage auf die Provinzial- (Landes-) Ausschüsse, den Verbandsausschuss und die Kreis-ausschüsse*. Vom 17. Juli 1933, [in:] GS, pp. 257–258; K. G. A. JESERICH, *Provinz Grenzmark*, p. 573; F. RYSZKA, op.cit., p. 301.

²⁶ *Gesetz über die Erweiterung der Befugnisse der Oberpräsidenten*. Vom 15. Dezember 1933, [in:] GS, pp. 477–478, art. I–II; Manfred SCHULTZE-LOTZ, *Ein Überblick über die Tätigkeit der Provinzialverwaltung von Pommern in den Jahren 1933 bis 1945*, Baltische Studien N.F., Bd. 49: 1962–1963, pp. 70–71.

präsident used the already mentioned state starost and the administration of the provincial association led by him.²⁷

The position of the Oberpräsident as a state official and central government's commissioner in the province, confirmed in the law from 15 December 1933 (Article I, II) was further strengthened by appointing him as representative of Reich's government and equipping him with the prerogatives equal to those of the governors of the Reich (27 November 1934).²⁸ The power of the Oberpräsident, however, resulted from the fact that he was also the Gauleiter of the NSDAP in the province. The process of combining the two functions was the fastest in East Prussia, where already on 2 July 1933 Gauleiter Erich Koch was appointed the Oberpräsident. In Pomerania the personal union became a fact after Franz Schwede was appointed to the two positions on 22 July 1934. In the Frontier March the two functions were united after the position of the Oberpräsident was transferred to Gauleiter and Oberpräsident of Brandenburg Wilhelm Kube.²⁹

In fulfilling his function, the Oberpräsident could rely on the advisory board of the provincial council (consisting of the local members of the state council), the president of the district authority as well as high NSDAP, SS and SA officials. In East Prussia the council consisted of 15 members, in Pomerania of 11 and in the Frontier March of only 5 representatives of the establishment.³⁰ In fact, these councils soon became mere facades and stopped to act as advisory boards while the Oberpräsident-Gauleiters had full power in the province, leading all the departments of state and communal administration as well as an extensive party administration. Moreover, the Oberpräsident was the representative of all pleni-

²⁷ Handbuch, Jg. 1934, pp. 179, 345, 387; Handbuch, Jg. 1938, pp. 152–159, 260–265; Handbuch, Jg. 1939, pp. 158–168, 276–284; G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Provinz Pommern*, p. 569; M. SCHULTZE-PLOTZIUS, op. cit., pp. 71–100.

²⁸ The Reichsstatthalter was appointed in 1933 in order to control and administer different federal states. For this reason, Hitler issued several decrees e.g. of 7 and 25 April, 26 May and 14 October 1933. In the subsequent the competence of the Reichsstatthalter were modified, and in November 1934 their competences were extended to Oberpräsidenten, see *Zweite Verordnung über den Neuaufbau des Reichs. Vom 27. November 1934*, [in:] Reichsgesetzblatt (further cit. RGB) I, 1934, p. 1190.

²⁹ E. JEŃDRZEJEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 99, 127–128; Andrzej CZARNIK, *Ruch hitlerowski na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1933–1939*, Poznań–Słupsk 1969, p. 34; idem, *Stosunki polityczne na Pomorzu Zachodnim w okresie republiki weimarskiej 1919–1933*, Poznań 1983, pp. 100–103; H. BRANIG, op. cit., p. 105; Bogdan FRANKIEWICZ, *Władze hitlerowskie w prowincji pomorskiej w latach 1937–1945*, Przegląd Zachodniopomorski, vol. 16: 1972, issue 3, p. 69; Fritz GAUSE, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preußen*, Bd. 3, Köln–Wien 1971, p. 124; Bohdan KOZIEŁŁO-POKLEWSKI, *Likwidacja samorządu terytorialnego w Prusach w okresie hitlerowskim*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo Warmii. Ustrój – prawo – administracja*, ed. Stanisław ACHREMCIK, Krystyna ORŁOWSKA-WOJCZULANIS, Olsztyn 2006, pp. 40–44; Stanisław ACHREMCIK, *Historia Warmii i Mazur*, vol. 2: 1772–2010, Olsztyn 2011, p. 988.

³⁰ *Gesetz über den Provinzialrat. Vom 17. Juli 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 254–257. The advisory character of the council was confirmed by the decree of 15 December 1933 (art. II 5). After incorporating the Frontier March into Pomerania the provincial council was extended to 19 members, see B. FRANKIEWICZ, op. cit., p. 71.

potentiaries for social or economic affairs appointed at the central level.³¹ His role and significance was confirmed in the regulations from 30 January 1935 as well as later directives issued during the preparations for the war in 1939, which were further extended during the war.³²

2. 1. 2. DISTRICT AUTHORITY (BEZIRKSREGIERUNG)

The Bezirksregierung continued to be the most important authority of provincial administration in Prussia. The district authorities were usually divided into 3 departments: presidial (general), for churches and schools as well as for domains and forests. Only the district authority in Straslund had two departments. The duties of the Bezirksregierung included the supervision over internal administration of the district, the police, construction and sanitary supervision, medicine, veterinary medicine, transport, construction, industry and trade, primary and vocational education, supervision over religious associations and churches, administration of state property and forests, culture and arts, cadastre administration and agriculture.³³ Some competencies were transferred between the departments, e.g. in 1920 the financial matters were transferred from the department for domains and forests to the presidial department.³⁴ In 1924 the same was done with the cadastre administration.³⁵ In the same year the district authority in Kwidzyn was deprived of the forest administration in the district and it was transferred to the Bezirksregierung in Królewiec. Moreover, all the district authorities (Department III) lost control over direct taxes (income, stamp, compensation and inheritance taxes), which in 1919 became the responsibility of the fiscal administration subordinate to the government of the Reich and not state governments.³⁶

Moreover, district authorities collaborated with local government's authority, namely the district committee (Bezirksausschuss), which issued administra-

³¹ B. FRANKIEWICZ, op. cit., p. 69. Only the police forces were beyond the authority of Oberpräsident-Gauleiters as they were the only forces subordinated directly to Himmler as the Head of the German Police. Still, Oberpräsident had prerogatives to issue police orders for police units and to receive reports from the police administration (Ordnungspolizei).

³² *Reichsstatthaltergesetz. Vom 30. Januar 1935*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 65–66; Dieter REBENTISCH, *Innere Verwaltung*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 744–750.

³³ H. MÖLLER, *Preußen*, pp. 553–554; Mieczysław STELMACH, *Kancelaria pruskich urzędów administracji państwowej na przykładzie rejencji w latach 1808–1945*, Szczecin 1981, pp. 67–72; Adalbert Josef NOBIS, *Die Preußische Verwaltung des Regierungsbezirks Allenstein 1905–1945*, München 1987, pp. 35–46. See also S. HARTMANN, op. cit., p. 29.

³⁴ The main Regierungshauptkasse dealt with collecting charges for administrative activities, revenues from state estates (forests, domains), and also the redistribution of the revenues in a form of subventions in the budget.

³⁵ Within each Regierungsbezirk there operated a Katasterbüro, which administered catastral issues, while in the district of the Regierungsbezirk it supervised catastral offices in the counties (Katasteramt).

³⁶ M. STELMACH, *Kancelaria*, pp. 67–71; Georg BITTER, *Die preußische Regierung zu Königsberg 1918–1945*, Leer 1988, p. 24.

tive decisions. It also served as an administrative court of second instance and disciplinary authority for communal officials. Furthermore, there was the higher insurance office (Oberversicherungsamt) and, after 1919, the higher insurance court (Oberversicherungsgericht). These authorities were led by the president of the Bezirksregierung and they also included district authority officials as well as representatives of provincial government and professional council.³⁷

In the 1920s the Bezirksregierung was still a collegial authority and decisions were made at meetings in departments and authorities (district committee), although some decisions in the presidial department were made solely by the president of the district authority. The directive from 3 September 1932 concerning the simplification of provincial administration in Prussia abolished the collegiality of decisions made in the district authorities. Afterwards, all decisions were made by the president of the Bezirksregierung, who could transfer his prerogatives to subordinate officials. Moreover, the presidents of the district authority became independent of the Oberpräsident's control, the process starting already at the end of the 19th century.³⁸

After the Nazis took power, there were further changes in the organization of district authorities. One consisted in depriving the district committee of its legislative functions and reducing it to an administrative court of second instance (15 December 1933).³⁹ Moreover, the departments for domains and forests lost control over the forests and new departments were established for their administration. On 1 December 1933 forest administration was transferred from the district authority to the state forest inspector appointed in every administrative district (Landforstmeister für den Regierungsbezirk). The official supervised the network of the existing forest inspectorates, divided into forest administration districts and regions.⁴⁰

The district authorities, as provincial authorities of state administration, directly supervised county and regional authorities (county starosties, land construction authorities, revenue offices), representing Prussia as one of the German states.

³⁷ Irena RADTKE, *Przemiany administracyjno-ustrojowe b. Rejencji w Pile i powikłania zespołowej spuścizny aktowej*, Archeion, vol. 46: 1967, pp. 14–15.

³⁸ *Verordnung zur Vereinfachung und Verbilligung der Verwaltung. Vom 3. September 1932*, [in:] GS, pp. 283–293 (§ 5–6); G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 24.

³⁹ *Gesetz über die Anpassung der Landesverwaltung an die Grundsätze des nationalsozialistischen Staates. Vom 15. Dezember 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 479–483 (§ 1–2, 5); E. JEŃDRZEJEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 102–103.

⁴⁰ The creation of a separate forestry administration was connected with Hermann Göring's aspirations. He, apart from holding numerous military posts and in the administration, subjugated to himself the administration of forests in Prussia, and later in whole Germany, see *Gesetz über Landesforstverwaltung. Vom 1. Dezember 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 417–418; Jobst von SCHÖNFELDT, *Die Allgemeine und innere Verwaltung*, Berlin–Wien 1943 (ed. 2), pp. 39, 50, 114; A. J. NOBIS, op. cit., p. 49; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 93. The offices of home inspectors of forests were also created in Koszalin, Piła, Szczecinin Pomerania and the Frontier March, in Gumbinnen (Gąbin), Królewiec, Olsztyn in Eastern Prussia. The forests in the Marienwerder Regierungsbezirk went under the authority of the inspector in Królewiec, see Handbuch, Jg. 1939, pp. 191–194, 302–305.

Moreover, the presidents of the district authority controlled the police administration in their districts, including the presidiums and authorities of the police force as well as, in theory, the Gestapo agencies, which were supposed to report to Berlin and receive directives and orders from presidents. In reality, after 1936 the police administration led by Heinrich Himmler became independent of internal state administration.⁴¹ Simultaneously, the district authorities and their leaders gradually came under informal supervision of the Oberpräsidenten-Gauleiters, which was confirmed in the regulations from August of 1939.⁴²

2. 1. 3. THE POLICE

Policing was done by several types of police forces, which were financed with both state and municipal funds. Policing was the responsibility of the municipalities, except for the cities, however, which had state police presidiums or authorities (Polizei-Präsidium/Direktion) in Królewiec, Elbląg (from 1 February 1927) and Szczecin as well as in Piła and Tylża (from 1 February 1927).⁴³ In the countryside, it was the responsibility of the Landrat, which was done by district leaders (Amtsvorsteher) as members of local police (Orstpolizeibehörde) and military police (Gendarmerie/Landjäger).⁴⁴ The latter was reorganized in 1919 and ceased to deal with military affairs, becoming part of civilian police administration controlled by the ministry of internal affairs.⁴⁵

Moreover, due to the threat of revolution, in 1920 security police (Sicherheitspolizei) was established which, however, in 1928 was transformed into protective police (Schutzpolizei). The new structure consisted of paramilitaries and served to quell riots and demonstrations.⁴⁶ The units, that is commands (Kommando), were

⁴¹ According to the act of 1936, the heads of the Gestapo posts played the role of political notifiers for the presidents of the Regierungsbezirk and the Oberpräsidenten, see *Gesetz über die Geheime Staatspolizei. Vom 10. Februar 1936*, [in:] GS, pp. 21–22 (§ 5); S. HARTMANN, op. cit., p. 29; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 91.

⁴² E. JEŃDRZEJSKI, op. cit., p. 128. About the superiority of the party activists of NSDAP over clerks on the example of the Regierungsbezirk in Szczecin, see in: Thorsten HINZ, *Die Partei macht Staat*, Baltische Studien N.F., Bd. 92: 2006, pp. 113–134.

⁴³ Moreover in Malbork and Ragneta there existed the offices of Polizeiamt subordinated to the presidium of the police in Elbląg and Tylża, see *Wegweiser durch die Polizei*, Berlin 1931, pp. 12–13, 16–17; H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., pp. 102–103; Marek ANDRZEJSKI, *Życie codzienne*, [in:] *Historia Elbląga*, vol. 4: 1918–1945, ed. Andrzej GROTH, Gdańsk 2002, p. 112.

⁴⁴ Volkmar GÖTZ, *Polizei und Polizeirecht*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 399–400.

⁴⁵ *Verordnung betreffend die Rechtsstellung der Landgendarmerie. Vom 10. März 1919*, [in:] GS, pp. 37–38; *Verordnung über die Regelung der Dienstaufsicht und des Kassenwesens in Landägerei. Vom 9. März 1923*, [in:] ibid., pp. 55–56. The name was changed upon the decision of the Home Secretary of 22 June 1920 p. 293. In each Regierungsbezirk there operated 2–3 inspections of gendarmerie (Landjäger-Inspektionen), e.g. for the Regierungsbezirk of Königsberg (2 inspections) and in Ornetta, Gąbin, Tylża and Goldap, while in the Regierungsbezirk of Szczecin – in Szczecin and Goleniów. They dealt with the substantive supervision of the work of this formation, its armament, training and disciplinary issues, see *Wegweiser durch die Polizei*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ V. GÖTZ, op. cit., pp. 401–402.

stationed not only in the biggest cities of Prussian Pomerania, that is in Szczecin (1157 persons) and Królewiec (1453 persons) but also in bigger towns: in Elbląg (624) with a division in Malbork, in Tylża (442) with a division in Ragnit, moreover, in Insterburg / Wystruć (334), Piła (327) and Koszalin (138). They were controlled by local police presidiums and authorities, and where the police was administered by the municipalities, in Koszalin and Wystruć, by the presidents of the district authorities.⁴⁷ The president of the Bezirksregierung was the highest police authority and controlled all security and law enforcement agencies.

The criminal investigation police was created from order police, because of an increase in, often organized, crime, which often reached beyond local level. Moreover, the new force served as political police and was responsible for protecting the state from internal threats as well as espionage from other countries.⁴⁸ In 1925 state criminal investigation police units (Landeskriminalpolizeistelle) were established at the police presidiums in Szczecin and Królewiec as well as at the Border Police Station in Piła, and in Elbląg, Olsztyn and Tylża. As far as the merit and coordination of their work were concerned, they were supervised by the Central Criminal Investigation Department (Landeskriminalpolizeiamt) which was based at the Police Presidium in Berlin, however, in disciplinary and organizational matters it was a responsibility of the local police administration – presidents and police authorities.⁴⁹ Moreover, local authorities responsible for police administration established criminal departments or employed individual criminal police officers.

The police administration was developed when Hitler and Nazis came to power. Very soon they took control of the existing law enforcement agencies, which were later integrated with the SS.⁵⁰ Already in February of 1933 the Prussian crimi-

⁴⁷ Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie [State Archive in Szczecin] (further cit. AP Szczecin), Prezydium Policji w Szczecinie (further cit. PPS), sign. 27; *Wegweiser durch die Polizei*, pp. 12–13, 19; V. GÖTZ, op. cit., pp. 405–406; M. ANDRZEJEWSKI, *Życie codzienne*, p. 112.

⁴⁸ Despite the existence of the act about the German criminal police of 1922, each federal state organized new service themselves. In Prussia organizational works lasted until the spring of 1925, see AP Szczecin, PPS, sign. 102, ch. 1–43; Rudolf VON BITTER, *Handwörterbuch der preußischen Verwaltung*, Bd. 2, Berlin 1928, p. 5; V. GÖTZ, op. cit., pp. 408–409, 415.

⁴⁹ *Runderlass des Ministers der Innere von 20. Mai 1925*, [in:] MBiV, 1925, pp. 569–574; *Wegweiser durch die Polizei*, pp. 16–17. The posts of the criminal police in Stettin and Königsberg were called Kriminaldirektion. They were directly supervised by the director, but the head was the local president of the police. Those posts were divided into two pillars – the criminal one and the political one, see AP Szczecin, PPS, sign. 102, ch. 50–60; sign. 126 (no page numbers); A. J. NOBIS, op. cit., p. 39; H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., p. 102; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 82.

⁵⁰ Until the collapse of Prussia on 20 July 1932 the criminal police guarded the republican political system and opposed extreme factions of both the right and the left wings, mainly KDP and NSDAP (Marek ANDRZEJEWSKI, *Hitleryzacja Elbląga*, [in:] *Historia Elbląga*, vol. 4, p. 130). However, later the police was manned by people connected with the right-wing conservatives supporting the Nazis. More about the Nazification of the police in Germany and Prussia and the role of the SS in the process see in: Hans BUCHHEIM, *Die SS – das Herrschaftsinstrument*, [in:] *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, München 1994, Bd. 1, pp. 15–160; F. RYSZKA, op. cit., pp. 333–353.

nal investigation police was reorganized and a separate political police force started to be created, which was regulated by the law concerning the Secret State Police (Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt) from 26 April 1933. Already on 2 May a Gestapo unit was organized in Szczecin, and a few days later another one in Koszalin (9 May).⁵¹ Furthermore, the paramilitaries connected with the NSDAP, mostly the SA but also the Stahlhelm, were given the status of auxiliary police (Hilfspolizei).⁵² Following the trend to unify the German Reich, the overall command of the police was transferred to the central government and it was not controlled by internal administration but managed by Heinrich Himmler as SS national leader and Chief of German Police (Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei). For the provinces it meant, among others, that the influence of the presidents of district authorities on police administration was greatly reduced and, in fact, they were deprived of any supervision over the Gestapo.⁵³ The process of organizing (constant reorganizations) police structures, especially in relation to security, continued throughout the existence of the Nazi state.

In the biggest cities of the Pomeranian regions, in Elbląg, Koszalin, Królewiec, Olsztyn, Piła and Tylża, Gestapo units (Staatspolizeistelle) and criminal police units (Kripo, Kriminalpolizeistelle) were established.⁵⁴ Moreover, Królewiec, Szczecin and Elbląg still had police presidiums, while Piła and Tylża police au-

⁵¹ *Gesetz über die Errichtung eines Geheimen Staatspolizeiamtes. Vom 26. April 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 122–123; Bogusław DREWNIĄK, *Początki ruchu hitlerowskiego na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1923–1934*, Poznań 1962, pp. 119–142; Robert THEVOZ, Hans BRANIG, Cecile LOWENTHAL-HENSEL, *Pommern 1934/35 im Spiegel von Gestapo-Lageberichten und Sachakten (Darstellung)*, Köln–Berlin 1974, pp. 19–22; Janusz WOLSKI, *Placówka Tajnej Policji Państwowej w Koszalinie*, *Rocznik Koszaliński*, vol. 14: 1978, pp. 104–129.

⁵² B. DREWNIĄK, op. cit., p. 100–109. After a few months on 17 August 1933 Goering did away with the auxiliary police.

⁵³ *Gesetz über die Geheime Staatspolizei. Vom 10. Februar 1936*, [in:] GS, pp. 21–22; V. GÖTZ, op. cit., pp. 1019–1020; H. FENSKE, op. cit., pp. 91–93. More about the structure of the police, including the Gestapo and SD in the Pomeranian Province see in: Andrzej ZIENTARSKI, *Represje gestapo wobec polskich robotników przymusowych na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1939–1945*, Koszalin 1979, pp. 27–73; idem, *Policja bezpieczeństwa w b. Prowincji Pommern w latach 1939–1945*, *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski*, vol. 24: 1980, issue 1, pp. 69–95.

⁵⁴ *Verordnung zur Ausführung des Gesetzes über die Geheime Staatspolizei. Vom 10. Februar 1936*, [in:] GS, pp. 22–25 (a list of posts of the Gestapo in Prussia); Andrzej ZIENTARSKI, *Placówka Gestapo w Pile*, *Koszalińskie Studia i Materiały*, 1974, nr 2, pp. 204–219; A. J. NOBIS, op. cit., p. 48; H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., p. 106. In the case of the capital cities of the provinces – Królewiec and Szczecin – the Gestapo posts (Staatspolizeileitstelle) were superior to the remaining headquarters of the Gestapo in the province. Apart from this, the Staatspolizeileitstelle could establish their branches. From 1933 the Commissariat of the Border Police in Bytów had such a superior position, see Józef LINDMAJER, *Bytów w okresie republiki weimarskiej i rządów faszystowskich (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Historia Bytowa*, ed. Zygmunt SZULTKA, Bytów 1998, p. 286. More: Janusz WOLSKI, *Hitlerowski aparat terroru na przykładzie powiatu bytowskiego*, [in:] *Pogranicze i Kaszuby w latach terroru. Prześladowania polskiej ludności rodzimej Pomorza Zachodniego 1939–1945*, ed. Andrzej CZECHOWICZ, Koszalin 1970, pp. 71–117 (diagram p. 74); B. FRANKIEWICZ, op. cit., pp. 83–84. The criminal police also had their field posts, see A. ZIENTARSKI, *Represje gestapo*, pp. 68–71.

thorities. What remained unchanged was the above mentioned organization of the protection police (Schupo), military police (Landjägererei) and local police (Ortspolizei), which were controlled by mayors, district leaders and county starosts.⁵⁵ Moreover, the party Security Service, SD (Sicherheitsdienst), deriving from the SS, was given the status of state police. Its organizational structure was related to the SS and not state administration. In Pomerania there were two SD units, in Szczecin and Szczecinek (Abschnitt), and in East Prussia also two, in Königsberg and Olsztyn.⁵⁶

Furthermore, on 13 November 1937, in every military districts (Wehrkreis) a Higher SS and Police Leader (Höher SS und Polizeiführer) position was established. In the Pomeranian regions two such leaders were appointed: in Królewiec and in Szczecin.⁵⁷ Their duties involved representing Heinrich Himmler as chief of police and SS in the district, supervising the enforcement of his decisions and leading special police campaigns. Higher commanders controlled inspectors who supervised the activities of the Gestapo, security police and order police (Inspekteur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Inspekteur der Ordnungspolizei).⁵⁸

2. 1. 4. ADMINISTRATION AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The county was a self-governing corporation with its own executive institutions, that is the county committee (Kreisausschuss) and the legislature, namely the county council (Kreistag). It was led by the starost (Landrat), who was also the highest official of county government and representative of the state responsible for general police administration.⁵⁹ The system of government in the county and the office of the starost as well as their competences and duties in communal matters, administration and state supervision, was based on the ordinance from 1872. During the Great War, however, county authorities were given new duties in medical care, social welfare, youth care, transport – regional transport (roads, narrow-

⁵⁵ G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁶ F. RYSZKA, op. cit., pp. 343–345. The Security Service (SD) in Pomerania belonged to II District of SS “North” (SS – Oberabschnitt Ostsee) with the seat in Stettin. It embraced Pomerania, Mecklenburg and the counties of Myślibórz and Prenzlau in Brandenburg. Within this district there operated three divisions of SD in Szczecin, Szczecinek and Schwerin (in Mecklenburg), see B. FRANKIEWICZ, op. cit., pp. 84–85; A. ZIENTARSKI, *Represje gestapo*, pp. 72–73; idem, *Policja bezpieczeństwa*, pp. 94–95.

⁵⁷ The Superior Head of the Police and SS in Stettin had the authority over Pomerania, Mecklenburg and part of Brandenburg (the counties of Myślibórz and Prenzlau).

⁵⁸ Hans BUCHHEIM, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer*, Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Jg. 11: 1963, pp. 362–363; Karol Marian POSPIESZALSKI, *Kompetencje wyższego dowódcy SS i policji*, Przegląd Zachodni, vol. 26: 1970, issue 2, p. 334; E. JĘDRZEJEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 145–147.

⁵⁹ Georg-Christoph VON UNRUH, *Der Landrat. Mittel zwischen Staatsverwaltung und kommunaler Selbstverwaltung*, Köln–Berlin 1966, pp. 84–85; Hans-Karl BEHREND, *Zur Personalpolitik des Preussischen Ministeriums des Innern. Die Besetzung der landratsstellen in den östlichen Provinzen 1919–1933*, Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands, Bd. 6: 1957, pp. 173–214; G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 20.

gauge railway) and vocational education.⁶⁰ Some of the above tasks became the responsibility of newly established specialised authorities for non-consolidated administration. Such organization caused rivalry and conflicts between the Landrat and the county committee as well as the special administration authorities and superior institutions.⁶¹

The significance of the position of the county starost was re-established with the directive concerning the simplification of administration from 3 September 1932. On the level of the county, it reduced the number of decision-making bodies and the Landrat, responsible for general administration, became superior to special administration (for agriculture, construction, cadastre, schools, veterinary medicine, healthcare, water and state income not coming from taxes). Afterwards, special administration authorities were given directives and orders, and reported to county starosts who were supposed to secure the interests of the state administration.⁶²

The Landrat was a state official appointed by the Prussian government and although he was directly controlled by the president of the district authority, as the one in charge of county institutions, including the council and county committee, he was the most important local official and representative of the community at state level.⁶³ The starost was responsible for general and police administration in the county, including the supervision over municipal government, and since 1932 also in the towns of under 10 thousand inhabitants. Police tasks related to order and public safety were enforced by the gendarmerie and the matters concerning the supervision over construction, sanitary, medical, veterinary medicine, etc. were controlled by competent officials or authorities. Moreover, because of their social importance, starosts often initiated various economic enterprises and the spread of modern Technologies (electrification). Furthermore, as the leader of local government and county committee, he controlled communal administration and administrative judiciary.⁶⁴

Apart from the tasks entrusted by the state, the starost was responsible for implementing the resolutions of the county council and the decisions made by the county committee. The election to the county council in 1919–1933 were democratic (four points). The council passed the budget of the local government, local

⁶⁰ K. G. A. JESERICH, *Kommunalverwaltung*, pp. 497–499; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 48.

⁶¹ G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Der Landrat*, pp. 84–86; K. G. A. JESERICH, *Kommunalverwaltung*, p. 497.

⁶² *Gesetz zur Vereinfachung und Verbilligung der Verwaltung. Vom 3. September 1932*, [in:] GS, pp. 283–293 (§ 12–20); G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Der Landrat*, pp. 86–87; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 48.

⁶³ A motion to appoint the landrat was put forward by the Home Secretary, see *Verordnung betreffend die Zusammensetzung der Kreistage und einige weitere Änderung der Kreisordnungen. Vom 18. Februar 1919*, [in:] GS, pp. 23–26 (§ 12); G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Der Landrat*, pp. 84–85; A. CZARNIK, *Stosunki polityczne*, pp. 90–95.

⁶⁴ G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Provinz Pommern*, p. 626; S. HARTMANN, op. cit., p. 30.

law regulations as well as resolutions concerning taxes, property of communal institutions, e.g. hospitals, schools, roads or transport.⁶⁵

In turn, the county committee – the executive body of county government consisting of the Landrat and 6 other members elected by the council – implemented the resolutions of the council as well as exercised the duties entrusted by state and provincial administration. Moreover, the county committee served as an administrative court of first instance.⁶⁶ In accordance with the regulations from 15 December 1933 the decision-making process was transferred to the starost and the committee was reduced to a body adjudicating in the matters of administrative judiciary.⁶⁷

The Landrat exercised his duties with the help of the county office (Landratsamt), which in 1932 was joined with other administrative bodies, creating the district office (Kreisamt). The office usually (e.g. in Braunsberg) consisted of three committees led by the “upper” inspectors and county “upper” secretaries.⁶⁸

After the Nazis came to power, the position of the starost became more important because on 17 July 1933 they dissolved the county council and on 1 January 1934 transformed the county committee into an administrative court. Afterwards, in accordance with the rules promoting the cult of the strong leader, the starost gained all the prerogatives in county administration previously controlled by the above mentioned institutions.⁶⁹ However, the starost had to take into consideration opinions of the local NSDAP district leader (Kreisleiter). With time, the position of the district leader of the Nazi party grew more important not only in political but also administrative matters and the Landrat was supposed to enforce orders of the Kreisleiter. The superiority of party official over the state official was legally

⁶⁵ G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 20; A. CZARNIK, *Stosunki polityczne*, pp. 95–102.

⁶⁶ *Gesetz über die allgemeine Landesverwaltung. Vom 30. Juli 1883*, [in:] GS, p. 195 (§ 4, 7); G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 20.

⁶⁷ Departments received the names of country (municipal) administrative courts (Kreis-, Stadtverwaltungsgericht). In 1939 the courts were liquidated, their competences being transferred onto the Regierungsbezirk courts, see *Gesetz über die Anpassung der Landesverwaltung an die Grundsätze des nationalsozialistischen Staates. Vom 15. Dezember 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 479–483 (§ 1–2); *Erlass vom 28. April 1939*, [in:] RGB I, 1939, p. 1535; *Erlass vom 6. November 1939*, [in:] RGB I, 1939, p. 2168; Albert VON MUTIUS, *Kommunalverwaltung und Kommunalpolitik*, [in:] DVG IV, p. 1055; G. Ch. VON UNRUH, *Provinz Pommern*, pp. 658, 667; J. VON SCHÖNFELDT, op. cit., pp. 99–100.

⁶⁸ *Gesetz zur Vereinfachung und Verbilligung der Verwaltung. Vom 3. September 1932*, [in:] GS, pp. 283–293 (§ 13); G. BITTER, op. cit., pp. 24–25.

⁶⁹ *Gesetz über die Übertragung von Zuständigkeiten der Provinzial- (Kommunal-) Landtage, der Verbandsversammlung des Siedlungsverbandes Ruhrkohlenbezirk und der Kreistage auf die Provinzial- (Landes-) Ausschüsse, den Verbandsausschuss und die Kreisausschüsse. Vom 17. Juli 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 257–258; *Gesetz über die Anpassung der Landesverwaltung an die Grundsätze des nationalsozialistischen Staates. Vom 15. Dezember 1933*, [in:] ibid., pp. 479–483; J. VON SCHÖNFELDT, op. cit., p. 63; E. JEŃDRZEJSKI, op. cit., pp. 102–103; G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 25; H. FENSKE, op. cit., p. 48; A. CZARNIK, *Stosunki polityczne*, pp. 99–100.

sanctioned in 1939.⁷⁰ In some counties the same person was both the Kreisleiter and the Landrat, e.g. in 1938 in Bytów.⁷¹

2. 1. 5. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CITIES AND RURAL AREAS

The organization of cities, rural municipalities and estate districts in the Pomeranian regions of Prussia remained virtually unchanged throughout the times of the Weimar Republic, although works on the communal reform were initiated. The aim was to eliminate estate districts and produce one law concerning the organization of cities and rural municipalities. Until 1933, however, only the estate districts were eliminated. The new system promoted a democratic election to urban and rural municipal councils.⁷²

Until 1933 the organization of the cities was based on the ordinance from 1853, although in the western part of Pomerania (Regierungsbezirk of Strasburg) the cities continued to follow the rules dating back to the times of the dukes, even though they were amended in the 18th and 19th century. The law from 1923 concerning municipal elections unified the system of elections as well as the membership in representative assemblies and municipalities. Every town council consisted of 11 deputies and for every thousand inhabitants another member was added (§ 4). These regulations led to the decrease in the number of town council members. In Szczecin their number dropped from 78 to 61, and in 1932 to 55. In Elbląg in 1919 an assembly consisted of 60 councillors but then was reduced to 45 in 1924. In Koszalin there were 32 representatives of the city.⁷³

The municipal council led by the mayor (Bürgermeister) had executive power and in bigger cities it was the “upper” mayor (Oberbürgermeister) (Królewiec, Szczecin, Olsztyn, Tylża, Elbląg and, since 1932, Koszalin). The number of councillors depended on the size of the place. In towns it was usually the mayor and 4–5 councillors (Stadtrat, Ratsherr) while in cities usually over 10. The councillors served 6-year terms and the mayors were elected for 12-year terms by the municipal council, which often appointed the same person for several terms.⁷⁴ Friedrich Ackermann was the Oberbürgermeister of Szczecin from 1907 until 1931

⁷⁰ E. JEŃDRZEJEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 128–129; B. FRANKIEWICZ, op. cit., p. 75; B. KOZIEŁŁO-POKLEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 44–47.

⁷¹ J. LINDMAJER, op. cit., p. 285.

⁷² *Gesetz über die vorläufige Regelung der Gemeindewahlen. Vom 9. April. 1923*, [in:] GS, pp. 83–87. Elections to legislative bodies of the towns and counties were secret, equal and direct. Active voting rights belonged to each inhabitant aged over 20, whilst candidates to the posts had to be over 25.

⁷³ Mieczysław STELMACH, *Ustrój i finanse miejskie*, [in:] *Dzieje Szczecina*, vol. 3, ed. Bogdan WACHOWIAK, Szczecin 1994, pp. 687–688, 690; Marek ANDRZEJEWSKI, *Ustrój i władze Elbląga*, [in:] *Historia Elbląga*, vol. 4, pp. 17–18; Kacper PENCARSKI, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne, druga wojna światowa (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Dzieje Koszalina*, vol. 1: *Do 1945 roku*, ed. Radosław GAZIŃSKI, Edward WŁODARCZYK, Koszalin 2016, p. 294.

⁷⁴ The composition of the town council and magistrate of each town was defined the town's statute (Ortssatzung), which was voted on by the assembly of the town's councilors.

(re-elected on 10 April 1919). The municipal council of the Pomeranian capital consisted of 26 members, including 13 regular employees (with the Oberbürgermeister and Bürgermeister ("upper" mayor and mayor)). In Elbląg, Oberbürgermeister Carl Friedrich Merten served two terms in office (1910–1934) and the municipal council consisted of 17 members (in 1919).⁷⁵ In Olsztyn, apart from the mayor and "upper" mayor, there were 10 councillors, and in Słupsk the municipal council consisted of 14 members.⁷⁶

In towns, the mayor received remuneration but other members of the municipal council usually worked for free. In cities, some members of the municipal council, including the assignee and city treasurer, were regular employees.⁷⁷ In the cities with district rights, altogether 13 in the three Baltic regions in 1932, the municipal council elected from its members the city committee (Stadttausschuss), which in accordance with the law of 1883 served primarily as an administrative court.⁷⁸

Similarly to the cities, the organization of rural municipalities (Landgemeinde) in the Pomeranian regions was based on the regulations from the 19th century (rural municipality ordinance from 1891 and county ordinance from 1872), which were amended only in relation to elections.⁷⁹ The head of the rural municipality was the community leader (Gemeindevorsteher) who was helped by the municipal council (Gemeinderat).

The above mentioned estate districts (Gutsbezirk) were not eliminated after the First World War although the government had announced that during the revolution. These districts continued to be basic administrative units where the inhabitants lacked their constitutional right to participation in local government. Estate districts were administered by district owners and their duties corresponded to those of the rural municipalities. It was not until the law from 27 December 1927 was passed that estate districts were eliminated and became regular rural

⁷⁵ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin, 1925, pp. 4–5; Bogdan DOPIERAŁA, *Die Rolle des Oberbürgermeisters und des Berufsbeamtentums in der Entwicklung der Deutschen Stadt*, [in:] *Die Städte Mitteleuropas im 20. Jahrhundert*, hrg. v. Wilhelm RAUSCH, Linz 1984, pp. 119–122; M. ANDRZEJEWSKI, *Ustrój i władze Elbląga*, pp. 17–18.

⁷⁶ *Adressbuch der Stadt Allenstein*, 1931, vol. 1, p. 1; Andrzej CZARNIK, *Lata republiki weimarskiej i trzeciej Rzeszy (1918–1945)*, [in:] *Historia Słupska*, ed. Stanisław GIERSEWSKI, Poznań 1981, p. 362.

⁷⁷ G. BITTER, op. cit., pp. 20–21. In Elbing out of 17 members of the magistrate five received remuneration; the same situation was in Allenstein; M. ANDRZEJEWSKI, *Ustrój i władze Elbląga*, p. 17; *Adressbuch der Stadt Allenstein*, 1931, vol. 1, p. 1.

⁷⁸ H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., pp. 98–99; *Gemeinde Lexikon für den Freistaat Preussen*, Bd. IV, Provinz Pommern, Berlin 1932, pp. XVII–XVIII; *Gemeinde Lexikon für den Freistaat Preussen*, Bd. I, Provinz Ostpreussen, Berlin 1931, p. XVI; *Gemeinde Lexikon für den Freistaat Preussen*, Bd. V, Grenzmark Posen-Westpreussen, p. XI.

⁷⁹ *Landgemeindeordnung für die sieben östlichen Provinzen der Monarchie. Vom 3. Juli 1891*, [in:] GS, pp. 233–267; K. G. A. JESERICH, *Kommunalverwaltung*, p. 496; H. FENSKE, op. cit., pp. 63–64; Stanisław SALMONOWICZ, *Administracja i prawo w prowincjach pomorskich*, [in:] *Historia Pomorza*, vol. 4, part 1, ed. idem, Poznań 2000, pp. 57–58.

municipalities or were joined into the already existing ones (Eingemeindung).⁸⁰ Most of these changes were introduced in the years 1928–1929.⁸¹

Moreover, in rural areas districts for police and supervision purposes were retained (Amtsbezirke); they were an intermediate administrative level between rural municipalities and estate districts and the county authorities (starost and county committee).⁸²

The Nazi rule brought revolutionary changes in the organization of rural and urban municipalities.⁸³ Hörmann Göring as Reich's Minister of the Interior for Prussia on 4 February ordered new elections to local governments (in rural communities, cities, counties and provinces) to be held on 12 March 1933, and dissolved all the existing authorities as of 8 February.⁸⁴ In local elections the NSDAP won a majority, however, the victory was not complete because, e.g. in Pomerania, the Nazis won 52,3% of valid votes. After the election (and before as well), inconvenient communal officials were removed by terror or through administrative measures, and members of the NSDAP, as well as the SA and SS, took control of municipal and rural governments. The terror was legitimised by the directive from 22 March 1933,⁸⁵ whose aim was to prevent the bad condition of municipal administration.

⁸⁰ In Prussia there were 12 000 rural districts inhabited by 1.5 million citizens. The act generated a heated debate in Parliament and beyond, and was resisted by the conservative factions. Finally, the act about the liquidation of rural districts was adopted owing to the votes of the left-wing politicians (SPD, KPD), see Landesarchiv Greifswald, Rep. 60, sign. 125, passim; H. SCHULZE, op. cit., pp. 322–323; H. MÖLLER, *Preußen*, pp. 555–556; G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 21; H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., pp. 111–112; Friedrich-Wilhelm HENNING, *Rahmenbedingungen und Grundzüge der Verwaltungsge-schichte Ostdeutschlands von 1815 bis 1945*, [in:] VO, p. 79; S. SALMONOWICZ, *Prusy*, p. 404.

⁸¹ P. GUT, *Podziały administracyjne*, p. 91.

⁸² The head of the district was elected by the country dietine and confirmed by the Oberpräsident. He played the role of a police officer and an assistant to the prosecutor, see *Landgemeindeordnung für die sieben östlichen Provinzen der Monarchie. Vom 3. Juli 1891*, [in:] GS, pp. 233–267; G. BITTER, op. cit., p. 21.

⁸³ The influence of the Nazi ideology on the political system in gminas in Germany in the years 1933–1945 was extensively discussed by Horst MATZERATH, *Nationalsozialismus und kommunale Selbstverwaltung*, Stuttgart–Berlin–Köln–Mainz 1970.

⁸⁴ *Verordnung über die Auflösung der Vertretungskörperschaften der Gemeinden und Gemeindeverbände. Vom 4. Februar 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 21–22; *Verordnung über die Festsetzung des Wahltags für die kommunalen Neuwahlen. Vom 4. Februar 1933*, [in:] ibid., p. 22; A. VON MUTIUS, op. cit., p. 1062.

⁸⁵ *Verordnung zur Behebung von Missständen in der gemeindlichen Verwaltung. Vom 22. März 1933*, [in:] GS, p. 67–69; *Runderlass über Bekämpfung von Missbräuchen in den Gemeinden und Gemeindeverbänden vom 3. Mai 1933*, [in:] MBiV, p. 529; Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin, 1933, p. 7; A. VON MUTIUS, op. cit., pp. 1063–1064; H. MATZERATH, op. cit., pp. 63–80. On the basis of those regulations the Nazis could eliminate disobedient people from the city councils and magistrates. They could also dissolve the whole community assemblies. In Słupsk the council elected in March did not come up to the expectations and was dissolved on 17 July 1933. The new council was appointed by the president of the Regierungsbezirk on 8 August 1933. The mayor was also changed, see A. CZARNIK, *Lata republiki weimarskiej*, pp. 373–375. To make the scrutiny on the communal administration more efficient the German Dietine (Deutsche Gemeindetag) was created instead of

Further significant changes in the organization of cities and rural municipalities were introduced by the Prussian Municipal Ordinance (*Gemeindeverfassungsgesetz*) from 15 December 1933 and the German Municipal Ordinance (*Deutsche Gemeinde Ordnung*) from 30 January 1935.⁸⁶ Apart from eliminating 15 types of communal organizations known solely in Prussia, the Prussian law from December of 1933 introduced a unified system of organization for urban and rural municipalities, and officially excluded social participation from local authorities; municipal councils were degraded and served as advisory boards to leaders of municipalities. The mayor was appointed by the local *fürher* and the councillors were chosen for 6-year terms by the supervisory authority (the *Bezirksregierung* or *Landrat*) after they first gained nomination from *Gauleiters*. The new organization of municipal administration introduced in the spring and summer of 1934, mirrored the cult of strong leadership, resembled the mayoral system in Rhineland, although the system ceased to be democratic and came under close control from top authorities of the state and party.⁸⁷

The Prussian legislation was followed by the German Municipal Ordinance from 30 January 1935, which was expected to come into effect on 1 April of the same year.⁸⁸ Each municipality (rural or urban) was supposed to be independent (§ 1 Abs. 2). However, the “freedom” of local government was restricted as municipalities were bound not only by existing regulations but also by the goals set out for the whole country, because a unity of the goals of local government and state had to be ensured (§ 106). These regulations brought municipalities under state control. On the one hand, the new law emphasized rules for local government, however, the legislator, aware of its crisis in the Weimar Republic, wanted to heal the situation, and yet the law promoted party interests by introducing a NSDAP representative into local administration (§ 6 Abs. 2, § 33).⁸⁹ Moreover, in order to control local institutions commissioners were appointed (§ 108–112). State supervision was even more evident in Hitler’s decree from 28 August 1939, which

six gminas on 22 May 1933 (formally upon the act of 15 Dec 1933). See A. VON MUTIUS, *op. cit.*, pp. 1064–1065; H. MATZERATH, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–104; Jan CHŁOSTA, *Miedzy wojnami*, [in:] *Kętrzyn. Dzieje miasta*, ed. Stanisław ACHREMCZYK, Kętrzyn 2016, p. 380; Stanisław ACHREMCZYK, *Orneta. Dzieje miasta*, Olsztyn 2006, pp. 158–159; Wojciech WRZESIŃSKI, *Olsztyn w latach 1918–1945*, [in:] *Olsztyn 1353–2003*, ed. Stanisław ACHREMCZYK, Władysław OGRODZIŃSKI, Olsztyn 2003, pp. 350–357.

⁸⁶ *Gemeindeverfassungsgesetz. Vom 15. Dezember 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 427–441; *Deutsche Gemeindeordnung vom 30. Januar 1935*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 49–64; F.-W. HENNING, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁸⁷ A. VON MUTIUS, *op. cit.*, pp. 1067–1068; H. MATZERATH, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–126; H. FENSKE, *op. cit.*, p. 60. According to the ordinance of 1933 in Bytów the mayor was assisted by 10 councilmen approved of by the *Gauleiter*. In Szczecin there were 25 assistants, see *Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin*, 1934, pp. 3–8; J. LINDMAJER, *op. cit.*, p. 284; K. PENCARSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

⁸⁸ H. MATZERATH, *op. cit.*, pp. 132–164.

⁸⁹ A. VON MUTIUS, *op. cit.*, pp. 1070–1071; J. LINDMAJER, *op. cit.*, p. 284. More about the problem of the Nazi party’s control over the communal administration in: H. MATZERATH, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–313.

eliminated all restrictions in state control of municipalities and associations of municipalities.⁹⁰

In accordance with the Ordinance from 1935 mayors were leaders of rural and urban municipalities, whereas in towns with district rights “upper” mayors were in charge (§ 32). Mayors were helped by adjuncts (Beigeordnete) in leading and supervising departments of local administration and one of them became the mayor’s deputy (§ 34–35).⁹¹ There were no municipal councils as such because, in addition to the adjuncts mentioned above, a representative of the NSDAP in agreement with the mayor appointed a prescribed number of municipal councillors (Gemeinderäte) and town councillors (Ratsherren, § 48–57). They supervised the work of local administration, advised the mayor in matters related to the municipality and explained the decisions made by local authorities to the community. Moreover, the mayor appointed an advisory council consisting of local inhabitants (Beiräte) in order to consult communal affairs of the municipality. The number of councillors and advisers as well as the intricacies of administration in each municipality were regulated by its internal statute.⁹²

New authorities were inaugurated in the spring and summer of 1935. In Szczecin, Gauleiter and Oberpräsident of Pomerania Franz Schwede became the representative of the NSDAP (1 July 1935), in Królewiec it was Gauleiter’s deputy Grossherr.⁹³

2. 2. REICH’S ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITIES

2. 2. 1. TAX ADMINISTRATION

In 1919 a major reconstruction of customs and tax systems was implemented, which until then had been mostly managed by provinces. The Weimar Constitution (Article 83) granted the central government the right to supervise customs and consumption taxes. Moreover, Article 14 of the Constitution (concerning the right of central government to take over various prerogatives not mentioned in the Constitution from the states) allowed the central government to take over all of tax administration from the provinces, except for municipal and land taxes.

⁹⁰ A. VON MUTIUS, op. cit., pp. 1074–1078.

⁹¹ H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., p. 114; M. STELMACH, *Ustrój i finanse miejskie*, pp. 692–693.

⁹² Depending on the number of the rural gmina and town from 12 to 36 councilmen were appointed along with several counsellors. In Królewiec there were originally 24; later the number rose to 30; in Szczecin the number was 25 and in subsequent years the number rose to 31 (in 1940); in the county of Bytów there were 12 people. Moreover, in Bytów 33 counselors were appointed on the strength of the city statute of 22 May, see Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin, 1935, pp. 11–13; Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin, 1940, pp. 13–16; H. B. BÖHMEKE, op. cit., pp. 114–115; F. GAUSE, op. cit., p. 120; J. LINDMAJER, op. cit., pp. 284–285; B. KOZIEŁŁO-POKLEWSKI, op. cit., pp. 44–45. Generally: F. RYSZKA, op. cit., pp. 302–303.

⁹³ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Stettin 1935, pp. 12–13; M. STELMACH, *Ustrój i finanse miejskie*, pp. 692–693; B. DOPIERAŁA, *Die Rolle des Oberbürgermeisters*, pp. 122–123; F. GAUSE, op. cit., p. 120.

The change was introduced with the law concerning tax administration from 10 October 1919 and Reich's Tax Code from 13 December 1919.⁹⁴

Reich's Minister of Finance supervised tax administration, taking control of the already existing tax administration and officials. Germany was divided into 26 provincial tax office districts (Landesfinanzamt), including as many as 13 in Prussia. In the Pomeranian regions such authorities were also established in Szczecin and Królewiec. The former served Pomerania and the northern part of the Frontier March, while the office in Królewiec administered East Prussia and the administrative district of West Prussia in Kwidzyn.⁹⁵

These offices supervised the tax offices (Finanzamt) for direct taxes and main customs offices (Hauptzollamt), customs offices (Zollamt), customs inspectorates (Zollinspektionen) and custom units (Zollaufsichtsstellen) which ensured the collection of consumption taxes, monopolies and customs duties. Tax offices were usually established in every county, although urban counties usually shared an office with rural counties, e.g. in Stargard, Ślupsk, Olsztyn or Tylża.⁹⁶

2. 2. 2. SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

After the First World War the German state took over the administration and supervision over social services, including employment and welfare agencies, which was guaranteed in the Weimar Constitution (Article 157, 161, 163, 165). It was a continuation of earlier government attempts to reorganize social security and healthcare insurance system from before 1914 (the law concerning social security from 1911). A new law from 1927 established an all-German system of employment agencies and organized care for the homeless.⁹⁷ The law concerning employment agencies and insurance of the unemployed from 16 July 1927 established the Reich's Office for Employment and Insurance of the Unemployed,

⁹⁴ *Gesetz über die Reichsfinanzverwaltung. Vom 10. September 1919*, [in:] RGB I, 1919, pp. 1591–1601; *Verordnung über die Einführung der Reichsfinanzverwaltung. Vom 27. September 1919*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 1766; *Reichsabgabenordnung. Vom 13. Dezember 1919*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 1993–2100; *Verordnung zur Einführung der Reichsabgabenordnung. Vom 18. Dezember 1919*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 2101–2107; W. FROTSCHER, *Verwaltungsorganisation*, p. 118; K. M. HETTLAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–201; H. KLAUS, *op. cit.*, p. 168–203.

⁹⁵ Each home office consisted of 3 departments: Präsidialabteilung, the 1st – the property tax and communication tax (Abteilung I für Besitz und Verkehrsteuern); the 2nd – of tax duties and consumption taxes- (Abteilung II für Zölle und Verbrauchsabgaben). Moreover, there operated the financial court (Finanzgericht), see M. HETTLAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 188; K. VON DER GROEBEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 243–244; Rolf CASEAR, Karl-Heinrich HANSMEYER, *Haushalts und Finanzwesen*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 840–841; H. KLAUS, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–65.

⁹⁶ In Szczecin and Królewiec there operated two tax offices in each; there was a third tax office for the rural county surrounding the capital of the province. Each of such offices consisted of the head (Vorsteher) and two divisions (Veranlassungsabteilung) and the fiscal bank (Finanzkasse), see K. M. HETTLAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–190.

⁹⁷ In 1919 there was set up the Ministry of Labour of the Reich, see Wilfried BERG, *Arbeits- und Sozialverwaltung*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 219–240.

which supervised a network of provincial employment offices (Landesarbeitsamt) and employment offices (Arbeitsamt). The institutions mentioned above did not correspond with state borders.⁹⁸ In East Prussia, such an office was established in Królewiec. It supervised 12 employment agencies in the province (Królewiec, Elbląg, Malbork, Olsztyn, Elk, Gołdap, Gąbin, Wystruć, Tylża, Biskupiec, Orneta and Bartoszyce). The office established in Szczecin, however, served not only the Pomeranian region but also the neighbouring province of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, with altogether 11 agencies in Słupsk, Koszalin, Szczecinek, Kołobrzeg, Stargard, Nowogard, Szczecin, Świnoujście, Greifswald, Stralsund and Neubrandenburg (Mecklenburg). The northern part of the Frontier March, with employment agencies in Piła, Wałcz and Czluchów, was subordinate to the Regional Employment Office in Brandenburg in Berlin.⁹⁹

2. 2. 3. MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

The provisions of the Treaty of Versailles significantly reduced the size of the German army (the Reichswehr of 100 000). Moreover, the Weimar Constitution transferred control of the army from Prussia to the Reich. On 30 September 1919 the commands of Prussian army corps (Armeekorps) were dissolved, including the ones in Szczecin and Królewiec. On 7 October 1919, in accordance with the new regulations, Germany was divided into 7 military districts (Wehrkreise). In the Baltic regions of Prussia two districts were established. East Prussia constituted the 1st Military District (Wehrkreis) while the 2nd Military District comprised Pomerania with Mecklenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Lübeck, Hamburg as well as the northern part of the Frontier March and part of Brandenburg (counties of Strzelce Krajeńskie, Choszczno). The command posts for these districts were established in Królewiec and Szczecin. Moreover, the naval bases in Świnoujście and Piława with their vessels were controlled by the navy command headquarters in Kiel.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *Gesetz über Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung. Vom 16. Juli 1927*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 187–218.

⁹⁹ The discussion about the organizational structure of the Job Offices (LAA) lasted a long time since it was officially announced on 1 June 1928, see *Reichsarbeitsmarktanzeiger*, Jg. 1928, Nr 22, pp. 1–4; about the discussion see also: AP Szczecin, NPPP, sign. 149, without page numbers. The project of the division of Germany into LAA districts was established on 2 November 1927. In each job office apart from full-time clerks there operated administrative divisions (Verwaltungsausschuss), which were decision-making bodies and consisted of representatives of public corporations (administration and local authorities) along with employers and employees. The Department also dealt with resolving conflicts between employers and employees, see AP Szczecin, NPPP, sign. 148, without page numbers; sign. 149, without page numbers.

¹⁰⁰ Walther HUBATSCH, *Die Reichswehr-Verwaltung 1919–1935*, [in:] DVG IV, pp. 254; S. HARTMANN, op.cit., pp. 32–33; F. GAUSE, op.cit., p. 39l; Erich MURAWSKI, *Stettin als Sitz eines General-kommandos*, *Nachrichtenblatt des Stettiner Verkehrsvereins G.m.b.H.*, Jg. 11, Nr 12 (16 VI 1937), pp. 1–3; idem, *Der Wehrkreis II*, *Baltische Studien N.F.*, Bd. 51: 1965, pp. 99–103.

In the first years of Nazi rule such a division into military districts remained intact. However, soon after the Nazis took power, without maintaining any appearances, they started an expansion of military units stationed throughout the province and initiated the construction of new military objects. The organization of military administration was changed in 1935 when, on 16 March, compulsory military service was introduced.¹⁰¹ Germany was divided into 12 military districts and two of them were established in the Baltic regions of Prussia. On 1 October 1935 East Prussia became the 1st district of the Army Corps (I. Armeekorps) and Pomerania with Mecklenburg, the northern part of the Frontier March and two counties from Brandenburg constituted the 2nd district of the Army Corps (II. Armeekorps). The military command remained in the two capitals of the Baltic regions, Królewiec and Szczecin.¹⁰²

2. 3. SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

The revolution and the transformation of Prussia and all of Germany into a republic did not have a significant impact on the organization of the system of justice, although from a legal perspective the change was revolutionary. The judges started to adjudicate in the name of the German nation and not monarchs.¹⁰³ The administration of courts and prosecutor's offices continued to be controlled by the states, as was guaranteed by the German constitution (§ 103) as well as the amended law concerning the judiciary from 1924.¹⁰⁴ Changes were implemented after the Nazis took power. Since the dominant ideology aimed to create a unified country, states lost the right to organize and administer the system of justice and finally, in 1935, their competencies were transferred to Reich's Minister of Justice.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *Proklamation der Reichsregierung an das deutsche Volk bezüglich der Einführung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht. Vom 16. März 1935*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 369–375; *Gesetz für den Aufbau der Wehrmacht*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 375; Michael SALEWSKI, *Grundzüge der Militärverwaltung*, [in:] DVG IV, p. 902.

¹⁰² E. MURAWSKI, *Stettin als Sitz*, pp. 1–4; *idem*, *Der Wehrkreis II*, pp. 104–105; H. FENSKE, *op. cit.*, p. 87; A. CZARNIK, *Ruch hitlerowski*, pp. 147–153; F. GAUSE, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

¹⁰³ *Allgemeine Verfügung vom 11. Dezember 1920*, [in:] Justiz Ministerial Blatt, p. 721; *Preußische Gerichtsverfassung. Aufbau und Wirkungskreis der Justizbehörden* (32 Jg. Des Jahrbuchs der preußischen Gerichtsverfassung, Berlin 1926), p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ In 1919 there was set up the Ministry of Justice of the Reich, but until the Nazi Times it mainly dealt with the administration of legal issues of the Reich, legal counseling to central offices, administrative issues of the Reich's Court and the Patent Office of the Reich (Reichpatentamt), *zob. Verordnung über Gerichtsverfassung und Strafrechtspflege, vom 4. Januar 1924*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 15–22, 299–370; W. FROTSCHER, *Verwaltungsorganisation*, p. 119; J. WĄSICKI, *Państwo pruskie*, pp. 175–176.

¹⁰⁵ The process of taking over the judiciary system from the federal states by the Reich lasted 3 years (1933–1935), see *Erstes Gesetz zur Überleitung der Rechtspflege auf das Reich. Vom 16. Februar 1934*, [in:] RGB I, p. 91; *Zweites Gesetz zur Überleitung der Rechtspflege auf das Reich. Vom 5. Dezember 1934*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 1214–1215; *Drittes Gesetz zur Überleitung der Rechtspflege auf das Reich. Vom 24.01.1935*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 68–69. This Act came into force 1 April 1935, see F. RYSZKA, *op. cit.*, pp. 383–384.

The structure of the system of justice was still based on the regulations from 1877–1879.¹⁰⁶ Three Provincial High Courts (Oberlandesgericht) continued to exist in Szczecin, Królewiec and Kwidzyn. The district of jurisdiction of the court in Kwidzyn was most significantly changed after 1919.¹⁰⁷ It comprised the administrative district of West Prussia, which was incorporated into East Prussia in 1922, as well as all of the Frontier March. In the district there were three provincial courts (Landgericht), in Ebląg, Piła and Międzyrzecz, as well as 23 local courts (Amtsgericht).¹⁰⁸ The district of the Provincial High Court in Królewiec comprised the territory of East Prussia from before 1919, however, stripped of the lands taken over by Poland and Lithuania.¹⁰⁹ It administered 7 provincial courts, in Bartoszyce, Braniewo, Elk, Królewiec, Olsztyn, Wystruć and Tylża, as well as 65 courts of first instance.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the court in Szczecin controlled the Pomeranian region with

¹⁰⁶ In the first instance there operated district courts, provincial courts in the second instance and provincial high courts on the provincial level. The final instance was the Court of the Reich in Leipzig (Reichsgericht in Leipzig). Moreover, along with some district courts there operated courts of assessors, and sometimes criminal courts. In the country courts apart from criminal divisions there also existed the jury (Schwurgericht), see *Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz (Fassung 1924)*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 299–370; F. RYSZKA, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

¹⁰⁷ The changes of the districts of the Provincial High Court in Kwidzyn was changed on the strength of the act of 19 July 1919 about the authorization for ministries of justice and internal affairs about the execution of the peace treaty (GS, pp. 115–116). On these grounds the Minister of Justice issued a decree about the incorporation of provincial courts in Międzyrzecz and Piła into the Provincial High Court in Elbląg, see *Verordnung betreffend vorläufige Änderung von Gerichtsbezirken anlässlich der Ausführung des Friedensvertrag. Vom 4. September 1919*, [in:] GS, pp. 146–147; S. HARTMANN, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ In the district of the Provincial Court in Elbing there were district courts in Ebląg, Dzierzgoń, Iława, Malbork, Kwidzyn, Prabuty, Susz, Sztum; in the district of the Provincial Court in Piła: in Biały Bór, Czarne, Człopa, Człuchów, Debrzno, Jastrowie, Piła, Trzcianka, Wałcz and Złotów, see *Handbuch*, Jg. 1926, pp. 312–314.

¹⁰⁹ From 1922 the territory of the Provincial Court in Königsberg did not embrace the Region of West Prussia in Marienwerder, which fell under the jurisdiction of the provincial court.

¹¹⁰ In this district of the Provincial Court in Olsztyn there were district courts in Dabrówna, Barczewo, Nidzica, Olsztyn, Olsztynek, Ostróda, Pasym, Szczytno, Wielbark; the Provincial Court in Bartoszyce: in Barciany, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Creuzburg, Domnau, Friedland, Gerdauen, Dobrze Miasto, Jeziorany, Lidzbark Warmiński, Landsberg, Nordenburg, Kętrzyn (Rastenburg), Reszel, Sępólno; the Provincial Court in Braniewo: in Braniewo, Heiligenbeil, Miałkowo, Młynary, Morąg, Orneta, Pasłęk (Preußisch Holland), Pieniężno, Zalew and Zinten; the Provincial Court in Insterburg: Darkehmen, Gąbin, Gołdap, Pillkallen, Stallupönen and Insterburg; the Provincial Court in Królewiec: in Allenburg, Fischhausen, Königsberg, Labiau, Mehlaiken, Pillawa (Pillau), Tapiau and Welawa (Wehlau); the Provincial Court in Elk: in Bialla, Elk, Giżycko, Marggrabowa, Mikołajki, Mrągowo, Orzysz, Pisz, Ryn and i Węgorzewo; the Provincial Court in Tilsit: in Heinrichswalde, Kaukehmen, Ragneta (Ragnit), Skaisgirren and Tilsit; *Handbuch*, Jg. 1926, pp. 305–311; A. J. NOBIS, op. cit., p. 158a. In 1932 two district courts were done away with – in Allenburg and Młynary and their districts were incorporated to adjacent courts of the first instance (Wehlau, Tapiau and Pasłęk), see *Verordnung über die Aufhebung vom Amtsgerichten. Vom 30. Juli 1932*, [in:] GS, p. 253; *Verordnung über die Aufteilung der Bezirke der aufgehobenen Amtsgerichte. Vom 13. September 1932*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 301–307 (p. 306).

5 provincial courts, in Greifswald, Koszalin, Słupsk, Stargard and Szczecin, as well as 59 courts of first instance.¹¹¹

The interwar period brought a significant expansion of special judiciary. Already in 1923 juvenile courts (Jugendgericht) were established at some local courts, and in 1927 labour courts (Arbeitsgericht). The latter were supposed to be independent institutions (selbständige Gerichte).¹¹² After the Nazis took over, for ideological reasons, they created more institutions – hereditary health courts (Erbgesundheitsgericht) and local hereditary courts (Anerkennungsgesetz).¹¹³

Special courts (Sondergerichte) were established in accordance with the directive from 21 March 1933.¹¹⁴ These courts ruled in political matters, sentenced enemies of the Nazi system and, during the war, ruled in all cases of anti-state actions, also in cases concerning foreigners. Originally, one such court was established in every district of the Provincial High Court, in Szczecin for Pomerania, in Królewiec for East Prussia, as well as in Kwidzyn. However, after the outbreak of

¹¹¹ In the district of the Provincial Court in Greifswald there operated district/ local courts in Anklam, Barth, Bergen, Demmin, Franzburg, Greifswald, Grimmen, Loitz, Stralsund, Treptow a.T., Wologoszcz (Wolgast); the Provincial Court of Koszalin: in Barwice, Białogard, Bobolice, Czaplinek, Karlino, Kołobrzeg, Koszalin, Okonek, Polczyn, Sianowo, Szczecinek and Świdwin; the Provincial Court in Słupsk: Bytów, Darłowo, Lębork, Miastko, Polanów, Sławno and Słupsk; the Provincial Court in Stargard: in Dobrzany, Drawsko Pomorskie, Goleniów, Gryfice, Ińsko, Kalisz Pomorski, Łobez, Maszewo, Nowogard, Pyrzyce, Resko, Stargard, Trzebiatów and Złocieniec; the Provincial Court in Szczecin: in Banie, Dąbie, Gartz a/O., Gryfino, Kamień Pomorski, Nowe Warpno, Pasewalk, Penkun, Police, Stepnica, Szczecin, Świnoujście, Ueckermünde, Widuchowa and Wolin, see Handbuch, Jg. 1926, pp. 438–442. In 1932 local courts in Dobrzany, Penkun and Sianów were liquidated; their districts were distributed among adjacent offices (Stargard and Ińsko, Szczecin and Gartz a/O., Koszalin i Polanów), see *Verordnung über die Aufhebung vom Amtsgerichten. Vom 30. Juli 1932*, [in:] GS, p. 253; *Verordnung über die Aufteilung der Bezirke der aufgehobenen Amtsgerichte. Vom 13. September 1932*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 301–307 (p. 307); Paweł GUT, *Organizacja sądownictwa w pruskiej prowincji Pomorze w latach 1808–1945*, *Szczeciński Informator Archiwalny*, no. 11: 1997, pp. 56–59.

¹¹² *Jugendgerichtsgesetz. Vom 16. Februar 1923*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 135–141. The labour courts were set up on the basis of the act about the labour courts (*Arbeitsgerichtsgesetz. Vom 23. Dezember 1926*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 507) and started operating from 1 July 1927. They dealt with cases resulting from labour law, which had hitherto been resolved by general courts. They also dealt with cases so far resolved by industrial and merchant courts. Labour courts were set up in the regions of the district court; in the second instance Landarbeitgericht were established as part of provincial courts, while Reichsarbeitsgericht as part of the Reich's Court in Leipzig.

¹¹³ Local hereditary courts were normally set up as part of every district court; in higher provincial courts there were set up Erbhofgericht, see *Reichserbhofgesetz. Vom 29. September 1933*, [in:] RGB I, pp. 685–692 (§ 41, 43); *Bäuerliches Erbhofrecht. Vom 15. Mai 1933*, [in:] GS, pp. 165–183 (§ 30, 31); F. RYSZKA, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

¹¹⁴ *Verordnung. Vom 21. März 1933*, [in:] RGB I, p. 136; *Verordnung. Vom 6. Mai 1933*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 259; Albrecht WAGNER, *Die Umgestaltung der Gerichtsverfassung und des Verfahrens- und Richterrechts im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, Stuttgart 1968, pp. 244, 257–259; F. RYSZKA, *op. cit.*, pp. 391–392.

the Second World War more of such special courts were established at provincial courts.¹¹⁵

2. 4. CLOSING REMARKS

The organization of administration and administrative bodies in the Baltic regions of Prussia (Pomerania, East Prussia, Frontier March) were significantly changed in the interwar period of the 20th century. First, during the Weimar Republic, the system of administration, reformed and partly reorganized after the federal government took over many competencies, was a continuation of the system developed in the Kingdom of Prussia and the Second Reich.

The Nazis' rise to power immediately led to the elimination of predicates of democracy in provincial and local administration. Two Pomeranian regions of Prussia, as was the case in other parts of the province and all of Germany, were unified by Nazi authorities. The party started to influence the system of administration, and the fact that NSDAP Gauleiters in East Prussia and Pomerania were appointed Oberpräsidenten of the regions demonstrated the supremacy of the party over provincial and local governments.

The Second World War did not bring significant changes in the system of administration and during the war the Nazis emphasized the supremacy of the NSDAP over the German state and people, in the Baltic regions of Prussia as well.

(transl. by Agnieszka Chabros)

Received 15th January 2016

Received in revised form 29th October 2016

Accepted 31st October 2016

Dr hab. Paweł Gut
State Archive in Szczecin
e-mail: pawel_gut@wp.pl

VERFASSUNG UND VERWALTUNGSORGANISATION DER PREUSSISCHEN OSTSEEPROVINZEN IN DEN JAHREN 1918–1939

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselwörter: Pommern (Pomerania), Ostpreußen, Grenzmark, Verwaltungsgeschichte, Gerichtswesen, Weimarer Republik, Drittes Reich

Nach dem 1. Weltkrieg verlor Preußen als Glied des vereinigten Deutschlands einen Teil seiner Ostseeprovinzen an die wiederentstandenen Staaten Polen und Litauen. Innerhalb dieses Bundeslandes verblieben die Ostseeprovinzen Pommern, Ostpreußen und

¹¹⁵ *Verordnung. Vom 21. März 1933; Verordnung. Vom 21. Februar 1940, [in:] RGB I, p. 405 (§ 10); Allgemeine Verfügung des RJM vom 11. März 1940, Deutsche Justiz, p. 323.*

Grenzmark. Die Organisation der allgemeinen und kommunalen Verwaltung in diesen Provinzen war in starkem Maß eine Fortsetzung der bisherigen Strukturen, die ihre Wurzeln in den Stein-Hardenbergschen Reformen hatten. Die wichtigste Veränderung war, zusammen mit der Einführung der republikanischen Verfassung 1918, die Implementierung von demokratischen Wahlverfahren in die kommunalen Organe und die Abschaffung der Gutsbezirke 1928. Außerdem kam es zu Veränderungen in der speziellen Verwaltung, z. B. in der Finanzverwaltung, die zur Prerogative der deutschen Zentralverwaltung wurde. In den Provinzen wurden für sie neue Strukturen geschaffen.

Eine wesentliche Veränderung der Verwaltungsorganisation fand 1933 statt, als die Nationalsozialisten die Macht übernahmen. Die Organisation der Verwaltung wurde gleichgeschaltet und dem Willen der Hitlerpartei unterworfen. Die tiefgreifendsten Veränderungen wurden in der Verfassung der Land- und Stadtgemeinden vorgenommen, die vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts stammte.

Der zweite Weltkrieg änderte an diesen Strukturen nicht mehr viel. In seinem Verlauf machten die Nationalsozialisten vor allem die Hegemonie ihrer Partei über den Staat und die deutsche Gesellschaft geltend, auch in den preußischen Ostseeprovinzen.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BALTIC PROVINCES OF PRUSSIA IN THE YEARS 1918–1939

Summary

Key words: Pomerania (Pommern), East Pomerania (Ostpreussen), the Frontier March (Grenzmark), the history of administration, the judicial system, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich

As a result of WWI Prussia as an element of united Germany lost part of its Baltic provinces for the benefit of the restored Polish and Lithuanian states. Within the boundaries of the German federation there remained the following Baltic provinces: Pomerania, East Prussia and the Frontier March. The organization of the general and local administration in the provinces constituted the continuation of the hitherto applied structures stemming from the reforms by Stein-Hardenberg. The most important change, along with the introduction of the republican political system was the implementation of the democratic election procedures to the local authorities and the elimination of courtly districts in 1928. Moreover, there took place changes in the special administration, e.g. fiscal administration, which became the prerogative of the central authorities in Germany. In the provinces new structures were created for it.

Important modifications of the organization of the administration started in 1933 when the Nazis took over the power. The administration underwent the so called Gleichschaltung and was subjugated to the authority of Hitler's party. The most far reaching changes were introduced in the political system of rural and municipal communes, which dated back to the beginning of the 19th century. It was replaced by the new legal rules of the organization of rural and municipal communes in the years 1933 and 1935.

WWII did not change much in the structures. During the war Hitler's authorities underlined the hegemony of the Nazi party over the German state and society including the Baltic provinces.