



ANNA ŻEGLIŃSKA*

Authorities and their offices in the Free City of Danzig (1919–1945) A project for a historical and political guide

Władze i urzędy w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku (1919–1945) Projekt przewodnika historyczno-ustrojowego

Abstract: This paper presents a project of an archival guide of an archival guide based on the analysis of the legal system of the Free City of Danzig, a distinctive organism which came into being as a result of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I. It presents a list of authorities and offices operating in the Free City of Danzig from 1919 to the end of World War II, as well as preserved records created by them, currently held in various archives. The applied research method (historical and legal) helps to comprehensively conceptualise the problem of lost records, and determine the locations of ones that survived. The list may contribute to conducting wide-ranging and in-depth research on the Free City of Danzig's unique and specific government and legal system, its beginnings and further developments. By accessing records pertaining to the same issues, but created by various authorities – Polish (mainly the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland), of Danzig (mainly the Senate), and of international institutions (mainly the Port and Waterways Board in Danzig) – the complicated local and international relations in the Free City may be better understood. The operations of Polish and international au-

* Wydział Historyczny Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, ul. Wita Stwosza 55, 80-308 Gdańsk, anna.zeglinska@ug.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-3429-8242.

thorities were stopped by the outbreak of World War II, while the local Danzig authorities ceased operating when the German Reich surrendered in 1945.

Keywords: League of Nations, German Reich, Republic of Poland, Danzig

Streszczenie: Artykuł przedstawia projekt przewodnika archiwalnego, który powstał na podstawie analizy ustroju prawnego Wolnego Miasta Gdańska, osobnego organizmu utworzonego w wyniku traktatu wersalskiego kończącego pierwszą wojnę światową. Zawiera wykaz władz i urzędów działających w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku do zakończenia drugiej wojny światowej oraz zachowane i znajdujące się obecnie w różnych archiwach akta przez nie wytworzone. Zastosowana metoda badawcza (historyczno-ustrojowa) umożliwiła całościowe przedstawienie problematyki zaginionych akt oraz określenie miejsc przechowywania dokumentów, które ocalały. Przedstawiony w artykule wykaz może przyczynić się do podjęcia wielostronnych i pogłębionych badań nad specyficznym ustrojem Wolnego Miasta Gdańska i procesem jego powstawania. Dotarcie do akt, które dotyczą tych samych spraw, ale sporządzonych przez różne władze, tj. urzędy polskie (głównie Komisarza Generalnego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), gdańskie (głównie senat), jak również instytucje międzynarodowe (głównie Radę Portu i Dróg Wodnych w Gdańsku), pozwoli na ukazanie istniejących w nim skomplikowanych stosunków międzynarodowych i lokalnych. Działalność władz polskich i międzynarodowych została przerwana przez wybuch drugiej wojny światowej, urzędów gdańskich zaś – przez kapitulację Rzeszy Niemieckiej w 1945 r.

Słowa kluczowe: Liga Narodów, Rzesza Niemiecka, Rzeczpospolita Polska, Gdańsk

Introduction

Over the centuries, Danzig (Gdańsk) changed its state affiliation several times. It belonged to the Crown of Poland, but in 1793, due to the Second Partition of Poland, it came under the Prussian rule. Conquered by the French in 1807, it gained the status of *Ville Libre* (Free City), held up to 1815. The Allied and Associated Powers returned to this legal and constitutional concept on 28 June 1919 in the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I.¹ Regulations pertaining to Gdańsk were included in Part XI of the said Treaty: “Free City of Danzig” (Articles 100–108). Based

¹ L. L. Beckenbaugh, *Treaty of Versailles. A primary document analysis*, Santa Barbara 2023, doi.org/10.5040/9798216027485.

on these provisions, Danzig became a separate political entity. The Province of West Prussia, which belonged to the German Reich, was divided between three parties: Poland (the Pomeranian Voivodeship), Germany (Grenzmark Posen–Westpreußen) and the Free City of Danzig (Ville Libre de Danzig). According to Article 101 of the Treaty of Versailles,² the frontier of the territory of the Free City of Danzig was to be delimited on the spot within 15 days of the said Treaty coming into force, by a Commission composed of three members: a High Commissioner as President appointed by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, one member appointed by Germany, and one member appointed by Poland (see: Map 1).

The Treaty of Versailles came into force on 10 January 1920, as a result of which Germany lost its rule over Danzig to the Principal Allied and Associated Powers (the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan), known as “the Big Five”. Authority over Danzig was taken by the High Commissioner of the Allied and Associated Powers. In November 1919, the Principal Powers appointed Sir Reginald Tower as their plenipotentiary and administrator. He came to Danzig with an unofficial fact-finding mission on 21 November 1919. At the same time, Maciej Biesiadecki, a future General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland, came to Danzig with a similar visit. At the beginning of December 1919, Germany appointed Lothar Förster, President and Deputy of the Supreme President (Regierungspräsident und stellv. Oberpräsident) of the Danzig District (Regierungsbezirk Danzig), as the Commissioner of Reich and Prussia (Reichs- und preußischer Staatskommissar die Überleitung) to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles in the evacuated territory of the former Danzig region.³

In accordance with the agreement signed in Paris a day before the Treaty of Versailles came into force, that is, on 9 January 1920, between the representatives of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Germany

² *Traktat pokoju między mocarstwami sprzymierzonymi i skojarzonymi i Niemcami, podpisany w Wersalu dnia 28 czerwca 1919 roku* (henceforth: *Treaty of Versailles*), Dz.U. 1920, no. 35, item 200.

³ M. Andrzejewski, *Zagadnienie drugiego Wolnego Miasta Gdańska w historiografii obcej i polskiej*, “Dzieje Najnowsze” 1979, vol. 11 (1), p. 183–189.

(Convention au sujet de la cession des territoires de Memel et de Dantzig)⁴ on the withdrawal from the Klaipėda (German: Memel) and Danzig territories, administrative and court personnel remained temporarily in position in the newly established Free City of Danzig. Moreover, the agreement declared that

without determining the issue of delayed submittance [sic] of financial reports, German financial management and all accounting books, as well as all administrative and court inventories will be completed on the day of the handover of the territories. Archives and registers will come into possession of the new government without determining the issue of future division of the above mentioned archives and registers between the interested states.⁵

On 13 January 1920, the aforementioned Lothar Förster issued an announcement (*Bekanntmachung*), in which he stated that

as for now all courts, administrative authorities and other offices in this territory remain in place and continue their activities in compliance with the binding acts of law. Until the administration is taken by the Deputy of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, the executive power of the highest official in this territory, as approved by these Powers, remains in my hands.⁶

According to Article 1 of the aforementioned convention of 9 January 1920, the evacuation of German troops and the transition of power to “the Big Five” over the established territory of the Free City of Danzig would take place at the request and in a mode specified by the representative of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. The issue of the transfer of

⁴ *Umowa w sprawie odstąpienia obszarów Kłajpedzkiego i Gdańskiego*, in: *Zbiór dokumentów urzędowych dotyczących stosunku Wolnego Miasta Gdańska do Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej zebrane i wydane przez Komisariat Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Gdańsku* (henceforth: *Zbiór*), vol. 1: (1918–1920), Gdańsk 1923, p. 12–13 or Archiwum Akt Nowych (henceforth: AAN), 2/513/0/-/282, p. 4–15.

⁵ *Zbiór*, vol 1, p. 12–13.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13; S. Kutrzeba, *Teraźniejszość Gdańska*, Lwów 1927, p. 3–4.

this territory to the Republic of Poland was referred to in the resolution of 18 November 1920 on withdrawing the military of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and the division of property in Danzig, which set 23 November 1920, as the date of withdrawal of these troops.⁷ In compliance with these provisions, the German troops left the territory of the Free City of Danzig at the appointed time, and military protection of the borders of the Free City was transferred to the Republic of Poland.⁸ Internal security matters were transferred to the Danzig police, which from 1920 was subject to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig (without subordination to the supreme authorities in Berlin).

The provisions of the Treaty of Versailles described in general the framework of the political organism it established, having assumed they would be defined precisely by means of agreements between Poland and Germany, reached through the medium of the High Commissioner. Article 104 of the Treaty of Versailles stated that the Free City of Danzig may come into being provided precise agreements would be reached between both parties. Out of all the agreements signed at that time, two documents are the most significant in terms of constitutional affairs and relations between the parties. The first is the aforementioned treaty signed on 9 January 1920 in Paris between the representatives of the Republic of Poland and Danzig (the Treaty of Paris).⁹ Its provisions were elaborated in a substantial agreement reached in Warsaw on 24 October 1921 (the Treaty of Warsaw).¹⁰

⁷ *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 130.

⁸ See: Statement by the French Representative to the Council on 22 June 1921, with regard to the draft Resolution on the question of the defence of the Free City of Danzig (AAN 2/513/0/-/2825:110); Report by Viscount Ishii, Representative of Japan, adopted by the council of June 22nd, 1921 (AAN 2/513/0/-/2825:110–111); *Zbiór*, vol. 2, p. 35–36, and Przyznanie Polsce mandatu do obrony Wolnego Miasta Gdańska. Korespondencja, AAN 2/1192/0/4/31.

⁹ Oświadczenie rządowe w przedmiocie konwencji polsko-gdańskiej, zawartej w Paryżu dnia 9 listopada 1920 r., Dz.U. 1922, no. 13, item 117. The Treaty of Paris was signed in a single copy to remain deposited in the archives of the French Republic, and of which authenticated copies were transmitted to Poland and the Free City of Danzig (Art. 40).

¹⁰ Ustawa z dnia 17 grudnia 1921 r. w przedmiocie zatwierdzenia podpisanej w Warszawie dnia 24 października 1921 r. umowy, zawartej pomiędzy Polską a Wolnym Mia-

Thus, the three above mentioned documents – the Treaty of Versailles, the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Warsaw – constituted the fundamentals of the international status of the Free City of Danzig; they, in turn, were further developed in additional Polish-Danzig agreements and decisions issued by High Commissioners. The resulting agreements interpreted these three documents and regulated the scope of competence of the administration of the Free City of Danzig, the League of Nations and the Polish Government. On the basis of these agreements, the Principal Allied and Associated Powers transferred titles to Gdańsk received from Germany partly to the city itself (ca. 95% of its citizens were German), and partly to the League of Nations, providing Poland with special powers in the city.¹¹

On 15 November 1920, the Free City of Danzig was proclaimed, as on this day, the decision of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers on the proclamation of the Free City of Danzig came into force, signed by “the Big Five” on 27 October 1920, and by the Danzig plenipotentiaries, Heinrich Sahm and Wilhelm Schümmer, on 9 November 1920.¹²

With the proclamation of the Free City of Danzig, the transition period officially ended, which meant that the power was transferred from the Plenipotentiary of the Powers to proper structures of new authorities. From that time, the Constitution of the Free City of Danzig was to regulate the structure and rights of exercised power. The election to the 120-person Constitutional Assembly was held on 16 May 1920; the first session took place on 14 June of the same year. The Constitutional Assembly passed the draft Constitution on 11 August 1920, but the authorities indicated

stem Gdańskiem celem wykonania i uzupełnienia polsko-gdańskiej konwencji z dnia 9 listopada 1920 r., Dz.U. 1922, no. 16, item 139. The original in: Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku (henceforth: APG), Komisarz Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, ref. code: APG 10/259/0/2.1/53.

¹¹ J. Karski, *The great powers and Poland 1919–1945: From Versailles to Yalta*, New York 1985; S. Dyroff, *Die Freie Stadt Danzig (1920–1939). Internationale Kontrolle lokaler Verwaltung in einer Konfliktregion*, in: *Zwangsadministrationen: legitimierte Fremdverwaltung im historischen Vergleich (17. bis 21. Jahrhundert)*, ed. F. Frommelt, Berlin 2014; S. F. W. Wollenberg, *Die Regierung von Konfliktgebieten durch die Vereinten Nationen*, Baden-Baden 2007.

¹² J. Karski, op. cit.; S. Dyroff, op. cit.; S. F. W. Wollenberg, op. cit.

in the Constitution did not take immediate action. Interim provisions anticipated that until the Senate was appointed, the State Council which had existed from the moment the Free City of Danzig was established would continue to perform as a caretaker government, whereas the Constitutional Assembly would become a legislative body. On 6 December 1920, in accordance with provisional regulations of the enacted Constitution, the Constitutional Assembly pronounced itself as the first Volkstag (People's Parliament). On the same day, the Volkstag elected the first Senate. The Senate, as the highest organ of executive authority under the leadership of Heinrich Sahm commenced its official duties on 7 December 1920.¹³ The text of the Constitution adopted at the 12th parliamentary session of the Constitutional Assembly (Volkstag) required the approval of the League of Nations (Article 103 of the Treaty of Versailles). After several months of negotiations, on 11 May 1922, the Constitution was approved by the High Commissioner and two days later by the League of Nations. The Senate of the Free City of Danzig published the text of the Constitution on 14 June 1922.¹⁴ The Constitution of the German Reich of 11 August 1919 became invalid (Article 116).

According to Article 1 of the Constitution the Free City of Danzig, the city was acknowledged as a free republican state with precisely determined restrictions regarding its military jurisdiction (Article 5 of the Constitution). The power was provided by the people (Article 3), the official language was German, but the Polish population was granted the right to use the Polish language and develop their national identity freely (Article 4). The sovereignty of Danzig was restricted in favour of the League of Nations, which acted as a safeguard of the Constitution with the authority to introduce changes to it. Moreover, the League of Nations was an arbitrator in disputes between Poland and Danzig, which were treated as equal bodies in Geneva.

The agreement of 17 May 1922 between Poland and the Danzig Senate under the auspices of the League of Nations proclaimed complete in-

¹³ M. Podlaszewski, *Ustrój polityczny Wolnego Miasta Gdańska w latach 1920–1933*, Gdynia, p. 32–33.

¹⁴ O. Loening, *Die Verfassung der Freien Stadt Danzig*, Danzig 1922.

dependence of Polish officials – in terms of competence – from Danzig authorities, integrity of Polish government offices and archives, as well as exclusion from the Danzig jurisdiction of all Polish State property, with the exception of restricted property laws related to it. The right to extraterritoriality was granted only to officials appointed by the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland. The property of the German Reich was transferred on 10 January 1920, that is, on the day the Treaty of Versailles came into force, to the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, which in turn gave it up on 15 November 1920 partly to Poland, and partly to the Free City of Danzig. Thus, the established political body constituted a peculiar legal construct,¹⁵ and its territory was an intersection of diverse interests of (1) former “allied and associated” states, executed by the High Commissioner of the League of Nations, (2) Danzig, backed the German Reich, which exploited political instability, and by local authorities striving for the dissolution of the Treaty of Versailles’s provisions, and (3) the Republic of Poland, which had regained independence after 123 years of partitions. These interests were carried out by various administrative bodies and individual posts which performed specific functions in the Free City of Danzig government and legal system. All this work generated particular types of documentation and, therefore, archival materials.

The research topic here is documentation from the registries (record offices) of offices and institutions – materials usually beyond the scope of archive services. However, in Danzig the situation was different due to a specific status of the city after World War I. During the first post-war years, that is, by 15 November 1920, the fate of Danzig was being decided, and the next 20 years were full of political unrest, which did not stabilise the uncertain political situation of the city, and led to the outbreak of World War II.

Following the end of World War I in the neighbouring territories of East Prussia (the province of the German Reich), the German archives service, through the medium of Danzig authorities and organisations, pursued actions aimed at securing the most significant documents. In 1929, in the

¹⁵ Research is still ongoing to determine its legal and government status; the most up-to-date works include S. Dyroff, *op. cit.*

Secret State Archives in Berlin-Dahlem, the Frontier March of Posen–West Prussia Archives (Staatsarchivs für die Provinz Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen) was established, to serve as central archives for the territories of the former Prussian partition, which from 1919 belonged to Poland, and to hold archival materials mainly from the Archives of the City of Danzig.¹⁶ Some documentation from the Danzig Landrat office (Landratsamt Danzig), Police Presidium (Polizeipräsidium Danzig), Danzig Region Government (Regierungsbezirk Danzig) and the Free City of Danzig Archives, was transferred to these archives.¹⁷

The operations of international and Polish institutions were interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. On 1 September 1939, at dawn, Danzig SS men attacked facilities belonging to Poland in the territory of the Free City of Danzig, that is, the Polish Post Office building, and opened fire at the Polish crew of the Military Transit Depot in Westerplatte.¹⁸ The attack aimed at the Polish State in Danzig destroyed the registries belonging to Polish authorities and offices. On the same day, the Reichstag issued a bill which incorporated the territory of the Free City of Danzig, together with its inhabitants, to the German Reich.¹⁹ The first serious war damages in the Free City of Danzig were caused by the Allied Forces bombing raid in July 1942, after which German authorities decided to implement mass evacuation of registries of authorities and offices operating in Danzig (not only the old holdings of the Staatsarchiv der Freien Stadt Danzig). The documentation was transported to nearby properties of German nobility, and as the Eastern front came closer, it was moved further westwards in

¹⁶ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki w okresie międzywojennym 1919–1939*, Warszawa 1969, p. 109; M. Stażewski, *Niemiecka polityka archiwalna na ziemiach polskich włączonych do Rzeszy 1939–1945*, Warszawa–Łódź 1991, p. 17.

¹⁷ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*

¹⁸ On 28 April 1939, Hitler presented Poland with an ultimatum. One of his demands was accepting the annexation of the Free City of Danzig to the German Reich. The demands were rejected by Poland in full, as they threatened the sovereignty of Poland and breached international conventions.

¹⁹ *Gesetz über die Wiedervereinigung der Freien Stadt Danzing mit dem Deutschen Reich von 1. September 1939*, “Reichsgesetzblatt” 1939, p. 1547, <https://www.verfassungen.de/de33-45/danzig39.htm> (accessed July 26, 2024).

order to avoid its destruction. Fragmentary reference documentation does not give a full presentation of the last actions taken by authorities, offices and institutions in the Free City of Danzig. Destruction of the city and of the documentation of registries operating in the Free City of Danzig was completed by the Red Army in the beginning of 1945. From the beginning of 1946, when the situation became more stable, the Polish archives service began to acquire archival materials which remained in place, along with some recovered in nearby locations, and in the following years, the process of reclaiming archival documentation was commenced by the Polish State.²⁰

Methodological assumptions for an archival guide to the Free City of Danzig government and legal system from a historical perspective

The starting point for the proposed archival guide to the government and legal system of the Free City of Danzig²¹ is the specific structure of authorities and offices of the Free City, which served as the basis for describing the archival materials created by them. The purpose of the guide is to devise a model for the scientific description of all registries created by different authorities and offices, together with parts of these registries that have been dispersed, or even lost. Existing archival information aids issued by individual institutions inform about the archival materials kept there, ignoring the wider system of authorities and offices which created these documents as well as any links between them. The list presented in this paper is a comprehensive proposal and contains a framework structure of particular authorities and offices of state provenance. It encompasses all authorities, both (1) international and (2) of Danzig, as well as (3) Polish; it pertains also to the period before the proclamation of the Free City of Danzig (28 June 1919–15 November 1920) when, due to the implementa-

²⁰ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*, p. 27–35.

²¹ The development of the conception prepared for authorities and offices of the Second Republic of Poland (1918–1939) is currently in progress.

tion of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, several delegations and commissioners of appointed institutions operated in Danzig to organise a new political system. Moreover, local authorities continued to work undisturbed, in compliance with German and Prussian regulations. First of all, matters related to the demarcation of the territory of the Free City of Danzig, the regulation of its property, transit, and food provision, as well as temporary power assumed in order for it to be subsequently transferred to the authorities and offices being established in Danzig were taken into consideration. In this period, Danzig and all its territory had fallen under the authority of the five powers – a kind of condominium of the United States, British Empire, France, Italy and Japan.

The detailed order of the proposed guide results from an analysis of the political system, and contains a list of all authorities and offices of state provenance as well as concise description of them limited to appointed objectives and performed functions. It also includes information on determined places where the remaining archival materials are held, indicating the number of archival units and linear metres of records. These data have been obtained on the basis of published archival and information guides, updated with the help of internet databases: Szukaj w archiwach (<https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/>), Archivdatenbank (<https://gsta.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/recherche/archivdatenbank.html>), Archives diplomatiques (diplomatie.gouv.fr), United Nations in Geneva (<https://archives.ungeneva.org/>). The authorities, offices and their registries have been thus merged (in their descriptions) in order to provide a better access to sources held in various institutions in Poland, Germany, France and Switzerland.

This historical, governmental and legal system-related research approach was proposed many years ago by Józef Siemieński²² in relation to the political system of the former Republic of Poland (until 1795). It was recalled by Bohdan Ryszewski in papers systematising archival aids, including a broad

²² J. Siemieński, *Przewodnik po archiwach polskich. [T. 1], Archiwa dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, [s.l.] 1933, <https://polona.pl/sets?searchCategory=objectSets&page=0&size=24&sort=RELEVANCE&searchLike=siemie%C5%84ski%20j%C3%B3zef%20przewodnik> (accessed 26 July 2024).

group of archival guides.²³ I have researched this subject in relation to the political system of the Second Polish Republic.²⁴

The project of the archival guide to the government and legal system of the Free City of Danzig from a historical perspective presented in this paper was created as a result of analysing the state of preservation of archival sources related to the Free City (1918–1939) kept in numerous archives, based on a developed list of authorities and institutions operating during the interwar period. Because of the incompleteness of sources, to devise this project, I used information found in state documents (treaties, agreements, journals of laws – “Gesetzblatt”, gazettes – “Staatsanzeiger”), as well as statistical yearbooks published in the period, and first of all, *Zbiór dokumentów urzędowych dotyczących stosunku Wolnego Miasta Gdańska do Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (*Collection of Official Documents Pertaining to the Relations of the Free City of Danzig to the Republic of Poland*), vol. 1–11 (Gdańsk 1923–1937), published by the office of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Danzig. The latter consists of decisions and opinions of the Conference of Ambassadors, resolutions of the Council of the League of Nations in Danzig, decisions of the Inter-Allied Commission for the division of post-German property in Danzig, agreements between Danzig and Poland and other of importance or influence for Polish-Danzig relations, as well as selected significant reports on negotiations between Poland and Danzig, which were published in their original versions; for texts issued in English and French, the publishers chose the French version, except for the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Convention, which were printed in two language versions. Moreover, synthetic studies of the history of Danzig proved helpful, as did detailed monographs on the work undertaken by particular departments within

²³ B. Ryszewski, *Uwagi o dawnych i nowych przewodnikach archiwalnych*, “Archeion” 1984, vol. 78, p. 31–44; idem, *Przegląd i systematyka pomocy archiwalnych polskich i obcych publikowanych w ostatnim ćwierćwieczu*, “Archeion” 1990, vol. 88, p. 7–21.

²⁴ A. Żeglińska, *Losy i straty zasobu registratur władz i urzędów II Rzeczypospolitej. Założenia metodologiczne przewodnika historyczno-ustrojowego*, in: *Historia i pamięć: studia z dziejów XX wieku*, eds. W. Gieszczyński, W. B. Łach, K. Sacewicz, Olsztyn 2011, p. 445–489.

the Free City of Danzig administration. They are listed in Volume 5 of *Historia Gdańska (History of Gdańsk)* by Jan Kucharski and Przemysław Szafran, edited by Edmund Cieślak,²⁵ which enabled me, as the author of this paper, to skip the detailed description of the state of research. It should be noted, however, that it has not proved comprehensive enough so far in relation to the political system and legislation of the Free City of Danzig, possibly because of war losses in documentation of numerous authorities and offices, as pointed out by contemporary researchers.²⁶ The proposal for the comprehensive depiction of archival sources presented in this paper should help researchers to access documentation kept in various archives, as source materials are read anew not only by historians and political scientists,²⁷ and archives are no longer their property.²⁸ Because of the specifics of these institutions, the documents are written in various languages, as Danzig authorities used German, the international organisations in Danzig mainly operated in English and French, while the authorities appointed by the Republic of Poland used Polish. Comprehensive analysis of these sources should shed light at the problems related to the history of the Free City of Danzig in 1918–1945 from different points of view,²⁹ without exclusions caused by language barriers.³⁰

²⁵ J. Kucharski, E. Cieślak, P. Szafran, *Historia Gdańska*, vol. 5: *Bibliografia Gdańska*, Sopot 1997.

²⁶ J. Lubini, *The Free City of Danzig and its Higher Administrative Court (1920–1935)*, “Journal on European History of Law” 2020, vol. 11 (2), p. 2–15.

²⁷ E. M. Clark, *Borderland of the mind. The Free City of Danzig and the sovereignty question*, “German Politics & Society” 2017, vol 35 (3), p. 24–37, doi:10.3167/gps.2017.350302.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ H. V. Böttcher, *Die Freie Stadt Danzig. Wege und Umwege in die europäische Zukunft. Historischer Rückblick, staats- und völkerrechtliche Fragen*, Bonn 1997.

³⁰ Z. J. Gąsiorowski, *The Free City: Danzig and German foreign policy, 1919–1934. By Christoph M. Kimmich. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968. 196 pp.*, “Slavic Review” 2017, vol. 28 (3), p. 496–497, doi:10.2307/2494036.

The list and description of authorities and offices of the Free City of Danzig (1919–1945) – a hierarchical arrangement

A. International bodies

1. German-Polish Delimitation Commission. Danzig Subcommission (Komisja do Spraw Wytyczenia Granicy Polsko-Niemieckiej. Podkomisja Gdańska, Commission de delimitation des Frontiers Germano-Polonaise. Sous Commission Danzig)

A temporary international institution of the Supreme Inter-Allied Council and the Conference of Ambassadors, which continued the work of the Peace Conference. Decisions on the course of the frontier were based on natural landscape, economic, social and religious factors. The Commission was dissolved in 1922 after the final delimitation of the frontier (see: Map 1). The representative of the Republic of Poland participated in the works of the Commission. The Treaty of Versailles did not envisage the participation of the Free City of Danzig, so Mayor (Oberbürgermeister) Heinrich Sahm took part in its proceedings as a formal advisor.

In the State Archives of Gdańsk there are 28 archival units (0.5 linear metres, reference code: 10/1300/0), kept in the fonds: Akta komisji do spraw wytyczania granicy polsko-gdańskiej z lat (1919–1921) – Records of Polish-Gdańsk Delimitation Commission (1919–1921), which were probably evacuated during World War II to land properties close to Gdańsk, and then to the Soviet Union, from where they were reclaimed in 1957.³¹ Furthermore, the records of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig contain 9 archival units of the Danzig Subcommission from 1920–1924 (reference code: 10/260/0/1.2/50–10/260/0/1.2/58). Archival materials related to these records are to be found in the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw in the fonds: Wydział Organizacji Międzynarodowych (Department of International Organizations) (reference code: 2/322/0/4.2/2547: Działalność Mieszanej Komisji Granicznej Polsko-Gdańskiej – Activity of

³¹ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*, p. 81.



the Mixed Polish-Gdańsk Delimitation Commission, illegal border crossings. Reports, minutes, protocols, correspondence, notes).

2. German Temporary Commissioner for internal and general administration in Danzig (Deutscher Überleitungskommissar für innere und allgemeine Verwaltung in Danzig, Niemiecki komisarz przejściowy ds. administracji wewnętrznej i ogólnej w Gdańsku)

So far, the records of the Commissioner of the German Reich have not been recovered, similarly to the documentation of the German General Consulate in Gdańsk, where they could have been submitted because of the extraterritorial character of this diplomatic post of the German Reich.³² Usually temporary commissions (appointed to fulfil specific tasks) secured their own documentation and returned it to the archives in their respective countries.

3. Commission composed of three members appointed by the Governments of the British Empire, France and Italy – established as a result of the resolution of 18 November 1920 on the withdrawal of allied and associated forces and the division of property in Danzig³³

The resolution of 9 February 1921 of the Conference of Ambassadors envisaged a Commission des Réparations (Reparation Commission). In a letter dated 19 February 1921, the Commission informed the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk that it had just commenced its activities³⁴ as the Inter-Allied Commission for the division of state property.

4. High Commissioner of the League of Nations, with headquarters in Danzig (Wysoki Komisarz Ligi Narodów – z siedzibą w Gdańsku)

According to Article 102 of the Treaty of Versailles, the Free City of Danzig was to be handed over to the patronage of the League of Nations, exclud-

³² Ibidem, p. 12.

³³ *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 130.

³⁴ *Zbiór*, vol. 2, p. 7–8; S. Mikos, *Wolne Miasto Gdańsk a Liga Narodów 1920–1939*, Gdańsk 1979.

ing the military protection of the city, which would be handed over to the Republic of Poland. On 5 March 1920, the High Commissioner of the League of Nations issued a regulation (*Verordnung*) in which he informed that on 11 February 1920 he had taken over the administrative power over the future Free City of Danzig, where he would proclaim the State Council (*Staatsrat*), defining its objectives, composition and jurisdiction.³⁵ In the transition period, that is, to 15 November 1920, the High Commissioner performed two functions: participating in Danzig's constitution as the Administrator of the future Free City of Danzig, and acting as the Plenipotentiary of the Powers with full power over the entrusted territory. That meant that the High Commissioner issued dispositions, *inter alia*, in the State Council issues, elections to the Constitutional Assembly, and made international agreements with the Polish government, and served as the highest executive organ. Moreover, as an administrative and executive organ of the League of Nations, the High Commissioner had judicial powers, issuing judgements in the court of first instance in all disputes between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. The parties had the right to appeal the High Commissioner's decisions to the Council of the League of Nations (Article 103 of the Treaty of Versailles). The salary of the High Commissioner was covered jointly by two parties: Poland and Danzig.³⁶ The High Commissioner was entitled to personal and property extraterritoriality (pertaining to office buildings³⁷).

On 1 September 1939, at 7 am, the German radio announced that Albert Forster had proclaimed the annexation of Danzig to the German Reich.³⁸ On this occasion, protocolar visits were planned. German sailors from the Schleswig-Holstein gave a party and invited the High Commissioner to it. His refusal of the invitation was attributed to his violent protest against the usage of force which ended the existence of the Free City of Danzig, and to his function as the High Commissioner of the League of

³⁵ *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 16–18.

³⁶ *Zbiór*, vol. 2, p. 12–13.

³⁷ See: *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 127.

³⁸ Albert Forster, as the result of his struggle for power, on 23 August 1939, announced himself the Head of the Free City of Danzig – see: C. J. Burckhardt, *Moja misja w Gdańsku (1937–1939)*, trans. M. Giniatowicz, Warszawa 1970, p. 247.

Nations in Danzig. The day before, that is, on August 31, Carl J. Burckhardt, together with the representative of Great Britain, F. Sheperd, burnt official reports and private notes.³⁹

In the League of Nations Council Archives there are records of the League of Nations Council Secretariat related to Danzig, held in the fonds “Administrative Commissions and Minorities Section” (<https://archives.ungeneva.org/administrative-commissions-and-minorities-section>) in the United Nations Library and Archives Geneva. This fonds contains records of “Registry files 1919–1927”, “Registry files 1928–1932” and “Registry files (1933–1946)” held in Sub-series 4 (Reg.19–27) – “Danzig” (60 boxes), Sub-series 2B – “Administrative Commissions – Danzig” (84 boxes), Sub-series 2B (Reg. 33–46) – “Administrative Commissions – Danzig” (59 boxes). These records include several reports, opinions, correspondence and draft agreements sent by the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig. In 1934, affairs related to the “Administrative Commissions” were moved to the “Political Section”. Its “Sub-sub-series R3626/1/1915 – German-Polish Relations (Polish Corridor)” contains one archival unit from 1930–1936: German-Polish Relations – (Polish corridor) Various correspondence. In the archives of the League of Nations at Geneva we may also find some archive groups called “Private papers”. They have been digitalised thanks to the LONTAD project (<https://archives.ungeneva.org/>). Original decisions of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations are also included in the records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Danzig (10/259/145–152). Reports of the High Commissioner were published in *Journal Officiel*, and they are accessible in electronic form at Société des Nations (see: “Registry files 1919–1927”, “League of Nations Official Journal” and <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328700354/date.item>).

5. The Conference of Ambassadors of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers in Paris

This inter-allied organisation was incorporated in the League of Nations as one of numerous executive bodies. In affairs related to the Free City of

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 258.

Danzig it was supposed to approve and serve as an intermediary in lodging Poland's complaints to the German Government. It did not examine problems on its own, and, all the more, did not make any decisions.⁴⁰ Having completed its tasks, the Conference of Ambassadors collected not only official closing documents (delimitation protocols, technical descriptions, etc.) but also records of various commissions, as it was a usual procedure to secure one's documentation by individual delegations and transfer them to their state administration. The preserved fragments of these records are now kept in the French Diplomatic Archives (Archives diplomatiques) run by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères) in this fonds: *Ministre des Affaires Etrangères Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de la Courneuve Commissions de Delimitation des Frontières en Europe 1919–1936*.⁴¹

6. The German-Polish-Danzig Arbitral Tribunal for the Transit Traffic Matters in Danzig (Niemiecko – Polsko – Gdański Sąd Rozjemczy do spraw ruchu tranzytowego w Gdańsku, Deutsch – Polnisch – Danziger Schiedsgericht für den Durchgangsverkehr in Danzig)

The arbitral tribunal called to settle disputes resulting from the implementation of the transit convention signed between Germany, on the one hand, and the Republic of Poland and the Free City of Danzig, on the other,⁴² following the execution of Article 89 and 98 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 33 of the Paris Treaty. It arbitrated in cases related to limitations in transit traffic between East Prussia and the rest of Germany as well as between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. It was composed of three

⁴⁰ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*, p. 12–13.

⁴¹ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères) – <https://archivesdiplomatiques.diplomatie.gouv.fr/>, *Commissions de Delimitation des Frontières en Europe 1919–1936. Répertoire numérique détaillé* par Raphaël Supiot 2002, FRMAE, 4POI/1, <https://archivesdiplomatiques.diplomatie.gouv.fr/search/results?q=COMMISSIONS+DE+DELIMITATION+DES+FRONTIERES+EN+EUROPE&scope=all> (accessed July 26, 2024).

⁴² Konwencja między Polską i Wolnym Miastem Gdańskiem a Niemcami w sprawie wolności tranzytu pomiędzy Prusami Wschodnimi a resztą Niemiec, podpisana w Paryżu dnia 21 kwietnia 1921 r., Dz.U. 1922, no. 61, item 549.

arbiters: a German, a Pole, and a citizen of the Free City of Danzig, as well as of a President appointed by the three parties of the convention, who was to come from a state which had been neutral during the First World War. The convention stipulated that in case there was no agreement between the German Government and the Government of Poland, which acted on behalf of Poland and the Free City of Danzig, the parties would have to consult the King of Norway to appoint the President of the Tribunal. Salaries and other costs were divided between Germany (45%), Poland (45%) and the Free City of Danzig (10%). The arbitral Tribunal acted according to the procedure decided on 11 May 1923 (Government announcement).⁴³

Nothing is known about the fate of these records and their potential condition. The records of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig contain one archival unit related to Förster's extraterritoriality rights as a judge of this tribunal (reference code: 10/260/0/1.14/811, *Exterritorialität des Regierungspräsidenten a. D. Foerster als stellvertr. Deutscher Richter beim deutsch [poln.] Dzg. Schiedsgericht für den Durchgangsverkehr*, Bd II).

7. The Danzig Port and Waterways Board (Rada Portu i Dróg Wodnych Gdańska, Conseil du Port et des Voies d'Eau de Dantzig, Ausschuß für den Hafen und die Wasserwege von Danzig)

The office established on 24 March 1921,⁴⁴ against the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, which assigned the authority, administration and exploitation of the port, waterways and railways serving the port of Danzig, to Poland (Article 104, paragraph 2). The Board, as an international office managed collectively, was therefore regulated by the Paris Treaty (Articles 19–28). The Board did not possess full power within the port, because police matters were not included in its competence, but taken care of by the Senate of the Free City of Danzig. The port police was led by the comman-

⁴³ Oświadczenie rządowe z dnia 11 maja 1923 r. w przedmiocie procedury stałego Sądu Rozjemczego, ukonstytuowanego na mocy artykułów 11–12 Konwencji między Polską i Wolnym Miastem Gdańskiem a Niemcami w sprawie wolności tranzytu pomiędzy Prusami Wschodnimi a resztą Niemiec, podpisanej w Paryżu dnia 21 kwietnia 1921 r., Dz.U. 1923, no. 57, item 404.

⁴⁴ *Zbiór*, vol. 2, p. 19.

dant, who was the subordinate of the Board. Thus, he was legally subject to two authorities. Communication between the Board and the Senate and the Police Authority was executed by a person appointed by Poland. The costs paid by the Free City of Danzig were reimbursed by the Board. The port police had three departments: (1) water police (Schiffahrtspolizei) led by chief of pilots and inspector of pilots, (2) security police (Sicherheitspolizei) taking care of the traffic (le trafic) and ensuring safety (service de sûreté), and (3) police within the free zone.

The Board had an even number of commissioners from Poland and the Free City of Danzig. Members of the Board elected one of them as its chairman for a three-year term. In case there was no decision within one month, the League of Nations was supposed to appoint this person from among Swiss citizens.

Among the Board's tasks, in accordance with Article 20 of the Paris Treaty, were: supervising and managing the exploitation of the port, waterways and all the railways servicing the port, as well as managing enterprises servicing the railways. Moreover, the Board collected all fees from the administration of the port, waterways and railways (Article 23), and was obliged to provide Poland with the right to use the port and its infrastructure freely (Article 26 – Government announcements related to the matters of the Poland-Danzig convention).

The Board was a legal entity and had its own property, although its costs were covered in half by Poland and the Free City of Danzig. Its main executive agency were: the Commerce Authority (the post reserved for a Pole), and the Technical Authority (the post reserved for a German). The Commerce Authority administered the port, that is, literally, used the port machinery, whereas the Technical Authority took care of the preservation and the technical aspects of port development. The Board's orders and by-laws were approved by the Senate.

The State Archives in Gdańsk contain this fonds: Rada Portu i Dróg Wodnych w Gdańsku (The Port and Waterways in Danzig Board, Der Ausschuss für den Hafen und die Wasserwege von Danzig), which also includes records of the Pilots Office and Machine-building Office in Danzig-Krakowiec (Maschinenamt Danzig-Krakau), as well as records of the Chief Presidium of the Province and Region of Danzig (Akta Naczelnego

Prezydium Prowincji i Rejencji Gdańskiej) related to port and sailing issues, 1739 archival units in total, from [1811–] 1921–1939 [–1945], equal to 37,0 linear metres (reference code: 10/1027/0).

B. Danzig bodies

The Free City of Danzig internal administration and legislation was transferred to the local authorities by the High Commissioner on 15 November 1920. The population of the Free City of Danzig was dominated by people of German origin (95%). The German state, having no formal authority in this territory, exercised a strong influence on the political, cultural and economic life of Danzig, with the help of local (Danzig) authorities, led by the Senate of the Free City, as well as through administration of justice and police authorities.

In mid-March 1920, the electoral law proposal was enacted, approved by the League of Nations in April 1920. In accordance with its provisions, all citizens of the German Reich, both men and women who were 20 years of age or older and lived in the territory of the Free City of Danzig in the moment when the Treaty of Versailles came into force, had a right to vote. The election to the 120-people Constitutional Assembly took place on 16 May 1920, and the first meeting on 14 June 1920.⁴⁵

1. *Volkstag (legislative and executive power)*

The Parliament (Volkstag) was established as a result of the 6 December 1920 Act transforming the Constitutional Assembly.⁴⁶ According to the Constitution, the People's Parliament (Volkstag), with 120 members (Article 6), elected for 4 years (Article 9), represented the whole population (Article 7). Acts of law adopted by the Parliament were published in the official Danzig Journal ("Staatsanzeiger").

⁴⁵ M. Podlaszewski, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁶ S. Kutrzeba, op. cit., p. 211; T. Maciejewski, *Ustrój konstytucyjny i sądowy Napoleonówskiego (1807–1814) i Wersalskiego (1920–1939) Wolnego Miasta Gdańska w rozwoju prawnohistoryczno-porównawczym*, Gdańsk 2017, p. 136–149; *Die Verfassung der Freien Stadt Danzig: in der Fassung des Gesetzes vom 4. Juli 1930*, ed. H. Reiss, Danzig–Berlin 1931, p. 26–34.

The State Archives in Gdańsk, in the records of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, contain 19 archival units from 1924–1939 in a sub-series – *Parliament and Powiat Diets – Volkstag i sejmiki powiatowe* (reference code: 10/260/0/1.6) – regarding the work of the Presidium. These records are of significant value, as their own registry, held in a building destroyed in 1945, has been lost.

2. The Senate of the Free City of Danzig (executive power)

In accordance with the Danzig Constitution (Article 39 of the Constitution of the Free City of Danzig), the Senate was the highest executive and governing body of the Free City of Danzig. Furthermore, it had some legislative rights (right of legislative initiative, right of veto), and in time it gained the right to issue statutory instruments (regulations). It served as a head of state, a government, and as organs of government administration and territorial local-government. It was composed of 22 people elected by the Volkstag for an indefinite period, holding office depending on the trust of Parliamentary majority. It was divided into two groups, that is, seven principal senators, who were professional officials (im Hauptamte) and 13 acting in a secondary capacity (im Nebenamte), representing political parties. A President (Chairman) and principal senators were elected by the Volkstag for a 4-year term. The meetings of the Senate were secret, and the quorum was at least half of the elected members of the Senate. The decisions were taken with a majority of votes, and in case it was not reached, the vote of the President had the decisive power.⁴⁷

The transfer of all administrative tasks at the highest and medium level to the Senate was officially announced on 7 December 1920, a day after the first Senate was elected.⁴⁸

The Danzig Senate had broad jurisdiction:

- 1) to announce acts of law and issuing executive orders to them,
- 2) to administer the Free City of Danzig,
- 3) to supervise all local authorities,

⁴⁷ T. Maciejewski, op. cit., p. 149–155; M. Podlaszewski, op. cit., p. 101–125; *Die Verfassung der Freien Stadt Danzig...*, p. 34–41.

⁴⁸ M. Podlaszewski, op. cit., p. 168.

- 4) to set budget estimates, manage assets and public revenues and negotiate the amount of income and expenditures of the state,
- 5) to protect the rights of the Free City of Danzig and its citizens, and appoint officials (Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution),
- 6) to agree on guidelines for internal and foreign policies (Article 38 of the Constitution),
- 7) to grant pardon (Article 40 of the Constitution),
- 8) to represent the Free City of Danzig externally, if this was not in conflict with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, as Danzig's foreign relations were the responsibility of the Polish Government (Article 41 of the Constitution),
- 9) to provide an explanation in public matters at each request of the League of Nations (Article 42 of the Constitution),
- 10) to supervise the Police headquarters, which initially was a separate authority organ subject to the superior authority in Berlin.

The Senate became the successor of the records of offices acting in the territory of the Free City of Danzig – in compliance with the announcement (*Bekanntmachung*) of 7 December 1920, in which it notified that on that day it “took over the official competences of German central state and regional authorities, of the Supreme President and of the Region Government President. All the authorities remained in their offices and continue their official duties according to existing acts of law”.⁴⁹ Moreover, on 1 May 1921, the Senate took over the responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Danzig municipality as the local-government body. At the outbreak of World War II, on 1 September 1939, the incorporation of the Free City of Danzig within the German Reich was proclaimed, and the Senate was dissolved.

The direct dependence and cooperation between Danzig and Germany may be seen in the way the registry records of the Danzig Senate were handled. The most important records of the Presidium's Office were transferred by the Senate to the State Archives of the Free City of Danzig (*Staatsarchiv der Freie Stadt Danzig*) directly after matters had been settled. Records related to political affairs, Danzig-German relations and minutes of the Senate's meetings were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin.

⁴⁹ *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 132.

Their fate is not known.⁵⁰ The preservation of the most important records of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig was discussed during the conference of representatives of Prussian archives and the Danzig archivist in October 1932 in Berlin. The decision was made to send these records directly to Berlin, as they contained crucial, often confidential information. They were to be held in the Secret State Archives in Berlin-Dahlem (Geheimes Staatsarchiv in Berlin–Dahlem). The transportation was executed by land and sea, probably via Królewiec, immediately after the meeting. This way, the highest authority of the Free City of Danzig was handing over the most valuable records, including secret ones, for formal keeping, to a foreign state,⁵¹ which might explain why they are to be found in German archives. Archival materials, which could not be evacuated and reclaimed were destroyed together with the whole archives building in 1945.

The State Archives in Gdańsk keeps 3633 archival units (51.0 linear metres), which were preserved by Polish archives service after the end of the war (reference code: 10/260/0).

3. Senate and local-government institutions for administration of the Free City of Danzig economy

The territorial administration of the Free City of Danzig, which covered 1,893 square metres, was divided into two city districts (Stadtkreise, powiaty miejskie) and three land districts (Landkreise, powiaty wiejskie): (Article 67 of the Constitution). Each had its own local-government, supervised by the Senate (Article 68 of the Constitution). Within this structure, the City of Danzig constituted a separate municipality (gmina), with its own property assets. In principle, the administration organs' organisation and scope of work in the Free City of Danzig reflected the system in Germany and Prussia, as the legislation of these states remained in force when the Constitution of the Free City of Danzig was adopted, unless respective acts of law were clearly repealed (Article 116 of the Constitution). Therefore, all authorities and offices of the state administration below the former regional

⁵⁰ C. Biernat, *Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku: przewodnik po zasobie do 1945 roku*, Warszawa–Łódź 1992, p. 84.

⁵¹ Idem, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*, p. 127–128.

level (Regierungsbezirk Danzig), particularly those at the district/powiat level, continued to operate in compliance with hitherto valid legislation from the municipality/gmina regulations of 1891, city regulations of 1853 and district/powiat regulations of 1872.⁵² The scope of local-government autonomy depended on the will of the Free City of Danzig, and precisely its Senate, which depended on the provisions of Article 68 of the Constitution.

The State Archives in Gdańsk keep few records from the Landrat Office in Danzig (Landrat in Gdansk / Landratsamt Danzig-Land) from 1857–1937 – one archival unit (reference code: 10/24/0). Seven archival units of the Landrat Office are kept in the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin-Dahlem (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin–Dahlem) (reference code: GStA PK XIV.HA, Rep. 186), but only for the period 1883–1890. The whereabouts of other records are not known.

In the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin-Dahlem (reference code: XIV. HA, Rep. 182) there is only one archival unit of the commission for the Danzig Region/Bezirksausschuss für den Regierungsbezirk Danzig, which was affiliated to the Danzig Region (Regierung zu Danzig) in 1916–1925. The commission was appointed to settle administrative disputes and to issue administrative decisions.

In the transition period, that is, until 15 November 1920, matters of local administration and municipal economy were run by hitherto existing institutions, but in order to supervise the implementation of commodities control regulations which were still in force in this territory, the office of the Delegate of the German Reich's Commissioner for Import and Export Licenses (Delegierte des Reichs-Kommissars für Aus- und Einfuhrbewilligung, see *Bekanntmachung*) was established on 22 March 1920. Lothar Förster as the President and Deputy of the Supreme President of the Danzig Region established the Foreign Trade Office at the Danzig municipality (Aussenhandelsstelle des Magistrats der Stadt Danzig), which was later subject to the Senate, as well as the Economy Office for the future territory of the Free City of Danzig (Wirtschaftsamt für das Gebiet der künftigen Freien Stadt Danzig).

⁵² M. Podlaszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 169–170.

When the Senate of the Free City of Danzig was established on 6 December 1920, economic affairs were taken over by individual departments of the Senate,⁵³ which had to rely on legal acts created by their predecessors (the succeeded), namely aforementioned offices and delegations.

Among the prerogatives of the Senate was the Police Presidium (Polizeipräsidium zu Danzig), and its records were transferred directly from the Police Headquarters in Danzig to the Secret State Archives in Berlin and arranged within Part XIV of the Province of West Prussia. They were included in the holdings under the reference code of the repository of the Danzig Archives: Rep. 209 (reference code: XIV. HA, Rep. 209) and contained only records created before 1920. After 1945, another 29 volumes of official documents were moved to the Secret State Archives in Berlin, resulting from the distribution of holdings between archives and from other transfers. A partial inventory of records and archival materials, which were not transferred, in total 7,179 volumes and 23 plans from 1849–1945, is kept in the State Archives in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/14/0). Police structures in Danzig were expanded, as German military units were removed and the city was demilitarised. There were units pertaining to the Criminal Police (Kriminalpolizei), Order Police (Schutzpolizei) and State Police School (Staatliche Polizeischule) as well as Harbour Police units.

Apart from the above-mentioned bodies, in the Free City of Danzig there were several other institutions and organisations, enumerated in detail in statistical yearbooks and address books. Among them were the Post and Telegraph Board (Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung), the Land Tax Office (Landessteueramt), and the Tariffs Board of the Free City of Danzig (Die Zollverwaltung der Freien Stadt Danzig). Their registries were completely destroyed and only some related information can be found in records of other agencies. Of pivotal importance was the State Archives of the Free City of Danzig (Staatsarchiv der Freien Stadt Danzig). On 29 July 1921, the Commission for the Distribution of the Government Property informed the President of the Polish Delegation that having examined the proposals of the President of the Senate and the President of the Polish Del-

⁵³ B. Hajduk, *Finanse, przemysł i rzemiosło (1920–1939)*, in: *Historia Gdańska*, vol. 4, part 2, ed. E. Cieślak, Sopot 1999, p. 134–135.

egation, the decision was made to assign the building and the adjacent plot of the State Archives to the Free City of Danzig, but it anticipated the possibility to allocate space in the archives to Poland for the purpose of keeping records related to territories given up to Poland in the Treaty of Versailles; the remaining records were assigned to the Free City of Danzig, and the right to part of the holdings was retained by the German state.⁵⁴ The inter-war registry of the State Archives of the Free City of Danzig (Staatsarchiv der Freien Stadt Danzig) was taken away by the Germans. Nevertheless, the remaining materials (the Danzig Senate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, i.a.) helped recreate the course of the Polish-Danzig-German dispute, to determine its essence, and, first of all, the fundamental objectives planned to be reached by interested parties.⁵⁵

4. Administration of justice – judicial bodies and powers

The administration of justice played an important role in the relations between Poland and Danzig. Excluded from the Free City's jurisdiction were only the office personnel of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland's and the Polish state as a legal subject, as well as real assets belonging to the Polish State Treasury in the territory of the Free City of Danzig and state-owned enterprises equated with them, especially the Polish Railways. There were three courts: Amtsgericht (a lower-level court) in Danzig, Sopot (Zoppot), Nowy Staw (Neuteich) and Nowy Dwór Gdański (Tiegenhof), Landgericht (a medium-level court) in Danzig, and Obergericht Danzig (a superior-level court in Danzig), based on German civil and criminal legislation of 1877, with necessary modifications introduced after the Free City of Danzig was established. The reform of the administration of justice was carried out on 18 January 1927.⁵⁶ The third ordinance on simplifications and savings in the administration of justice, dated 3 July

⁵⁴ *Zbiór*, vol. II, p. 47; see also: APG, Senat Wolnego Miasta Gdańska, *Verteilung der Staatsarchive der Freien Stadt Danzig*, ref. code: 10/260/0/1.25/2867.

⁵⁵ C. Biernat, *Spór archiwalny polsko-gdańsko-niemiecki...*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ G. Voigt, *Danziger Gerichtsverfassung: Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz nebst Ausführungsgesetz und Nebengesetzen mit Anmerkungen*, Danzig–Berlin 1927; T. Maciejewski, op. cit.

1935 (Dritte Verordnung betreffend Vereinfachungen und Ersparnisse in der Rechtspflege vom 3. Juli 1935), liquidated the Amtsgericht in Sopot, and its jurisdiction was ceded to the Amtsgericht Danzig. The Amtsgericht in Neuteich was also liquidated and its jurisdiction passed to the Amtsgericht Tiegenhoff. Only two Amtsgericht registries survived, namely of Amtsgericht Danzig and Amtsgericht Zoppot.

The Amtsgericht Danzig records are kept in the State Archives in Gdańsk and contain archival materials from 1776–1878, 1879–1945, 1946–2005, totalling 87,755 archival units, that is, 938.0 linear metres. They cover the period from the annexation of Pomerania by Prussia (1772), when the Polish administration of justice, namely the Royal Land and Administrative Court (Królewski Sąd Ziemiański i Administracyjny, Königliche Land- und Amtsgericht) was liquidated. Despite changes in the state structure, the Amtsgericht Danzig records are not divided into series and sub-series.

The Amtsgericht Zoppot records (reference code: 93/146/0) have been transferred to the State Archives of Gdańsk, Gdynia Branch. They include archival materials from 1 October 1879, that is, from the day this court was established based on the introduction of unified administration of justice in the German Reich, up to 1945. There are 3,883 archival units in total (55.58 linear metres), not divided into series or sub-series that would reflect changes in the state structure and organisation of the system over time. The fonds contains not only land, real estate and mortgage registers of Sopot, which acquired city rights in 1901, but also registers transferred from courts which existed before that time in Mosty (Brueck) and Wejherowo (Neustadt).

Records of the medium-level court, that is, the Landgericht Danzig and the industrial tribunal (Arbeitsgericht Danzig) affiliated to it from 1929, have not been preserved. The jurisdiction of the Arbeitsgericht Danzig covered the whole territory of the Free City.

In the State Archives in Gdańsk we can find records of the superior court (Obergericht Danzig) from 1921–1935[–1945]. It was the last instance court of common jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases. It also served as a constitutional and election tribunal, as well as an administrative court. Amtsgericht and Landgericht courts fell under the Superior Court. The Obergericht Danzig was liquidated following the annexation

of Danzig to the German Reich in 1939. The preserved fonds contains 310 archival units, that is, 5.35 linear metres of records (reference code: 10/89/0). The Obergericht Danzig was replaced by the Oberlandesgericht Danzig. Its records (reference code: 10/96/0) contain 6,671 archival units (73.75 linear metres).

Moreover, in the Free City of Danzig there were special courts appointed to decide in specific categories of cases. They included the disciplinary court for judges (Disziplinargericht) and the disciplinary court for non-court officers, the Marine Chamber in Danzig (Seeamt Danzig) and for appeal instance – the Superior Marine Chamber in Danzig (Oberseeamt Danzig), as well as the Usury Court (Wuchergericht). Out of all these courts, only the registry of the Marine Chamber in Danzig has been preserved, and it is kept in the State Archives of Gdańsk. It contains 101 archival units (1 linear meter) from 1787–1944, so the records pertain not only to the period of the Free City of Danzig, but also to the earlier and later years, without clear division of these periods in the structure of the fonds.

Separate courts of justice were public prosecutor's offices (Staatsanwaltschaft), the Bar (Rechtsanwaltschaft), and prison authority (Gefängniswesen). The latter covered prisons: Strafanstalt Danzig, Strafanstalt Tiegenhof, Strafanstalt Zoppot; the juvenile detention camp (Jugendstrafanstalt) fell under the Strafanstalt Danzig. Public prosecutor's offices were organised in the same way as courts, they were subject to similar reorganisation processes and acted on the analogous territory.

The State Archives in Gdańsk keep one fonds entitled Prokuratura w Gdańsku (Public Prosecutor's Office in Danzig, Staatsanwaltschaft Danzig), which contains both the registry of the superior public prosecutor's office (Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Oberlandesgericht) and of the Landgericht Danzig from 1887–1945 – 744 archival units in total, 4.47 linear metres (reference code: 10/93/0). As far as the prisons' records are concerned, only personal records of the staff of the prison in Danzig (Strafanstalt Danzig) from 1923–1944 have been preserved. They contain 70 archival units, 0.18 linear metres (reference code: 10/137/0).

C. Polish institutions*

1. General Delegation of the Ministry of Provision for the city of Gdańsk (Generalna Delegacja Ministerstwa Apropowizacji na miasto Gdańsk)

The Delegation began its activities before the commencement of the Paris conference. On 11 January 1919, the General Delegate of the Ministry of Provision for the city of Gdańsk was established. It operated in the framework of the American Relief Administration – Mission for Poland, commonly known as the American Food Mission (Amerykańska Misja Żywnościowa, AMŻ) based in Warsaw but with a branch office in Gdańsk. Members of the General Delegation of the Ministry of Provision, accompanied by Americans, came to Gdańsk on 30 January 1919.⁵⁷ When the American Relief Organization completed its operations in Gdańsk in mid-August 1919, the role of the General Delegation of the Ministry of Provision for the city of Gdańsk was diminished as well. It continued to exist, however, but in the structures of the Delegation of the Polish Government in Gdańsk.⁵⁸

2. Delegate of the Polish Government in Gdańsk 1919–1924 (Delegat Rządu Polskiego w Gdańsku)

The Delegation of Polish Government came into being on 28 January 1919. It was led by Mieczysław Jałowiecki, who at the same time served as the General Delegate of the Ministry of Provisions for the city of Gdańsk; the Delegation of the Polish Government was a superordinate body in this hi-

* In the chapter devoted to Polish institutions operating in the Free City of Danzig, the Polish-language name of the city (Gdańsk) has been used.

⁵⁷ In September 1919, the tasks of the American Relief Administration – Mission for Poland were taken over by the British Mission.

⁵⁸ *Komisarz Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Gdańsku*, ref. code: APG 10/259/0/1/2–APG 10/259/0/1/7; S. Mikos, *Działalność Komisariatu Generalnego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku 1920–1939*, Warszawa 1972, p. 36, 59–61; idem, *Wolne Miasto Gdańsk w okresie rządów parlamentarnych (1920–1933)*, in: *Historia Gdańska*, vol. 4, part 2, ed. E. Cieślak, p. 42, 44.

erarchy. From an organisational point of view, the Delegation constituted an integral part of the Inter-Allied Mission (of the American section – the American Relief Organization), under the chief command of colonel Grove in Warsaw, in Gdańsk headed directly by major Webb. The Delegation was financed by the State Office for the Purchase of Basic Necessities (Państwowy Urząd Zakupu Artykułów Pierwszej Potrzeby). It was the first Polish post in the territory of the Free City of Danzig, which later was transformed into the office of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk (APG 10/259/4, APG 10/259/16, APG 10/259/259). Records of the Delegate of the Polish Government in Gdańsk from 1919–1924, together with records of the General Delegation of the Ministry of Provisions for the city of Gdańsk (50 archival units) were transported on 27 April 1959 from the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie) to the State Archives in Gdańsk, where they are kept in a separate series of records (reference code: 10/259/0/1).

3. The General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland (Generalny Komisarz Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej)

The Polish Government had a representative in Gdańsk, called a diplomatic representative of the Polish Government in the Convention of 9 November 1920,⁵⁹ and in the Treaty of Warsaw (of 1921) a General Commissioner.⁶⁰ The General Commissioner represented the Polish Government and was responsible for the execution and protection of rights and interests of Poland, Polish citizens and Polish origin citizens of the Free City of Danzig. The direct supervisor of the General Commissioner was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw.

In the territory of the Free City of Danzig, the General Commissioner supervised – in terms of their responsibilities and in disciplinary cases – all Polish officials (except for customs officials, railway and postal officers) and military men (through the medium of the highest-ranking officer), regardless of ministries they represented. General Commissioners and their direct

⁵⁹ *Zbiór*, vol. 1, p. 100–110.

⁶⁰ The same title pertained to a representative of the Polish King in Gdańsk from 1736 to the annexation of Gdańsk by Prussia in 1793.

subordinates staffed the General Commissioner's Office. Ministries, except for railway, postal and customs matters, contacted the General Commissioner directly and through them to their ministerial agencies. The General Commissioner or the official appointed by them performed external functions, e.g. in relation to the Free City of Danzig authorities, or to the High Commissioner of the League of Nations. Only customs officials, postal and railway officers were granted any freedom of action in their respective areas, namely in technical matters of significance, although they were obliged to act in agreement with the General Commissioner. The General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk served also as a diplomatic representative of Poland in the Senate of the Free City. Commissioners intermediated in the whole of the correspondence between the Governments of Danzig and Poland (they received letters from the Polish authorities and delivered them to the Danzig Senate, and received letters from the Danzig Senate in order to send them to Warsaw). They represented Poland in front of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig. They also acted directly as representatives of Poland while granting visas to citizens of the Free City of Danzig.

The records experienced complicated and not fully explained events. Some of them, materials of special importance in particular, were either destroyed on the spot by Polish authorities before the outbreak of World War II, or were transported to Warsaw, where they might have shared the fate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' records.⁶¹

The essential part of the fonds was left in its location and transferred by the German archives service to the Staatsarchiv der Freien Stadt Danzig. At the end of World War II, probably in 1944–1945, the General Commissioner's records were intercepted by the Red Army and transported to locations near Gdańsk. Pieces of these records found after World War II were in good condition, so they could not have been kept inside the building which burnt down and was completely destroyed. In 1956, the Soviet

⁶¹ C. Stodolny, *Inwentarz akt Komisarza Generalnego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Gdańsku 1919–1939*, Warszawa 1967, p. 26.

authorities returned 7 linear metres of the General Commissioner's records secured in the vicinity of Gdańsk in 1945 to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These records were then transported from Warsaw to the State Archives in Gdańsk in order to merge them with other respective records. In 1959, records of the Delegation of the Polish Government in Gdańsk (50 boxes) were added to these holdings, creating an integral entirety of the materials created by representatives of the Polish Government in the Free City of Danzig. Records of the so-called "Select Office" of the General Commissioner (Departments I–III) and few records of the Representation of the Office of the State Attorney of the Republic of Poland have also survived. The fate of records of other offices is unknown to the Polish archives service.⁶² In the State Archives in Gdańsk these records constitute a separate fonds (reference code: 10/259/0), with 1094 archival units (26 linear metres). In 1995, due to the accession process, 720 archival units from the Central Archives of Modern Records, including a few archival units from the Central Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were transferred to this fonds. In 2001, as a result of merging records of fonds between archives, 5 additional archival units were added to the fonds.

Offices and representatives of Polish authorities falling officially under the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland, with an indication of the authorities they represented in the territory of the Free City of Danzig (offices with double subordination, making use of the registry of the creator of the fonds):

3.1. General Representative of the Government for Westerplatte (Generalny Pełnomocnik Rządu ds. Westerplatte)

The remnants of its registry may be found in the records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland, kept in the State Archives in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/259/0), which were transferred from the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw in 1995. In this fonds, in the series 2.9 – Port Gdańsk (the Gdańsk Harbor) and 2.10 – Stocznie Gdańskie (the Gdańsk Shipyards) there are few documents regarding the Wester-

⁶² Ibidem, p. 26–28.

platte depot (126 archival units). The related materials (7 archival units) from 1924–1926 are to be found in the records of the Ministry of Military Affairs in Warsaw (reference code: AAN 2/1192/0/3).

3.2. Commercial Representative of the General Commissioner (Pełnomocnik Handlowy Komisarza Generalnego)

The representative of the Central Office of Measures in Warsaw; its registry has not been preserved, but related materials are kept in the records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/259).

3.3. Merchant Fleet Office (Urząd Marynarki Handlowej)

The office subordinate to the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Warsaw. It executed the rights of the Polish State with regard to registering vessels under the Gdańsk flag, registered and supervised the efficiency of Polish merchant ships and signing on crews (Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 3 April 1922). In 1928, the Merchant Fleet Office changed its headquarters and name and was transformed into the Gdańsk Maritime Office in Gdynia. Its records, beginning in 1926, are kept in the State Archives in Gdańsk, Branch Office in Gdynia (reference code: 93/3/0). Records related to this office are to be found in the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw – 1 archival unit from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Maritime Department from 1938 (reference code 2/12/0/11) and one archival unit related to the Merchant Fleet Office in the Free City of Danzig from 1925, belonging to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers in Warsaw (reference code: 2/8/0/4.1/IV Rkt.1 t.14 podt.9). The records of the latter office contain also 31 archival units from 1924–1939 related to Poland's attitude to the Free City of Danzig (reference code 2/8/0/6.134).

3.4. Representation of the Office of the State Attorney of the Republic of Poland (Delegatura Prokuraturii Generalnej R.P.)

The office subordinate to the Ministry of the Treasury; it was composed of the delegate and two referendaries. It performed two functions: (1) of an

official deputy of financial interests of the Polish State Treasury and state enterprises equated with it – in courts in Danzig, as well as (2) of the General Commissioner's Legal Office.

The Office of the State Attorney of the Republic of Poland came before the Gdańsk courts in trials, stood trials in the courts of Gdańsk whenever the Polish State Treasury or a state enterprise equated with it was a party in litigation, usually in railway trials. Furthermore, it was involved in conducting cases related to protecting Polish interests before the Free City of Danzig authorities and at the League of Nations. The Delegate of the Office of the State Attorney participated in protecting Polish affairs in the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva. The Delegate was also a permanent member of the Polish Delegation to the Port and Waterways Boards in Gdańsk, which administered the port of Gdańsk.

The State Archives in Gdańsk holds remnants of the registry of the Office of the State Attorney of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, namely 37 archival units from 1921–1939 (reference code: 10/259/0/5/1006–10/259/0/5/1042).

3.5. Polish State Treasury (Polska Kasa Rządowa)

The institution acting within the framework of the Bank of Poland, accepting and making payments to and from the account of the Polish Government, settling account with the Free City of Danzig. Its records have not been preserved.

3.6. Commission for the Distribution of Food Products (Komisja Rozdzielcza)

The office subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, appointed to administer food trade with the Free City of Danzig. Its records were lost.

Offices and representatives of Polish authorities with limited dependence on the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland, with an indication of the authorities they represented in the territory of the Free City of Danzig:

3.7. Customs Inspectorate in Gdańsk (Inspektorat Cel Gdańsk)

The office subordinate to the Ministry of the Treasury (Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 9 January 1922). In accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, the territory of the Free City of Danzig was incorporated into the Polish customs territory and subject to Polish legislation and customs tariffs. On the basis of the Paris Convention, the execution of these acts and collecting customs duties was confined to the Free City of Danzig officers, acting under general supervision of the Central Customs Board of Poland. Gdańsk was paid a percentage of customs revenues received by the Polish State. The operations of the customs service in Gdańsk were supervised by the Customs Inspectorate, whereas the administration of customs was performed by Danzig officers, who became collectors of Polish customs duties.

The Free City of Danzig legislation regarding monopolies, indirect charges and taxes was not fully adapted to the Polish legislation. Although Danzig had a common customs territory with Poland, it had its own monetary system. On 1 January 1924, a new currency was introduced – the Danzig gulden, equal to 1/25 of the British pound sterling. It was divided into 100 Pfennig. On 22 September 1931, it was based on 0.222.895 grams of gold. This complicated situation shaped a common misconception that between Poland and Gdańsk there was a customs border. The registry of the Customs Inspectorate in Gdańsk has been lost; related materials are kept in the records of the Ministry of the Treasury in Warsaw, where they constitute a separate series: Customs Inspectorate for the City of Gdańsk: customs negotiations and a political situation in Gdańsk (Inspektorat Celný na m. Gdańsk: rokowania celne i sytuacja polityczna w Gdańsku) – 52 archival units from 1922–1939 (reference code: 2/10/0/10.2/7275–2/10/0/10.2/7310, 2/10/0/10.3 /7311–2/10/0/10.3/7326), as well as in the records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk – 41 archival units from 1920–1939, held in the State Archives in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/259/0/2.8/280–10/259/0/2.8/320).

3.8. Post and Telegraph District Directorate of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk (Dyrekcja Okręgu Poczty i Telegrafów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Gdańsku)

The Directorate was subordinate to the Ministry of Post and Telegraph, and from 1 October 1921, it operated in the structure of the Post and Telegraph Directorate in Bydgoszcz. It administered the state-owned enterprise “Polish Post, Telegraph and Telephone”. The Polish State opened three post offices in Gdańsk: (1) Maritime (Port) Post Office, which commenced its operations on 10 March 1920, after the *Krakus* ship entered the port of Gdańsk with a load of parcels, legitimised on 22 April 1920;⁶³ (2) Railway (Station) Post Office, launched on 17 April 1921 at the Gdańsk Main Railway Station under the name of the Polish Post Office No. 2 in Gdańsk; (3) Post and Telegraph Central Office inaugurated on 5 January 1925 under the name Polish Post and Telegraph Office No. 3 in Gdańsk, offering a full range of postal services. On the day the latter office was open, 10 post boxes were installed in Gdańsk. From 1 August 1926, this office operated under the name of the Polish Post and Telegraph Office No. 1 in Gdańsk.

The registries of Polish post offices have not been preserved; materials related to them can be found in the records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk – 6 archival units from 1920–1935, held in the State Archives in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/259/0/2.7/274–10/259/0/2.7/279).

3.9. State Railways District Directorate (Dyrekcja Okręgowa Kolei Państwowych)

The office administered a network of standard gauge railways in the territory of the Free City of Danzig (excluding streetcars) and in the Pomerania district. The Directorate was composed of delegates of the Port

⁶³ Its names were: the Postal Shipment Office Gdańsk-Nowy Port (Urząd Ekspedycji Pocztovej Gdańsk-Nowy Port), from 1922 – the Polish Post Office No. 1 in Gdańsk (Polski Urząd Pocztowy nr 1 w Gdańsku, from August 1, 1926 – the Polish Post Office No. 3 (Polski Urząd Pocztowy nr 3); the latter was moved to a building that was constructed specifically to suit the needs of the overseas post office at Broschkischerweg 26 (Wiślna Street, currently Chodackiego Street).

and Waterways Board and of the Free City of Danzig. The railway police service was the responsibility of the Free City of Danzig. The Directorate underwent a few transformations. On the basis of the existing Freistadt Eisenbahn Direktion (Dyrekcja Kolei Wolnego Miasta), it was established on 1 December 1920 as the State Railways Directorate (Dyrekcja Kolei Państwowych w Gdańsku), operating between 1921–1929, also known as the Pomeranian Railways Directorate in Gdańsk (Pommerellische Eisenbahndirektion in Danzig, Pomorska Dyrekcja Kolei w Gdańsku); from 1929 to 1933, it functioned as the State Railways District Directorate in Gdańsk (Dyrekcja Okręgowa Kolei Państwowych Gdańsk). Affiliated to the Directorate was the delegate of the Free City of Danzig for railway matters. After conflicts with the authorities of the Free City of Danzig (which protested against the Directorate managing railways in Gdańsk), on 1 September 1933, the Polish authorities transferred the Directorate to Toruń, and some of its departments to Bydgoszcz. The Gdańsk Bureau of the Polish State Railways (Biuro Gdańskie Polskich Kolei Państwowych – PKP) remained in Gdańsk.⁶⁴

In the State Archives in Gdańsk there are records of the Railways Administration in Gdańsk (reference code: 10/1081/0), which contain records of the Eisenbahndirektion Danzig, though records from the Free City of Danzig period are not separated within this fonds in a separate series. The fonds includes technical documentation (plans, technical drawings) of the construction of segments of railways from the second half of the 19th century in the territories of the whole province of West Prussia and the Pomeranian Voivodeship. The most numerous related records are to be found in the Records of the General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk – 49 units from 1920–1938, held in the State Archives of Gdańsk (reference code 10/259/0/2.6/231–10/259/0/2.6/273) constituting a series entitled Polish Railways in the Free City of Danzig.

⁶⁴ See: F. Marszałek, *Koleje na obszarze Wolnego Miasta Gdańska pod względem prawnopolitycznym*, Gdańsk 1960; S. Mikos, *Sprawa przeniesienia dyrekcji Polskich Kolei Państwowych z Gdańska do Torunia i Bydgoszczy (1920–1933)*, “Komunikaty Instytutu Bałtyckiego” 1993, vol. 42, p. 111–126.

Conclusion

The Free City of Danzig came into being on 15 November 1920 as a new political construct resulting from the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919. The rights to Gdańsk acquired from Germany were transferred by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers partly to the city, and partly to Poland, with special rights reserved for the League of Nations. That is why matters related to the Free City of Danzig are reflected in the documentation in archival fonds of established registries of old authorities and offices, currently held in archives in many countries. The most important of them are the papers of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, Port and Waterways Board in Gdańsk, as well as of international organisations and Polish and Danzig authorities related to them.

In the interwar period, the territory of the Free City of Danzig saw the establishment of new offices of international and Polish authorities, and, over time, also of Free City authorities which exercised central powers within the specific constitutional framework of the Free City. The entire territorial administration – including regional (provincial) and local bodies operating in the city – was subordinated to these central institutions. They operated under the patronage of the League of Nations, though the local-government operated independently of the changes in higher authorities, as it was legally regulated in the Free City of Danzig. The lack of military institutions results from removing the German army from the Free City of Danzig and demilitarisation of its territory. Polish authorities and offices as well as authorities of international organisations operated in Gdańsk until the outbreak of World War II, whereas Gdańsk authorities operated until the end of World War II in 1945.

As evacuation plans were relatively belated, they caused the destruction of the majority of documentation which had been left in registries of particular local administration offices. They are not fully preserved, which means that the documentation of many authorities and offices has been completely lost. The surviving archival material reflects either some of the functions performed by the offices (their part) or all of these functions, but

in a fragmentary state (remnants of files). So their state of preservation may be described as partial and rudimentary. But despite these losses, the preserved documentation, presented comprehensively in this paper, may serve as a gateway and guideline for broad research performed in all aspects of the history of the Free City of Danzig, including legal issues and diplomatic relations. Indeed, this paper presents – based on the proposed historical, government and legal system method – a model list of authorities and offices operating in the proclaimed Free City of Danzig, which includes both offices and institutions, the registries of which have been preserved, as well as those, of which not even one archival unit has survived.

The proposed historical and political guide may be verified through applying it in other categories of holdings created by authorities and offices operating in various political systems.

