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MAKING 'RECOVERIES': THE CULTURAL POLITICS
OF TERRITORIAL APPROPRIATION IN A POLISH-
GERMAN INDUSTRIAL BORDERLAND, 1922-1953

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Making “Recoveries”: The Cultural Politics of Territorial Appropriation in a
Polish-German Industrial Borderland, 1922-1953

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The present dissertation examines the development of a Polish-German transnational political culture of contesting and nationally appropriating a common territory over a three-decade time span. It is based on the case-study of the Upper Silesian Industrial District, an area that underwent three border re-drawings between 1922 and 1950. First, it focuses on how the bilateral national “cold war” over this borderland during the interwar era spurred the cultivation of revanchist discourses, acculturation programs, symbolic landscapes, and particular groups of Polish and German elites devoted to agitating for the territory. Second, it explores how these factors served as the supporting and legitimating basis of war- and postwar-era violence and ethnic cleansing that occurred in this borderland, as well as the totalitarian-minded regimes that promoted it. Third, it examines the transnationally interactive character of rivaling Polish and German revanchist cultural politics, the bilateral contestation of nationalization efforts, and the influence each rivaling side had on the other. Finally, it also examines the contestation of state efforts to construct national landscapes and minds at the local level and the impact that this contest had on the ultimate fate of nationalization efforts.

Drawing heavily on archival records and multimedia published primary sources, this dissertation focuses on a broad range of acculturation efforts as well as a number of agents and governments coordinating them. It examines the revanchist politics of Polish and German centrist governments, the Sanacja, German National Socialist, and Polish Communist regimes, as well as how these governments mobilized a constant set of Polish and German border activist groups to do their bidding. The prime concern here is on an analysis of a multifarious range of cultural-political policies and acculturation projects, including the use of architecture and landscape development for nationalization politics, the manipulation of folk culture (music, costume, religious practices and festivals), the coordination of adult education programs, and the promotion of culturally racist discourses of the “other.” The transnational contestation of these and other nationalization policies, their reception at the local level, and how they served as counterparts to ethnic cleansing-oriented population politics, are likewise a strong concern of the investigation here.

DEDICATION

To **William S. Franz**,
Dear Friend & Teacher

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INDEX OF COMMONLY USED PLACE NAMES

<i>German</i>	-	<i>Polish</i>	-	<i>English (if applicable)</i>
Sankt Annaberg	-	Góra świętej Anny	-	Mount of St. Anne
Beuthen	-	Bytom		
Deutsche Piekary	-	Piekary Śląskie		
Gleiwitz	-	Gliwice		
Gross Strehlitz	-	Wielkie Strzelce (interwar era), Strzelce Opolskie (today)		
Hindenburg	-	Zabrze		
Kattowitz	-	Katowice		
Königshütte	-	Królewska Huta (to 1934), Chorzow (1934-present)		
Oppeln	-	Opole		
Pless	-	Pszczyna		
Ratibor	-	Raciborz		
Rybnik	-	Rybnik		
Tarnowitz	-	Tarnowskie Góry		

INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

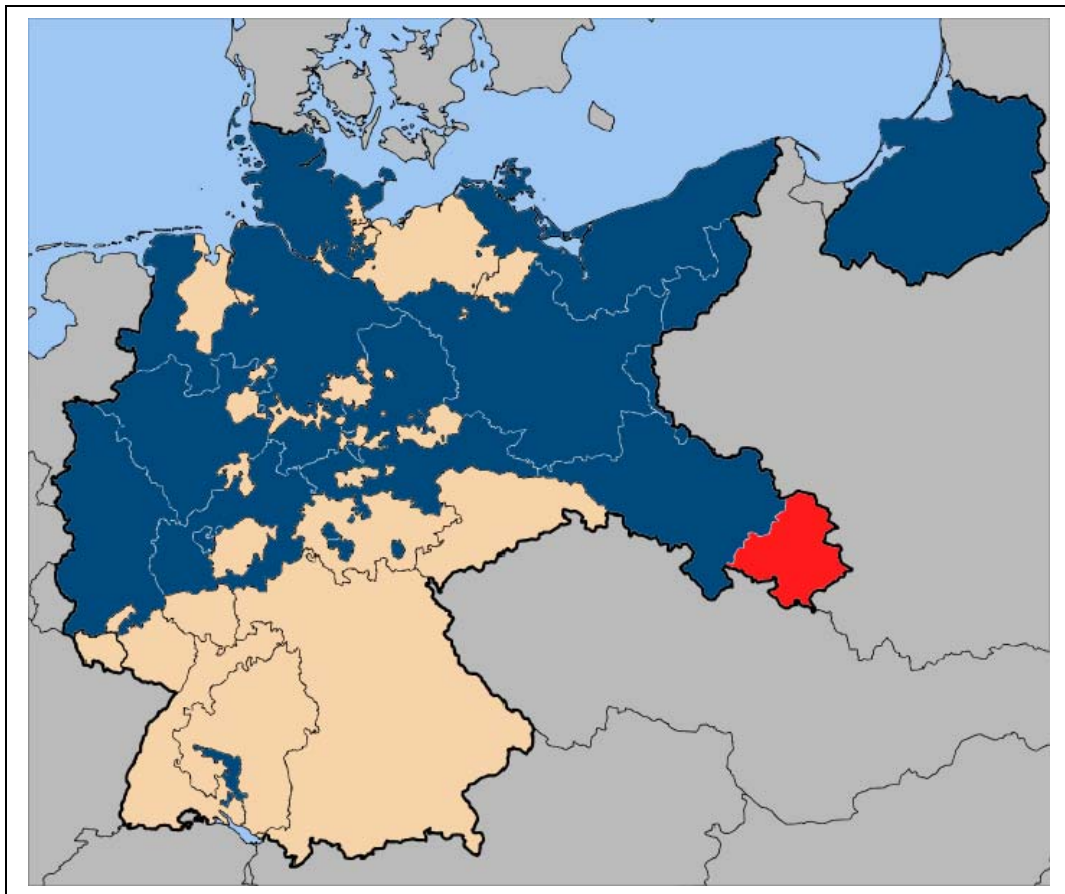
AAN	- Archiwum Akt Nowych or New Records Archive (Warsaw)
APK	- Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (Polish State Archiwe in Katowice)
APK-Oddz.	- (same as above)-oddział
APO	- Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (Polish State Archive in Opole)
BArch	- Bundesarchiv
BdO	- Bund der Oberschlesier
BDO	- Bund der deutschen Osten
ChD	- Christian Democratic Party (Korfantiites)
DAF	- Deutsche Arbeitsfront
D. Gen. Kons.	- Deutsche Generalkonsulat (in Kattowitz)
DVL	- Deutsche Volksliste
GG	- Generalgouvernement
GStA PK	- Geheimstaatsarchiv Preussische Kulurbesitz
Katt.	- Kattowitz (Katowice)
KH	- Königshütte (Królewska Huta/Chorzow)
Kon. Gen. RP Byt.	- Konsulat Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Poskiej w Bytomiu or General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Bytom (Beuthen)
KVP	- Katholische Volkspartei
KZ	- <i>Kattowitzer Zeitung</i> (newspaper)
MSZ	- Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych or Polish Foreign Ministry
MZO	- Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych, or Ministry of Recovered Territories
NOFG	- Nord und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
n.p.	- not paginated
NSDAP	- Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Nazi Party)
NSLB	- Nationalsozialistische Lehrerbund (Nazi Teacher's Union)
NWT	- Northern and Western Territories (of postwar Poland)
OKK	- Obywatelskie Komitet Kontroli (Citizen Control Committee)
OSW	- <i>Oberschlesische Wanderer</i> (newspaper)
OP	- Oberpräsidium/Oberpräsident der Provinz Oberschlesien or Governorship/Governor of the O/S Province.
O/S (O.S.)	- Oberschlesien or Upper Silesia
OSV	- <i>Oberschlesische Volksstimme</i> (newspaper)
PA-AA	- Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
PPR	- Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Communist Party before 1948)
PSL	- Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish Peasant League)
PZPR	- Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish Communist Party after 1948)
PZ	- <i>Polska Zachodnia</i> (newspaper)

PZZ	- Polski Związek Zachodni, or Polish Western Union (same as ZOKZ)
RGVA	- Rossiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv
RKF	- Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums
RZf.HD	- Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst
SD	- Sicherheitdienst (of the Nazi RF-SS)
Spr. Syt.	- Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne (Situation Report)
UB (UBP)	- Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego) Public Security Organs (of People's Poland)
VB	- Deutsche Volksbund für polnische Oberschlesien – in short, Volksbund (main German minority organization in the Voivodeship)
VBW	- Volksbildungswerk
Woj. Śl.	- Województwo Śląskie (Voivodeship Silesia)
VGB	- Voivodeship Government Building
VVHO	- Vereingte Vereine Heimattreue Oberschlesien or United Organizations of Upper Silesians Patriots of the Heimat
ZIOF	- Zentralinstitute für Oberschlesische Landesforschung
ZOG	- Związek Obrony Górnego Śląska
ZOKZ	- Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich or Defense Union of the Western Borderlands (from 1934 on, called the Polish Western Union (PZZ))
ZPwN	- Związek Polaków w Niemczech (Union of Poles in Germany, or main Polish minority organization)
ZPŚl.	- Związek Powstańców Śląskich or Union of Silesian Insurgents
ZWPŚl.	- Związek Weteranów Powstańców Śląskich or Veterans Union of Silesian Insurgents

MAPS

MAP 1:

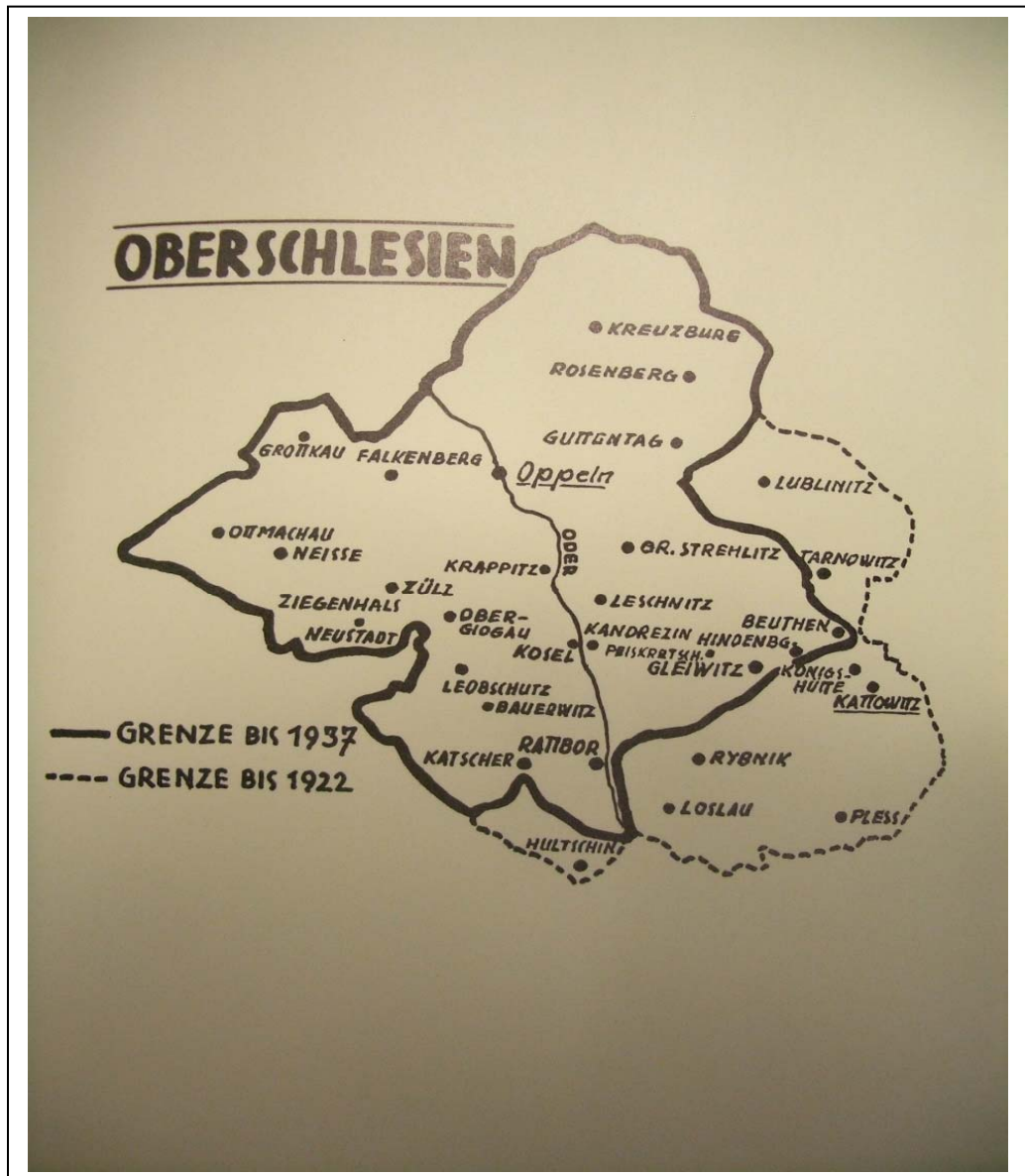
„The Prussian province of Upper Silesia (red), within the Free State of Prussia (blue),” 1922-1939.



Based on map data of the IEG-Maps project (Andreas Kunz, B. Johnen and Joachim Robert Moeschl: University of Mainz) - <http://www.ieg-maps.uni-mainz.de>

MAP 2: UPPER SILESIA (1922-1939)

- Bold Line represents Polish-German border 1922-39
- Dotted Line represents Imperial German border up to 1922



Map 3: Katowice (Kattowitz). City Center and Southern Side of the City. 1945-1950.



INTRODUCTION

On 1 September 1939, just hours after beginning the attack on Poland, Adolf Hitler stood before the Reichstag to deliver his infamous address legitimating the beginning of WWII. Its opening included the following statement:

Danzig was and remains a German city. The Corridor was and is German! All these areas owe their cultural development exclusively to the German people, without which these eastern territories would have been engulfed into the deepest of barbarism. Danzig had been torn away from us. The corridor annexed by Poland! The German minorities living there [have been] maltreated in the most harrowing manner! Already in 1919/20 over one million people of German blood had to leave their Heimat.¹

This statement carries some of the core features of the discourse of territorial contestation that the present dissertation will examine. Foremost, the statement began with what I refer to as a revanchist trinity—namely, the following conception: that territory X “was, is, and remains” of a certain national character. Next, Hitler did not just declare that Germany had historical claims to the eastern provinces, but also those based on a history of cultural cultivation (or cultural work). At the same time, he also explicitly denied Poland any achievements in this sense. Finally, he projected a demonic image of his other: that of Poland as an aggressive occupier of territories that do not belong to it, and that of a—de facto—“ethnic cleanser.”

The present study is devoted to an analysis of the cultural politics of contending, defending, and nationally integrating contested borderlands. One of its basic purposes is to investigate the ways in which national and regional governments and their professional aides represented a revanchist trinity—or in other words, an official myth of the timeless “belonging” of a territory to a given nation. In this regard, I focus on the how the

¹ Quoted from: “Der Führer spricht,” *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost* (hereafter ODM), 241 (2 Sept. 1939).

following means were utilized to represent the region in a specific national character: mass rallies, the politics of symbolic urban planning, the standardization of folklore, adult education (“public enlightenment”) programs, and multimedia propaganda. In contrast to many studies of authors and works of politicized geo-political *academic* thought, this dissertation is concerned with the *popular* variants of such discourses, which were coined for, and broadcasted to, a mass audience.

I carry this analysis out based on a specific case study across three decades: the German-Polish struggle over the central Upper Silesian industrial borderland (1922-1953), the area at the southeastern fringe of the German Prussian State, and the southwestern end of Poland, during the interwar era. A part of Prussia since the 18th century, this region became a contested borderland with the founding of the modern Polish state after the First World War. A de facto (undeclared) war was fought over it between Germany and Poland, with the worst fighting occurring in May and June of 1921. Partitioned by the Allies between these nation-states in 1922, Upper Silesia (Oberschlesien/Górny Śląsk²) remained a hotspot of revanchist politics, as both national governments engaged in a “cold war” over this territory until September of 1939, when the region was forcefully “reunited” under the Third Reich. Indeed, its eastern part (ceded to Poland in 1922 and referred to by German officials as Ostoberschlesien) marked one of the prime “eastern territories” along the “bleeding border” that the Germans had claims to, and that Hitler referred to in his 1 September 1939 Reichstag address. In 1945, all of

² A note on place names: because the names of places in German and Polish variants carried political charges, I follow the approach taken by recent scholarship on contested areas and state the name in both languages. I use the official name of the place as given by the state controlling it during the time period I am referring to, placing the other variant in parentheses next to it. I do this only when I first mention the place during each chapter and thereafter use the official name for that time period. When an English equivalent is available, for example, the Mount of St. Anne, I use this rather than the Polish or German, but again, mention both once in parentheses.

Upper Silesia was ceded to Poland. All these episodes of border redrawing (1922, 1939, 1945) were accompanied by forceful state efforts to “un-mix” —borrowing a concept from Rogers Brubaker³—the population (separate “Germans” from “Poles”) and thus homogenize the borderland. Only international law and surveillance during the interwar era, marked by the Geneva Convention (1922-1937), put a significant limit on such strivings. In contrast, during the eras that followed, the totalitarian-minded states (Nazi and communist regimes) that disposed of this border society had almost free reign to engineer it as they saw fit—including even the Western Allies’ mandate to “ethnic cleansing” after WWII.

Carried out in the context of these larger political developments, this study inquires about the role that Polish and German *cultural politics* played in the aftermaths of these border re-drawings. Cultural politics—or in other words, state-coordinated *acculturation*—marked the basic tools by which governments and their professional elites worked to promote a new official identity of the borderland to accompany each episode of border shifting. This domain of social engineering was particularly important in this “land in between” (*Zwischenraum*) nations, where it was hardly possible to differentiate between “Pole” and “German.” Rather, Slavic-Germanic cultural mixture, age-old distinctly local ways, and more importantly, deeply-rooted regional bonds, all overshadowed any traits of one-sided national culture and exclusive national patriotism.⁴

³ See: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996) 148-78.

⁴ Scholarly literature has referred to this strongly regionally tied majority of the population of Slavic-Germanic-Upper Silesian culture as the “layer in between (*Zwischenschicht*)” or “national indifference.” I agree with Tara Zahra that such perspectives “smell of nationalism” and so don’t apply them to denote the population, but do mention them from time to time, on account of their widespread use, with quotation marks around them. On “*Zwischenräume*,” see: Peter Oliver Loew, Christian Pletzing, Tomas Serrier, „Zwischen enteignung und Aneignung: Geschichte und Geschichten in den ‚Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas‘“, in Christian Pletzing & Tomas Serrier Peter Oliver Loew, ed.,

And because of this, even the broader national publics in Poland and Germany had to be persuaded not to dismiss this region as a “foreign” land of “Germans” and “Poles” respectively, as both had a tendency to do.⁵ In Upper Silesia, the pan-European twentieth-century “spell” of building homogenous nation-states—a project that included annexing one’s historical lands and cleansing these of “foreign elements”—was thus particularly about “*inventing* traditions” and *constructing* identities. This was all the more the case during the war and postwar eras when nation-state governments had almost free-reign to engineer this region socially as they saw fit. Unlike other border territories, where expulsion and resettlement were the basic tools of social reconstruction, due to the needs of industry and the ideal of “recovering” a “lost” population, in Upper Silesia the majority of locals were left in place.

The thesis of the present dissertation is that the acculturation politics of Polish and German governments in this borderland were transnationally interwoven with one another. Indeed, I would argue that one can speak of a *common (Polish-German) political culture of revanchism* (contestation and national appropriation of territories). Developed during the interwar era, this culture of borderland activists and the governments they aided became an inherent counterpart, and legitimating basis, of radical social engineering processes by German and Polish governments in the decades following. A core feature of this transnational acculturation politics was the propensity to forge official

Wiedergewonnene Geschichte: Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas, (Wiesbaden 2006), 9-15. Also: quoted from Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca and London 2008) 8. More on the socio-cultural character of the region in chapter 1.

⁵ Two notable works of popular scholarly value published during the interwar era in Poland and Germany aiming to convince their respective national publics that Upper Silesia belonged to “their nation” and not that of the “other” were: Zofia Kossack’s *Nieznany Kraj* (1932), and Ernst Laslowski’s *Verkanntes Oberschlesien* (1933). Published only a year apart, these works coincidentally carried a very similar title, “the Unknown Land” and “Unknown Upper Silesia” respectfully.

symbolic and discursive domains representing the contestation and annexation of territories as a process of “taking back” what had always been one’s own. I thus refer to these politics as making (staging/representing) “recoveries.” Among other similar words and phrases, that of “recovery” (*Wiedergewinnung/odzyskanie*) also appeared in the revanchist political vocabulary of both national camps.⁶ Both also commonly used the phrase of “re-connecting” a “lost” province “with its motherland” (the respective nation), as well as “liberating” it from “foreign yoke/tyranny.” The meaning remained the same: each nation’s political borderland agents aimed to underline that they were *not colonizing* (or aiming to do so) a foreign territory, *but rather reclaiming* a land that “was, is, and remains” theirs. Indeed, accenting a revanchist trinity marked a fundamental aspect of this revanchist political culture.

The official myths that buttressed and accented a Polish or German revanchist trinity were a part of what I refer to as *national-regionalisms*. To unite this region with the nation, Polish and German officials did not simply import all-national culture, but worked to invent narratives, traditions, and symbols that related to long-standing regional ways and experiences. Indeed, these official regionalisms inherently symbolized the region’s timeless and enduring particular national character. They were official nationally-oriented high cultures of regional character, and carried an interdisciplinary, and certainly not just a scholarly but also folkloric and multi-arts character. In libraries, the products of these traditions have been categorized under the broad heading of “*Silesiaca*,” which divided into the two main sub-categories of “Polish” and “German.”

⁶ The Germans used terms such as “Rückgewinnung, Weidergewinnung,” and “Rückgabe.” The term „odzyskanie“ was a common among Polish agents devoted to revanchist politics.

Indeed, such regional high cultures are not peculiar neither to Upper Silesia nor the larger Silesia region, but rather existed for many other regions of Germany and Poland. However, the international contestation of this borderland significantly politicized regional-oriented cultural production, turning the latter into a significant instrument of Polish and German revanchist politics. In both countries, regional high cultures of Upper Silesia served as “weapons” in the effort to overshadow the two elements that elites saw as a threat to their nation’s territorial integrity: the heritage of the national other, as well as strongly rooted (non-national) regionalism, or in other words, “national indifference.” It is important to note that national-regionalisms varied not just on the basis of national borders but along the lines of political factionalism within each national camp. To deliver a comprehensive analysis of the German and Polish versions of *Silesiaca* is not the topic of this dissertation. Rather, I am only interested in the aspects of national-regionalisms that were an important part of the transnational feud to contest and nationally appropriate this region, and only in this context.

One of the major themes of this study is of the continuity of this Polish-German transnational political culture of revanchism by various governments (German and Polish Catholic centrists, Polish Sanacja, and German Nazi regimes) and over several decades (1922-53). As I point out in the first three chapters, during the interwar era, the Polish-German “cold war” over Upper Silesia shaped discourses, symbols, and policies that were not only quite similar between the two contesting camps, but also largely interwoven. Polish and German official histories of the region, rallies in which revanchist voices were exclaimed, symbolic landscapes, and other features of this border contest, were to a large extent constructed in reaction to, and based on the mutual influence of,

one another. Moreover, this revanchist feud also shaped borderland activist societies and figures within each camp that were devoted to nationalizing and acquiring the contested territory. As I demonstrate in the final two chapters, the two ruling regimes used the major agents of interwar revanchist politics and many aspects of their national-regional cultures to carry out their social engineering projects. The continuity in this sense follows not just along national lines, but also transnational ones. During the war and after, both regimes struggled to confront and overcome an enduring legacy of the other's landscapes of national-regional symbolism, including physical sites of national memory, and traits of these high cultures left in the minds of locals. Moreover, for the sake of forging a politically convenient state of emergency, the Nazis and communists represented the Polish-German revanchist feud as ongoing, despite the official demise of the rivaling nation-state. In this sense, they worked to uphold the interwar revanchist "cold war" culture, including images of the national other's constant "malicious" presence.

The most significant aspect of the Polish-German revanchist culture was its evolution into an ideological supporting counterpart of wartime and postwar "ethnic cleansing" campaigns. As defined by Norman Naimark, ethnic cleansing is "the removal of a people and *all traces of them* from a concrete territory."⁷ While the state's coercive organs worked to expel, resettle, and forcefully re-assimilate, its cultural-political societies and elites strove to—borrowing a phrase from Gregor Thum—"cleanse memory" to the same end.⁸ Thus, Polish and German acculturation agents worked to (re-)construct symbolic landscapes, local cultures, and mindsets, so as to erase the memory

⁷ Quoted from: Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in twentieth-century Europe* (Cambridge, 2001) 4.

⁸ See: Gregor Thum, "Cleansed Memory: The New Polish Wrocław/Breslau and the Expulsion of the Germans," in: T. Hunt Tooley Béla Várdy, Agnes Huszár Várdy, ed., *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York 2003) 341ff.

of the group that was removed. This study examines how they did so by way of constructing and disseminating culturally racist discourses, segregating cultural symbols into “ours” and “theirs,” and implementing “public enlightenment” programs in an effort to cleanse minds—among other similar policies. In this regard, I focus not just on what is removed, but what it is replaced with—namely, ethnic cleansing’s “constructive” aspects. These—I would argue—marked part of the motivational idealism behind social engineering. Even as the war and postwar eras saw the most radical projects of removing everything associated with the unwanted other, to a significant extent the preparatory stages of these was the border conflict of the interwar era. At this time governments on both sides of the border, in large part also the Nazis, were restrained from systematically expelling the neighbor’s nationals on their side by international law and fear of the other state’s retaliation against their own groups. Instead, they and their aiding border societies strove to remove cultural traces of the other, and to promote official regional high cultures as a way of marginalizing the latter’s presence (past and present).

Another reason for the significance of Polish-German revanchist cultural politics was their use to legitimate the prerogatives of various dictatorial and quasi-dictatorial regimes. Taking advantage of their mandate to annex and nationally integrate an “endangered” borderland, the dictatorial regimes governing this area infused their own self-legitimizing ideological values and policies into this seemingly politically partisan-free and all-national venture. This instrumentalization started quite blatantly with the interwar Silesian Sanacja government (1926-1939), which used revanchist rallies and the mandate to “Polonize” the region as a way of fueling the personality cult of its leader, Michał Grażyński. However, this use of making “recoveries” as an ideologically

legitimizing screen for the expansion of state prerogatives was particularly important during the wartime and postwar eras. As the penultimate chapter of this study will demonstrate, the Nazis used a call for the “liberation” of eastern Upper Silesia from “Polish tyranny” that Germans of almost all political leanings shared before 1932 to represent the imperialist strike against Poland in a light of justice. To no regime was revanchist politics so important, and none instrumentalized it politically to such an extent, as the Polish communist regime. As I demonstrate in the final chapter, leading the project to appropriate the interwar German side of Upper Silesia gave this otherwise largely unpopular government a multifold of political capital, including the support of highly-respected national elites. I now turn to shed light on the place of this dissertation in the context of other (selected) relevant studies.

The Dissertation in Scholarly Context

After the Cold War era, during which the scholarship on Polish-German borderlands was still mostly part and parcel of the bilateral feud over the borderlands, studies seeking to deconstruct the former, rather than fuel it, have proliferated rapidly—and continue to do so. Many of the first genre of works have focused on population politics, particularly on expulsion, resettlement, and the local politics surrounding these phenomena in the Oder-Neisse territories of postwar Poland.⁹ Philipp Ther’s comparative study of the expulsion of Poles from east of the Curzon line and resettlement in Upper Silesia with the forced movement of German citizens from this region to the eastern provinces of postwar Germany was among the first Pan-Central European perspectives on postwar forced population movement. Ther’s study also marked one of the first in-

⁹ See for example: Andreas R. Hofmann, *Die Nachkriegszeit in Schlesien: Gesellschafts- und Bevölkerungspolitik in den polnischen Siedlungsgebieten, 1945-1948* (Weimar 2000); and Piotr Madajczyk, *Pryłączenie Śląska Opolskiego do Polski, 1945-1948* (Warszawa 1996).

depth examinations of the politics and ideology surrounding the expulsion, including Endecja (*Dmowskiite*) professionals' collaboration with the regime and what scholars have called the "Recovered Territories Myth" (*Mit Ziem Odzyskanych*).¹⁰

Over the last decade, a number of authors have published on aspects of these two topics, thus shifting the course of research from a focus on expulsion and resettlement per se, to the political and cultural historical context of the propensity to engineer an ethnically homogenous postwar Polish state. Among the most notable of these works is T. David Curp's study of what he argues was a postwar "national revolution" (the expulsion of Poland's minority groups) in Poland based on the regional case of Ziemia Lubuska (former Ostbrandenburg) and Wielkopolska. Curp points out that "ethnic cleansing" and the propensity to forge a homogenous Polish society created a significant degree of political solidarity among communists and their opponents, thus largely accounting for why the unpopular regime enjoyed significant stability until the 1970s.¹¹ With regard to the Upper Silesian case study, the monographs on the 1945-50 era by Bernard Linek analyze not only high political issues but also selected aspects of the cultural politics of "de-Germanization" (removal of Germans and their culture) in a borderland of unclear ethnic borders, including forced name changes and the confiscation/alteration of petty personal property.¹²

¹⁰ See: Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen, 1945-56* (Göttingen, 1998).

¹¹ See: T. David Curp, *A Clean Sweep? The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960* (Rochester 2006). Also his: "The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing: the PPR, the PZZ, and Wielkopolska's Nationalist Revolution, 1944-46" *Nationalities Papers*, 29 (2001): 575-603; and: "'Roman Dmowski Understood:' Ethnic Cleansing as Permanent Revolution", *European History Quarterly*, 3 (2005): 405-27.

¹² See: Bernard Linek, *Polityka antyniemiecka na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1950* (Opole, 2000); and his: *"Odnimczanie" województwa śląskiego w latach 1945-1950: w świetle materiałów wojewódzkich* (Opole, 1997).

While this body of scholarship was being developed, another was placing the topic in a broader temporal and geographic context of Pan-European forced population movement, violence, and extermination. One of the most significant works in this genre, Norman Naimark's study situates episodes of forced population movement and also genocide under one context—nationalist efforts to create the homogenized nation state. He applies the term “ethnic cleansing” as a category that encompasses these processes (expulsion and genocide), since despite their profound differences, both aimed at the removal of unwanted populations. The conception of the present dissertation draws from Naimark's emphasis on the following: 1) the importance of the development of nationalist and racist (including culturally racist) ideologies as prerequisites for cleansing campaigns, and 2) on the removal of all traits and symbols of the “unwanted other” as an inherent part of the cleansing campaigns. This dissertation will explicitly demonstrate the important role that cultural politics played in the cleansing process.¹³

The first extensive focus on cultural politics in the context of ethnic cleansing in the Polish-German borderlands was carried out by Gregor Thum. His monograph on how the German city of Breslau was turned into the Polish one of Wrocław after WWII focuses on the politics and processes of *acculturation*. Thum's work implicitly demonstrates that there were two inherently interwoven and inseparable aspects of ethnic cleansing, not just the removal of the “unwanted” but also the latter's *replacement* with the officially “desired.” With regard to cultural politics, the “German” was to be replaced with the “Polish.” As his study clearly points out, this was by no means a politically neutral process. Rather it was an ideologically charged, instrumentalized, and arbitrary

¹³ See: Naimark, *Fires*, introduction. Also on Ethnic Cleansing, the anthology: T. Hunt Tooley Béla Várdy, Agnes Huszár Várdy, ed., *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York 2003).

process of constructing symbolic notions of the “ours (the Polish)” and “theirs (the German).” Focusing on the politics of urban planning, Thum demonstrates how authorities first *invented* a “Polish” architectural tradition that not only reflected nationalist mythology but a communist identity that they skillfully engrained into the city’s rebuilt structural landscape. All of this points out that the mandate the postwar communist-controlled government received from the Western Allies to expel the Germans translated into a de facto right to re-engineer society as they saw fit.¹⁴

The present dissertation draws on some of Thum’s approaches. I devote the third chapter to an analysis of architectural symbolic landscapes with reference to how these functioned in the territorial appropriation processes, and also, how they were simultaneously used politically. However, I examine a broader range of acculturation processes and how they worked together, including landscape development, official festivities, popular scholarship, folklore, local museums, official histories, and adult education programs. These elements certainly do not account for the full range of the cultural politics of territorial appropriation. However, by incorporating them into one study, this dissertation aims to demonstrate the multifaceted character of territorial contestation and appropriation, something that works focusing only on one or two processes are less likely to do.¹⁵

Unlike works such as Thum’s that focus on one episode of border redrawing and territorial appropriation, the present dissertation looks at several cases. Although they do allude to an inherent connection between the episodes they examine, studies that take this

¹⁴ See: Gregor Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt, Breslau 1945* (Berlin 2003).

¹⁵ See for example, Matthais Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache in den Jahren 1921-1998* (Dortmund, 1999).

approach tend to isolate the treatment of each from the other. They thus come out seeming to be more interested in comparing one case to another rather than examining the interconnection between the two. Examples of such works include Michael Esch's study of resettlement and the development of rural economies during the war and immediate postwar eras in Polish-German borderlands,¹⁶ and Matthais Kneip's work on linguistic policy of various Polish and German governments in Upper Silesia between 1921 and 1998.¹⁷ Still another highly relevant work in this regard is Juliane Haubold-Stolle's recent monograph on the political memory of the Upper Silesian year 1921 during the interwar era and the postwar period in the German and Polish parts of this region and in West Germany. Although Haubold-Stolle does state that the histories of both nations with regard to this topic have been "entangled," her organization of her analysis on an intra-national case study basis make it difficult to demonstrate just what is meant by this assertion.¹⁸

The present dissertation takes a different approach that I offer as a methodology that can be applied to transnational studies in general, particularly those on the contestation of borderlands.¹⁹ In some respects, it is similar to diplomatic history in that governments are major actors of the events that I examine, and had been in dialogue with one another over these. Moreover, I also draw extensively on consular reports. However,

¹⁶ See: Michael Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse: deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa, 1939-1950* (Marburg 1998).

¹⁷ See: Matthais Kneip, *Die deutsche*.

¹⁸ Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956* (Osnabrück, 2008) 14.

¹⁹ On transnationalism and its uses in the history of borderlands, see: Marcus Gräser, „Weltgeschichte im Nationalstaat: die transnationale Disposition der amerikanischen Geschichtswissenschaft," *Historische Zeitschrift* 283 (2006): 355-382; Tara Zahra, „Looking East: East Central European Borderlands in German History and Historiography," *History Compass* 3 (2005): esp. 11-15; and same author, „Imagined Noncommunities: national Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69:1 (2010): esp. 114-9.

the approach I take actually strongly differs from diplomatic history. Well aware of one of transnational history's major pitfalls, that of privileging one type of historical actor over others, in my analysis I also give significant attention to internal political tensions at the grass-roots level, including the voice of opposition parties, regional Catholic clerics, national minority organizations, and non-governmental actors.²⁰ With regard to the latter, I address the issue of how the official cultural events and policies examined were received by the "nationally indifferent" part of the population, drawing on the main organ of the "Upper Silesian Defense Union" (*Związek Obrony Górnego Śląska*, ZOG), and other press as well as classified reports. These are the few remaining sources that allow one to examine how ordinary individuals received various facets of Polish and German acculturation politics, an issue not addressed by the token in-depth study of revanchist cultural politics in Upper Silesia, that of Haubold-Stolle.²¹ In sharp contrast to diplomatic historical methodology, neither cultural nor governmental elites are the focal point of this study, acculturation politics are. In this sense, one of the core pillars of the present study is a cultural critical analysis of the multifarious range of symbolism and discourses of Polish-German revanchist cultural politics.

Next to the actors and acculturation politics that I focus my analysis on, organization marks the most important facet of the transnational interactive approach I employ. Unlike other works this topic, which pick and choose scattered years to focus on, my analysis of the interwar Polish-German "cold war" over the borderland follows a more or less consistent and even chronological order. My purpose of doing so is to demonstrate the evolution and escalation of the actual Polish-German cross-border

²⁰ See a fragment of Chris Bayly's contribution to the AHR Conversation on Transnational History, *American Historical Review* 111: 5 (December 2006): 1148

²¹ Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*.

contest to acculturate the region, rather than to just study scattered episodes of it within an isolated one side of the region or the other.²² I examine important episodes in light of how agents of both sides of the border received it, the transnational debate that it sparked, and most importantly, with attention to how one national camp's policies influenced those of the other. To do this, I make a conscious effort not to fall into another pitfall of writing transnational history, namely, to devote to one set of national actors a disproportionate amount of attention over others. Indeed, for this interactive approach to work, each issue has to be addressed from the various sides involved in a way that gives attention to the cross-border dialogue developing over these issues. Employing this method allows this dissertation to demonstrate not only the striking similarity of Polish and German acculturation politics but that these were inherently interwoven, thus constituting one cross-border revanchist political culture.

Although this competition with the national neighbor disappeared during the war and postwar episodes of territorial appropriation, I nevertheless focus my analysis of these epochs on how in its efforts to re-nationalize the contested borderland, each regime first had to confront the legacy of its defeated rivals' acculturation politics. In this sense, I examine how cultural-political agents aiding the Nazis and Polish communists worked to appropriate, re-label, and re-narrate regional landscapes, as well as to re-educate and re-socialize local inhabitants. As they had been schooled in the revanchist conflict of the

²² The studies that focus on intra-regional affairs of either the Polish or German side of the region to which I'm referring include, Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos...*; Andrzej Michałczyk, „Deutsche und polnische Nationalisierungspolitik in Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen: ein Vergleich auf Makro und Mikroebene,” in Dieter Bingen, Peter Oliver Loew, and Kazimierz Wóycicki, eds., *Die Destruction des Dialogs: zur innenpolitischen instrumentalisierung negativer Fremd- und Feindbilder, Polen, Tschechien, Deutschland und die Niederlande im Vergleich, 1900-2005*, (Wiesbaden 2007); same author, „Celebrating the Nation: the case of Upper Silesia after the plebiscite in 1921,” in Claire Jarvis Daniel Brett, Irina Marin, ed., *Four Empires and an Enlargement: States, Societies, and Individuals in Central and Eastern Europe*, (London 2008); and, Guido Hitze, *Carl Ulitzka (1873-1953) oder Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen*, (Düsseldorf 2002).

interwar era, these specialists of borderland affairs even made an effort to represent the continued presence of the Polish/German rival. The creation of this conflict-ridden atmosphere benefitted both regimes' efforts to proliferate culturally racist stereotypes against the national "other," and to re-socialize Upper Silesian locals based on these. The plight of both regimes to forcefully assimilate the same society using similar approaches and institutions marks an important basis for the striking similarity and continued interwoven nature of their acculturation policies and revanchist ideologies. Indeed, what one governing regime taught this society at one time, the next had to un-teach, and what locals' experienced under one intrusive and authoritarian national government, they used to protect themselves against the succeeding one. In this way, the top-down and bottom-up approaches I employ in the last chapters of this study go hand-in-hand in demonstrating the ongoing evolution of this Polish-German transnational political culture.

As most studies of the Polish-German conflict over Upper Silesia have focused on the role of political actors and on population politics, cultural analyses of this topic are relatively new.²³ My own analysis in this regard draws largely from the official cultural products of borderland activist groups and the governments they aided. These sources include the press, tourist guides, popular scholarly literature, propaganda pamphlets, as well as films, among other multimedia sources. In drawing from this multimedia material and devoting a part of my dissertation to an analysis of the work of Polish and German borderland activist societies, and the construction of symbolic sites of memory, I am to an extent following a path first carved by Haubold-Stolle in her monograph of the Polish and

²³ See: Linek, *Odniemczanie* and his *Polityka*, as well as Kneip, *Die deutsche*, and Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*.

German political memories of the Upper Silesian year 1921. Indeed, I also agree with many of her arguments in this study. She argues that during the interwar and postwar eras (to 1956), Polish and German nationalist activist groups working for the state forged a mythical narrative that symbolically tied this contested borderland to their broader nations. According to her, Polish and German nationalized memories of the plebiscite (21 March 1921), the violence sparked by the third Polish insurgency (May-June), and also—to lesser of an extent—the national partition of the region (June of 1922) marked the essence of these mythical narratives. Her monograph is devoted to tracing the official memories of this epoch as endorsed by the Catholic Center Party, which dominated politics on the interwar German side of the border until 1932, Grażyński's Sanacja government on the Polish side, the Nazis (until 1939), the Polish communists (1945-50/55), and the Landsmannschaft (regional society) of expellees from Lower and Upper Silesia in Germany (1950s). Her sources for this study include various official speeches and popular propaganda, the 1927 film by Rudolf Kayser, *The Land under the Cross* (*Das Land unterm Kreuz*), and during the postwar era, also the “nationalist communist” monument erected atop the Mount of St Anne in 1955. One section of her study is also devoted to demonstrating the multifold media via which this propaganda was promoted to the public.²⁴

My work differs from her study in a number of ways. I employ an interactive approach, give attention to local-level reaction, and examine factors beyond just the representation of official histories, including the construction of landscapes, mass education, the politics of repression and mass mobilization. All of this makes this dissertation a contribution in the study of government-promoted social engineering

²⁴ See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*.

processes aimed at securing a borderland from the national neighbor, and the cross-border and local-level contestation of these, rather than a study of the politics of memory. Moreover, it is also one of the first extensive examinations of Nazi acculturation of the annexed territories of WWII, a topic that can hardly be understood in isolation from the context of the interwar Polish-German “cold war” over the borderlands.²⁵

I disagree with Haubold-Stolle’s argument that “during the war itself the mythical construction of Upper Silesia was suspended,” and instead “in the foreground the murderous population politics of Nazi Germany” dominated.²⁶ As I demonstrate in chapters 4 and 5, Nazi and postwar “nationalist communist” politics towards the Catholic Upper Silesian population were strikingly similar. Both regimes left the vast majority of Upper Silesians in their homeland and sought to assimilate them into their own respective national societies as part of the wider project of “recovering” a “lost people.” In this sense, the semantic, symbolic, and mythical, re-conceptualizing of interwar Polish Silesia was just as intensively pursued by the Nazis as was that of the German part of the region by the postwar Polish regime.

This agenda on the part of the Nazis, especially with regard to the multifaceted cultural-politics via which it was carried out, has received little scholarly attention.²⁷ Yet, Nazi politics of making “recoveries” marked the façade that first lent a spirit of justice to

²⁵ Studies of acculturation on these areas tend to be strongly focused on only one aspect of cultural politics or focus on the role of government agents. See for example, Peter Oliver Loew, *Danzig und Seine Vergangenheit: die Geschichtskultur einer Stadt zwischen Deutschland und Polen* (Osnabrück 2003) 332-354; and Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland*, (New York, 2010); Georg Hansen, *Ethnische Schulpolitik im besetzten Polen: Der Mustergau Wartheland*, (Münster, 1995); Hans-Christian Harten, *De-Kulturation und Germanisierung: die nationalsozialistischen Rassen- und Erziehungspolitik in Polen, 1939-45*, (Frankfurt/M. 1996); Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization*, (New Haven 2003).

²⁶ Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 297-301, 456.

²⁷ See: Epstein, *Model Nazi*, one of the few works that includes an overview of a broad range of acculturation factors. See also note 25.

the initiation of the war and then in part also to genocide and other forms of ethnic cleansing. According to official propaganda, destruction of Jews and expulsion of Poles was part and parcel of the project of turning the borderlands into a “beautiful”—or in other words, homogenously Nazi-German—“Heimat.” Dispelling any notion that the war prevented regime agents from taking any serious and extensive efforts to reconstruct landscapes and reshape the minds of locals, the present dissertation’s examines a range of projects and public discourses devoted to “restoring” the “German face” to interwar Polish Silesia. Götz Ally and Suzanne Heim devote a part of a chapter in their path breaking monograph, *Architects of Annihilation*, to Nazi building projects in Upper Silesia. The present dissertation aims to set these and other acculturation ventures in the context of the revanchist ideology and politics that fuelled them: namely, that of the engineering of “recovered” territories and peoples via expulsion and genocide, acculturation, and forced assimilation.

Since I examine various German and Polish projects of turning Upper Silesia into a “German Heimat” and “Polish” province, my study contributes to a number of scholarly discussions on elements relevant to these processes. These include: the agents of revanchist cultural politics, the official myths they created and how these were promoted via symbolic landscapes, and finally, processes of top-down nationalization, and the instrumental use of Heimat. To begin with the first topic on this list, there is a proliferating literature on geopolitical specialists, or devotees to the cause of “defending” the nation’s borderlands, and/or agitating for the “return” of that of another. These studies have focused on individuals or groups working to do this by way of scholarship, welfare, and popular cultural politics. They include intellectual and political biographies of

leading scholars of the German geopolitical tradition of *Ostforschung*, and of the Polish western border-oriented “western thought,” such as Eduard Mühle’s work on Hermann Aubin,²⁸ and Markus Kroska’s study of Zygmunt Wojciechowski.²⁹ A similar genre of works focuses not so much on individual authors as on the ideology, institutions, and political use, of these traditions. Examples include the work of Grzegorz Strauchold on postwar “western thought,” as well as several works on the German counterpart, such as Michael Burleigh’s classic study on this.³⁰ Studies on the groups working with governments to formulate policies based on these canons of geopolitical thought include T. David Curp’s study of the PZZ,³¹ and works examining pre-WWI era nationalist activist groups by Richard Blanke and Elizabeth A. Drummond.³² The most important work that does not focus on high-ranking planners and scholars, but rather on ordinary

²⁸ See: Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf, 2005); and also: „Der europäische Osten in der Wahrnehmung deutsche Historiker: das Beispiel Hermann Aubin,“ in Gregor Thum, ed., *Traumland Osten Deutsche Bilder von östlichen Europa in 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2006).

²⁹ Markus Kroska, *Für ein Polen an Oder und Ostsee: Zygmunt Wojciechowski als Historiker und Publizist* (Osnabrück, 2003).

³⁰ See for example: Ingo Haar, 'German Ostforschung and Anti-Semitism ', in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, ed., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1920-45* (New York 2005); Eduard Mühle, 'Geschichtspolitik und polnischer "Westgedanke" in der Wojewodschaft Śląsk (1922-39)', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 51 (2003): 409-26; Grzegorz Strauchold, *Myśl Zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945-1947* (Toruń, 2003); Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (New York 1988); Jan M. Piskorski, Jörg Hackmann & Rudolf Jaworski ed., *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik* (Osnabrück & Poznań, 2002); Grzegorz Strauchold, “Oberschlesien im Westgedanken der Volksrepublik Polen, 1945-8,” in: Juliane Haubold-Stolle & Bernard Linek , ed., *Imaginiertes Oberschlesien: Mythen, Symbole, und Helden in den nationalen Diskursen* (Opole / Marburg 2005).

³¹ T. David Curp, "'Roman Dmowski Understood:' Ethnic Cleansing as Permanent Revolution', *European History Quarterly*, 3 (2005): 405-27.

³² See: Richard Blanke, *Prussian Poland in the German Empire (1871-1900)* (New York 1981); and on the politics of Germanophobic Polish organizations during the interwar era, *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Kentucky, 1993); and: Elizabeth A. Drummond, “From ‘verloren gehen’ to ‘verloren bleiben’: changing German discourses on Nation and Nationalism in Poznań,” in: Charles Ingrao & Franz A. J. Szabo, ed., *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, 2008).

individuals who come to secure the borderland for Germany, is Elizabeth Harvey's study of women's activism in the "Germanization" of the Warthegau region during WWII.³³

Although I do discuss the evolution of societies of professional devotees to Ostforschung and "western thought," the focus of my analysis is on how these groups worked to popularize revanchism by way of staging myths on geopolitics. In this regard, I am particularly concerned with narratives of ethnicity/nationality that likewise played an important role in territorial annexation and ethnic cleansing. Existing scholarship of this topic focuses on the discursive aspects of the political mythologies they study and also on how these were publicly disseminated in various forms—including the construction of symbolic sites of memory. Relevant and more recent works on this topic include Juliane Haubold-Stolle's study of the German Freikorps myth and on the history of the political use of the Mount of St. Anne (Annaberg/Góra św. Anny) site.³⁴ The latter's function as a transnational and regional center of conflict over national history and local identity is also the subject of a study by James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth.³⁵ The works of Vejas Liulevicius and Thum mark a good example of recently proliferating research on the symbolic and discursive concepts of the "German East," including the vocabulary and

³³ Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven 2003).

³⁴ Juliane Haubold-Stolle, „Mythos Oberschlesien in der Weimarer Republik: die Mythisierung der oberschlesischen Freikorpskämpfe und der ‚Abstimmungszeit‘ (1919-21) im Deutschland der Zwischenkriegszeit,“ in Heidi Hein-Kirchner & Hans Henning Hahn, ed., *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Marburg, 2006); also: 'Der Gipfel der Symbolik: Der Sankt Annaberg als Verkörperung Oberschlesiens', in Christian Pletzing & Tomas Serrier Peter Oliver Loew, ed., *Wiedergewonnene Geschichte: Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas* (Wiesbaden 2006); and: "Der Sankt Annaberg in der deutschen und polnischen politischen Tradition," in: Juliane Haubold-Stolle & Bernard Linek, ed., *Imaginiertes Oberschlesien: Mythen, Symbole, und Helden in den nationalen Diskursen* (Opole / Marburg 2005).

³⁵ James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, "The Annaberg as a German-Polish 'Lieu de Memoire'," *German History*, 25 (2007): 373-400.

ideologies of the German colonial and “civilizing mission” towards this region.³⁶ Hubert Orłowski’s classic work on the myth of “polnische Wirtschaft” explores not only the history and content but also political function of this discourse as a rhetoric legitimating German imperialism and “civilizing” in the East.³⁷ Andreas Kossert, Robert Traba, and Wojciech Kunicki, have given a regional focus—the first two focusing on East Prussia, the second on western Silesia—to studies of myth, their material symbolic resonance, and political activism and instrumentalization.³⁸ The more extensive study, Traba’s work examines the construction of the idea of German Eastern Prussia (or “Eastern Prussianism”) during the interwar era, focusing on notions of the latter as an “island,” “fortress of Kultur,” and similar concepts, including the promotions of these motifs via the media, places of memory, tourism, and political rallies, and their political appropriation by the Nazis. The work of Peter Loewe on Danzig/Gdańsk in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and Jan Musekamp on postwar Stettin/Szczecin give this topic (myths, their promotion, and politicization) an urban focus.³⁹

³⁶ See: Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East, 1800 to the Present* (New York 2009); “The languages of Occupation: Vocabularies of German Rule in Eastern Europe in the World Wars,” in: Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East: 1850 Through the Present* (New York 2009); Gregor Thum, “Mythische Landschaften: Das Bild vom ‘deutschen Osten’ und die Zäsuren des 20. Jahrhunderts,” in Gregor Thum, ed., *Traumland Osten: Deutsche Bilder vom östlichen Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2006); and also: Eduard Mühle, “The European East on the Mental Map of German Ostforschung,” in: same author, ed., *Germany and the European East in the Twentieth Century* (New York 2003).

³⁷ See: Hubert Orłowski, *“Polnische Wirtschaft” : zum deutschen Polendiskurs der Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden 1996).

³⁸ See: Robert Traba, *“Wschodniopruskość”: Tózsamość regionalna i narodowa w kulturze politycznej Niemiec* (Poznań, 2005); Andreas Kossert, „Konstruktion von Grenze und Grenzregion: von der Wilhelmschen Ostmarkenpolitik zum NS-Grenzland- und Volkstumskampf, 1894-1945,” in Jörg Seifarth Etienne François, Bernhard Struck eds., *Die Grenze als Raum, Erfahrung und Konstruktion: Deutschland, Frankreich, und Polen vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/New York 2007); Wojciech Kunicki, *“... auf dem Weg in dieses Reich.” NS-Kulturpolitik und Literatur in Schlesien 1933 bis 1945* (Leipzig, 2006). See also: Elizabeth A. Drummond, “From ‘verloren gehen.’”

³⁹ Peter Oliver Loew, Christian Pletzing, Tomas Serrier, „Zwischen Enteignung,” 9-15; Jan Musekamp, 'Der Königsplatz (Plac Żołnierza Polskiego) in Stettin als Biespiel kulturelle Anegnung nach 1945. ' in Christian Pletzing & Tomas Serrier Peter Oliver Loew, ed., *Wiedergewonnene...*

Apart from being a case study of a Polish-German borderland, this dissertation also serves as a study of twentieth-century nationalizing and “gardening” states.⁴⁰ The work of Eagle Glassheim on the Northern Bohemian region (former “Sudetenland”),⁴¹ as well as those already mentioned by Gregor Thum, and Michael Esch, all demonstrate that border redrawing gave the state a mandate to nationally integrate a territory, and thus catalyzed the development of its prerogatives of social engineering, and central planning. What started as a venture to nationally appropriate a borderland via nationalization, ethnic cleansing, resettlement, and landscape reconstruction, escalated into projects of industrialization, in the case of Glassheim’s work, an urban skyline of quasi-Soviet architectural structures in the case of that of Thum, as well as the development of collective farms, in that of Esch. In chapters 3 to 5, I demonstrate how on three consecutive occasions, governments instrumentalized the redrawing of the border to imprint their symbols into the landscape, and their self-legitimizing ideology into the minds of the population. They also used the occasion to ostracize or expel political opponents, and extenuate control over society—including by intruding into the private sphere.

In its examination of how official identities and traditions were constructed and invented for the purpose of nationalizing Upper Silesia, this dissertation contributes to

⁴⁰ According to Amir Wiener, the “gardening state” uses extensive mobilization, surveillance, and sociological categorization techniques (census taking, passportization, mapping, etc.) to engineer a “new society” and “new man,” including via ethnic cleansing, “the elimination of social classes and genocide.” This is the modern state that evolves into a totalitarian one. See: Amir Wiener, ed., *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford 2003) 3-7. James C. Scott refers to this kind of government as the “high modernist state,” and emphasizes its propensity to promote utopian engineering efforts based on central planning, which are doomed to failure. See: James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven 1998). The classic work on the nationalizing state is: Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford 1976).

⁴¹ See: Eagle Glassheim, “Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia’s Borderlands, 1945-89,” *Journal of Modern History* 78 (March 2006): 65-92.

studies of Heimat and regionalism. In her study of the conceptualization of “Heimat” in German society during the modern era, Celia Applegate underscored the fundamental role of the region in the nation-building process. Her work points out that the region has served as the necessary forum of “civic communication,” bonding its individuals with the nation. She also sheds light on how national governments shaped and instrumentalized regional ways and folklore to promote their nation-building projects.⁴² The present dissertation works from the base of these premises. Indeed, unlike the German Palatinate region that Applegate studies, in Upper Silesia local identities remained consistently at odds with the high national consciousness that nationalizing government elites worked to impose. Nevertheless, re-socializing Upper Silesians into high nationals was only one aim of the Polish and German cultural politics that I examine here. Just as important was the instrumental use of the historical and folkloric capital of this borderland to construe these national identities in the first place. In this study I look at how various Polish and German borderland activist groups invented national-regionalisms, including official celebrations, architectural styles, folkloric forms, and mythical historical narratives to serve as a façade of the superiority of *kultura* and *Kultur*, among other meanings. In taking an interactive approach to presenting these issues, I demonstrate that this was a cross-border competition to invent and construct national-regionalisms in various forms.

⁴² See: Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley 1990); and same author, “A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,” *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 1157-1181. Also on “Heimat” and regionalism, Philipp Ther and Holm Sundhaussen, eds., *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europäischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg 2003); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill and London, 1997); Norbert Götz, “German-Speaking People and German Heritage: Nazi Germany and the Problem of *Volksgemeinschaft*,” and Thomas Lekan, “German Landscape: Local Promotion of the Heimat Abroad,” both in: Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagan, *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, (Ann Arbor, 2005) 58-77 and 141-62.

In competition against one another the two camps also engaged in transnational debate over the products of each other's policies, and thereby also influenced one another's work. Although the term "Heimat" plays an important role in German culture and history, my focus on Polish and German cultural politics demonstrates that the region was of fundamental importance as a source of symbolism for nation-building in both countries.

These studies on borderland-oriented professionals, activists groups and individuals, as well as political myths, all demonstrate the tremendous political capital that border questions had for nation-states and their governments. The present dissertation contributes to this genre of scholarship as a study in the development and evolution of myths (more specifically, politicized historical narratives and images of ethnicity/nationality) and symbolic landscapes in the midst of conflict. And it likewise aims to demonstrate how these discourses and symbolic fields were used as part of a larger politics of contesting, appropriating, and socially engineering borderlands—all on the basis of one geographically-focused case study.

Much of the scholarship mentioned in the last three paragraphs, along with the present study, deals not just with the phenomenon of borderland contestation but nation-building and the nationalization of border provinces. National frontier regions such as Upper Silesia have been a favorite for the study of these phenomena as "lands in between" (nationalities)⁴³ marked by cultural mixture, multiple collective identities, and "national indifference." Focusing their studies on the propensity by national-minded elites and nationalizing states to get populations of these areas to adopt exclusive one-

⁴³ This term from: Philipp Ther, "Sprachliche, kulturelle, und ethnische "Zwischenräume," als Zugang zu einer transnationalen Geschichte Europas," in: Philipp & Holm Sundhaussen Ther, ed., *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europäischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg 2003) IX-XXIII.

sided national identities, works on “lands in between” have underscored the shortcomings of such ventures.⁴⁴ The present dissertation is not a study in the phenomenon of regionalism and “national indifference” per se. However, I have chosen Upper Silesia as my case study in part on account of the presence of these characteristics. In this region with strong supra-national identities (i.e. Catholicism, regionalism/localism), cultural-political activists faced a two-pronged task: to limit the influence of elites from the opposing national side, and also to get locals to care about either of the two sides competing over their homeland and their acculturation agendas. All this added to the importance of acculturation politics in this region, and, particularly during the eras of radical social engineering, made these processes strongly contested ones even within the local community that the ruling regimes considered to be “theirs.” In short, Upper Silesia makes for a good “laboratory” of how regions are contested and integrated by way of “invented traditions.”

Other scholarship has pointed to the failure of projects to turn Upper Silesians into homogenous Poles or Germans.⁴⁵ Unlike these studies, this is not one aimed to find out if state policy succeeded in creating good national patriots out of locals. Although my

⁴⁴ Some of the works include: Richard Blanke, *Polish-Speaking Germans? Language and National Identity Among the Mazurians since 1871* (Köln 2001); James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, 2008); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge 2006); Andrzej Michałczyk, “Kirchlichkeit und Nationalität: ein Spannungsfeld. Identität und Identitätspraktiken in OS, 1922-1939” (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Erfurt 2010); same author, “Große Politik in mikrohistorischen Perspektive: Machtwechsel im polnischen Oberschlesien 1922 und 1926,” in: Mathias Beer, Dietrich Beyrau, Cornelia Rauh, *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950*, (Essen 2009) 199-214; Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*, (Ithaca and London, 2008); same author, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69:1 (Spring 2010): 93-119; Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*, (Cambridge, 2007); same author, “Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946,” *Slavic Review* 61:4 (Winter 2002): 683-706.

⁴⁵ See: Michałczyk, “Kirchlichkeit...”; and: Adam Ehrlich, ““Between Germany and Poland: Ethnic Cleansing and the Politicization of Ethnicity in Upper Silesia under National Socialism and Communism””, (Unpublished Dissertation: University of Indiana-Bloomington 2006).

prime concern is with the development of official acculturation politics, I do give attention to responses to these from the local level, and inquire about the causes of given public moods, because these significantly impacted on the evolution of state policies. My research certainly supports the conclusions of these works, namely that both governments had very limited successes in homogenizing culture and collective identity in this borderland along national lines. This is hardly a surprise: a number of factors interfered with the policies of the governments examined, including class and cultural conflicts between locals and the nationalizing elites, the use of terror, repression, and violence against the first group, and the short-lived nature of the most systematic episodes of nationalization.

Despite their inability to realize their ultimate goals, these nationalizing ventures remain significant for a number of reasons, not least the negative impact they had on German-Polish relations throughout the twentieth century and until today. The prime purpose of this study is to aid in the larger scholarly effort of deconstructing the legacies left behind by wars and tensions between the two nations. Indeed, the main source of these were the conflicts over borderlands, as well as the radical projects of colonizing these territories by German and Polish dictatorial regimes during the war and immediately after. More than a study of the Upper Silesian populace, this dissertation examines how territorial conflict shaped mutually malicious official views of the “other” on the part of both the German and Polish camps and how these were used by each to wage conflict against the “unwanted” group and to colonize the borderlands.

Throughout this study I treat nationality as a political construct or project and not a as fixed category or identity. I therefore place “Pole/Polish” and “German” in quotation

marks when using them in a context which reflects how state agents, or of how high nationals, view the regional population. Applying the theories of Rogers Brubaker in this regard, I treat ethnicity and nationality as a product, or aim, of the politics of “groupness” and thus do not make a clear cut distinction between the two terms.⁴⁶ Parts of this study are devoted to an analysis of how Polish and German cultural-political officials sought to construct these categories by way of teaching official concepts of regional history to their publics. This approach draws on Peter Loew’s concept of “culture of history” (*Geschichtskultur*), which holds all history contingent on the “where, when, how, and why was a certain history present” and also “from whom and with what purpose was it crafted.” Since history is bound to its sociopolitical and situation context, how it is represented and contested in the public sphere can thus be historicized as a history of the “culture of history.”⁴⁷ This study in part analyzes the role of official history as a tool of promoting notions of Upper Silesia as a territory that “was, is, and remains” of a Polish/German national character with an ultimate political purpose of legitimately and recognizably securing the whole region for Poland/Germany.

This dissertation follows a chronological order. The first chapter is devoted first to an overview of the region and the post-WWI German-Polish borderland war over it. This is followed by an analysis of Polish and German official histories of Upper Silesia as represented by rivaling rallies hosted by the heads of both states. I examine these discourses in the context of both the bilateral revanchist conflict over the borderland and also that of internal national political affairs. In the second chapter I turn to examine the transnational development of a feud of border rallies, the basic forums of disseminating

⁴⁶ See: Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, (Cambridge 2004);

⁴⁷ Quoted from: Peter Oliver Loew, *Danzig und Seine Vergangenheit: die Geschichtskultur einer Stadt zwischen Deutschland und Polen* (Osnabrück 2003) 21, 24-30.

revanchist and belligerent discourses and symbols during the interwar era. My aim here is to demonstrate how a Polish-German contest of revanchist spectacles escalated interactively, including with regard to each national camp's use of technology, organization, among other factors, to exacerbate the bombast and resonance of these events. Focusing on the politics of architecture, folklore, and socio-cultural homogenization during the 1930s, chapter three is devoted to analyzing the bilateral struggle to demonstrate each nation's track record of bringing progress and cultural uplifting to the borderland in past and present and the cross-border debates revolving around it. Here I analyze the role of urban development projects, folkloric spectacles, and the social sciences, among other elements, in the symbolic nationalization of both parts of the region, and how these buttressed repressive politics of homogenization. Chapter four is devoted to various facets of how the Nazis sought to "re-Germanize" the eastern part of the borderland, including how they confronted Polish symbolic landscapes and how they strove to turn Polish citizens into full-fledged Germans. Chapter five examines similar policies promoted by the Polish "nationalist communist" regime, including the aid they received from the borderland experts of the Grażyński era, their efforts to shape German citizens into a "new Pole," and the instrumentalization of these processes for the aid of the establishment of communism.

CHAPTER 1:

The “Real” Upper Silesian: Between Scholarship, Myth, and Politics

In October 1927 and September 1928 the national presidents, Ignacy Mościcki and Paul von Hindenburg, respectively, travelled to the border to fuel the Polish-German “cold war” over Upper Silesia. The Polish president came to popularize and give stature to his nation’s official historical narrative of this borderland in an effort to erase that of the German counterpart. To this end, he also presided over the unveiling of a tall statue of a worker wielding a medieval broadsword looking over to the German side of the border. Outraged by this gesture, as well as a depiction of the region that denied German history and heritage any proper place, Germany’s government sent its own chief to deliver a refuting narrative that denied Poland any role in the region’s history and culture. Although pitted against one another, both these mythical tales about Upper Silesia’s past, including the more recent post-WWI plebiscite conflict and borderland war, were quite similar in form. By demonizing, marginalizing, and erasing the memory of the other’s cultural and historical heritage, each aimed to underscore the following mythical thesis: that Upper Silesia “was, is, and remained” a Polish/German territory. In the present chapter I examine this “duel of the presidents,” which exemplifies an episode of how history and ethnicity “took place” in this border area as part of the revanchist conflict over it.¹ My doing so is part and parcel of one larger focus in this dissertation: on popular

¹ I base my predisposition towards ethnicity on Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Here he argues that ethnicity is not a fixed or natural category but a constructed one. One of the way it is constructed is through the public representation of “ethnicity”, i.e. ethnic schemata. See: p 64-87.

political representations of notions of Upper Silesia as a “recovered” land, rather than the more widely studied politicized academic and scholarly version of these.²

My prime purpose in this chapter is to demonstrate how a competition-driven dialogue between elites in both states (Poland and Germany) shaped two strikingly similar official schemas of “the Upper Silesian peoples.” These mythical models were meant to function as antitheses of one another. However, in actuality the official historical narratives of the “Lud Śląski” and “Oberschlesische Volk” conveyed a transnational consensus of values. Here I stress what I refer to as “fortress mentalities” to be the most important of these, namely the belief in the border area as a place of exceptionalism, where “foreign threat” required an end to “politics” (factionalism) and the forging of a “united front” of “work” and “struggle.” In the space that follows my aim is to address how this common discourse was forged by a dynamic of intra-regional and transnational conflicts, and how it was disseminated in the form of symbolic politics. Before turning to this topic, I proceed to provide an introduction to the character of the region, which will allow for a better understanding of all the aspects of the current study.

² Academic disciplines of History, Archeology, Ethnography, Linguistics, and others were mobilized to give these myths the appearance of objectivity and the status of „knowledge.“ There has been much scholarly work done on the service of academics to revachist politics. See: Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung*, (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005); same author, „Geschichtspolitik und polnischer ‚Westgedanke‘ in der Wojewodschaft Śląsk (1922-1939),“ *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 51:3 (1/2003), 409ff.; Peter Oliver Loew, *Danzig und seine Vergangenheit 1793-1997: die Geschichtskultur einer Stadt zwischen Deutschland und Polen*, (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2003); Urszula Biel, „Płonące premiery: z dziejów polsko-niemieckiego pogranicza filmowego na Górnym Śląsku,“ in: Andrzej Gwóźdź, *Kino niemieckie w dialogu pokoleń i kultur: Studia i Szkice*, (Kraków 2004); Jan M. Piskorski and Jörg Hackmann, *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik: Disziplinen im Vergleich*, (Poznan: Poznanskie Tow. Przyjaciół Nauk, 2002).

Upper Silesia: the “Land in Between”

General Socio-Historical Character

Upper Silesia had a long history of being a borderland between empires. Since the 1772 and until 1920, the historically Prussian Industrial District³ and its immediate western counties—the areas that are the focus of this study—belonged to German states. Up to 1871, this area belonged to the Prussian monarchy, and thereafter to the Prussian State within the united German Empire. Since the late 18th century the Industrial District bordered the Russian Empire to its immediate east, while the Prussian/German border with Habsburg Monarchy-ruled Austria-Hungary lay about a hundred kilometers to its Southeast. Both Slavic and Germanic linguistic and cultural influence had thus been historically strong here. High German was commonly used and understood, but spoken most exclusively only by the educated civil servants, the middle class, and elites. The bulk of the native population spoke Slavic-Germanic *dialects* in private and public life. These varied depending on locality and time-period.⁴ So as to deny them any claims of serious cultural status, high Germans referred to these by the pejorative term, “Water Polish” (*Wasserpölnisch*). The influence of high German on the vernacular reached its height with the Industrial Revolution, particularly in urban centers. It started to wane in the eastern part of this Prussian Industrial District after 1922, when this area, including some of the most densely populated cities of Kattowitz and Königshütte (Chorzow), were

³ Although not a formal place name, both Germans and Poles used—and continue to use—the term Upper Silesian Industrial District (Oberschlesische Industriegebiet/Górnośląski Ośrodek Przemysłowy) to refer to the cluster of industrial cities, the largest and most notable of which include, Kattowitz (Katowice), Königshütte (Chorzow), and the tri-city area, Gleiwitz (Gliwice), Beuthen (Bytom), and Hindenburg (Zabrze). I place “Industrial District” in capitals because this is how it is used today, when the official name of this area is abbreviated—in the Polish—as GOP.

⁴ Tomasz Kamusella refers to these dialects, Slavic words and expressions mixed with those from high German, as the “Upper Silesian creole.” See: “Kreol Górnośląski” in: *Schlonska mowa: Język, Górny Śląsk i nacjonalizmy*, (Zabrze 2005) 12-34.

ceded to Poland and Polish became the most influential language. The different linguistic culture and centuries-long location on the eastern peripheries of the Reich marked some of the catalysts of Upper Silesians' strong regional consciousness and feelings of otherness vis-à-vis mainstream parts of the German Reich.⁵

The almost unanimous Catholic religious character (some 90% around 1910⁶) of its native inhabitants marked another fundamental feature of this region. According to Jim Bjork, Catholicism was a fundamental factor that shaped and upheld the weak high national, and strong regional, collective identity of this population. Before 1919, Upper Silesia's almost unanimous Catholic character gave it strong distinction against the mainly Protestant surrounding provinces of the Prussian State. It also made the region a prime target of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's Kulturkampf, or war against the public influence of the Church in the newly united Germany in the early to mid 1870s. This persecution spurred alienation from the German state, strengthened the political might of the Church in the region, promoted the proliferation of Slavic/Polish languages/dialects, and helped give the limited Polish national movement a foothold in the region.⁷

Nevertheless the region's clerical elites remained resilient to pressures to take national

⁵ On the language of the Upper Silesians, see: T. Kamusella, „The Szlonzoks and Their Language: Between Germany, Poland and Szlonzokian Nationalism,” *EUI Working Papers*, 1 (2003), 16-17; Bogusław Wyderka, „Język, dialekt czy kreol?” in: Lech M. Nijakowski, ed., *Nadciągają Ślązacy: czy istnieje narodowość śląska?* (Warszawa, 2004); Matthais Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache in den Jahren 1921-1998* (Dortmund, 1999), 32-9; Manfred Alexander, „Oberschlesien im 20. Jahrhundert eine mißverstandene Region,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 30 (2004) 467-8.

⁶ See: Tomasz Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia 1870-1920: Between Region, Religion, Nation and Ethnicity', *East European Quarterly*, XXXVII (January 2005) 446.

⁷ See: James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, 2008), 25 & chapter 1. Tomasz Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: the emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848-1918* (West Lafayette 2007), 175-87.

sides, which they found to be a threat to the unity of their congregants.⁸ Even in the Voivodeship Silesia (the Polish side of the national border of Upper Silesia after 1922), during the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, the Church continued to resist the Polish nationalist regional governor's demand for an increasing ban on German language masses and a "cleansing" of the clerical ranks for "Germanizing" priests. Siding with the opposition to repressive "Polonization" measures, local clerics thus remained a fundamental protector of age-old regional ways.⁹ On the Polish side of the border neither Catholicism, nor its persecution, marked the token factors fueling regional ties in the region, as the high Polish newcomer elites were themselves Catholics. This points to the role of class, among other factors, as another important catalyst of the persistence of regional identity.

The Industrial District has always been foremost a society of workers. In 1921 60% of the total population (or circa 680-700,000) was working class, and about 54.4% of those who worked did so in coal mining and metallurgy plants.¹⁰ The rapid pace that industrialization took here, just as in Imperial Germany in general, prompted social dislocations and also class conflict. Since the industrial and landowning elites came from the high regions of Germany, this clash worked to alienate the dialect speaking masses from the Reich and to strengthen regional bonds and collective feelings of otherness. On

⁸ This is a major theme of Bjork, *Neither*; Kamusella, *Silesia*, 179; Andrzej Michałczyk, *Kirchlichkeit und Nationalität: ein Spannungsfeld. Identität und Identitätspraktiken in OS, 1922-1939*, (Unpublished dissertation: University of Erfurt 2010).

⁹ See: Lech Krzyżanowski, „Kościół katolicki a władza państwowa w województwie śląskim (1926-1939),” in Maria Wanda Wanatowicz & Idzieg Panica, ed., *Wiek Stare i Nowe*, Vol. 2, (Katowice 2001) 177-85; Jarosław Macała, *Duszpasterstwo a narodowość wiernych: Kościół Katolicki w Diecezji Katowickiej wobec mniejszości niemieckiej 1922-1939* (Wrocław-Katowice, 1999) 26-148. This point also made in Michałczyk, *Kirchlichkeit*...

¹⁰ The statistics pertains to the larger part of the Industrial District, including Teschen Silesia, which was ceded to Poland in 1922. See: Serafin, ed., *Województwo Śląskie: Zarys Monograficzny* (Katowice 1996) 90 & 92. 193,560 were employed in these industries in 1913. See: Kamusella, *Silesia*, 200.

the eve of and during the First World War, widespread economic and material discontent catalyzed rising support for Wojciech Korfanty and the regional Polish national movement.¹¹ After 1922, in the Voivodeship the opposite occurred: high Polish elites took up the leading posts in government and—next to old post holders who remained—industry, leaving natives at a disadvantage and discontent. The German minority factions, in addition to other political groups vowing to defend the rights of Upper Silesians, were the main benefactors of this regional xenophobia fuelled by class conflict.¹² Catholicism, multilingualism, social conflict and socioeconomic discontent, as well as the legacy of being a centuries-old border province thus all contributed to shaping strong regional/local bonds, including regional xenophobia, and in turn, weak national ones.

This regional/local identity was by no means a homogenous and stable one. Manfred Alexander's taxonomy of the various internal groupings and identities within this borderland society demonstrate this point well. He notes that before the end of WWII, the Upper Silesian native community differentiated among those who were "nationally indifferent," and groups that in addition to retaining strong regional bonds, also to some extent identified with a particular nation. He classifies these groups into categories of "Polish/German-oriented," "Polish/German leaning," and also "German-assimilated" groups. One objective factor that marked some distinction between these identities was linguistic competence. Although the vast majority of these groups knew the

¹¹ See: Waldemar Grosch, *Deutsche und polnische Propaganda während der Volksabstimmung in Oberschlesien, 1919-1921* (Dortmund 2002) 19; Eugeniusz Kopec, "Zagadnienie społeczne jendości kresów śląskich z organizmem państwowym II Rzeczypospolitej," in: Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Ziemia Śląskie w granicach II Rzeczypospolitej: procesy integracyjne* (Katowice 1985), 121-22; Kopec, "My i Oni" na polskim Śląsku, 1918-1939 (Katowice, 1986) 10-45; Philipp Ther, "Schlesisch, deutsch oder polnisch? Identitätswandel in Oberschlesien, 1921-1956," in: Kai Struve & Ther, ed., *Die Grenzen der Nationen: Identitätswandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit* (Marburg 2002) 174.

¹² On this, see: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1982); and her essay: "Rola Ludności Napływowej w procesie integracji Górnego Śląska z resztą ziem polskich," in: Serafin, ed., *Ziemia*, 78-86.

local dialects (what Alexander refers to as “Schlonsakisch” or Silesian), the more Polonophile or Germanophile their members were, the better they knew the high national languages and the more actively they could use them. Class belonging marked another objective factor of distinction among these groups. Since the adoption of the high national language marked a vehicle for upward mobility, the educated and middle classes tended to be fluent in the high languages. However, urbanites, including workers, also spoke German, particularly before 1922, and on the German side after the partition.¹³

Despite these internal differentiations of national/regional leanings and orientations, the members of all these groups also carried a common regional consciousness. More importantly, with no clear border—cultural, linguistic, or of any other character—to exclude individuals of one group from those of another, most could assume one leaning/orientation or another at any given time. This shifting of identity marks one of the key features of Upper Silesian society. Portraying oneself as a “Pole” or “German” at key moments due to opportunism and/or compulsion was common not only of the entirely “nationally indifferent” group but also the nationally leaning or oriented. For example, German records demonstrated that to escape persecution, members of the Polish “Insurgent Union,” the most nationalist group for Upper Silesians during the interwar era, joined the Nazi Party’s “Union of the German East” (*Bund der deutschen Osten*, BDO) when Poland’s part of this borderland was annexed by the Third Reich.¹⁴ In the same respect over 90% of Upper Silesians, who were Polish citizens during the interwar era, declared themselves as “Germans” to the Nazis in the Winter of 1939, with

¹³ Manfred Alexander, 'Oberschlesien im 20. Jahrhundert eine mißverstandene Region', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 30 (2004) 478-9.

¹⁴ Adam Dziurok, *Śląskie Rozrachunki: Władze Komunistyczne a byli członkowie organizacji nazistowskich* (Warszawa, 2000) 18.

about 15% of these declaring “Silesian” (and not German) as their native language. By 1943, over one 1.01 million individuals signed up for German citizenship via the “Deutsche Volksliste.”¹⁵ After the war, when the entire region was ceded to Poland, the vast majority of this population was “rehabilitated” (officially pardoned for having sought German citizenship) and restored to the status of Poles. The tendency of the region’s natives to variedly mimic national identity has earned it the historical reputation (on the part of the nationally-conscious) of having a “suspended” sense of nationality (“*schwebendes Volkstum*”).¹⁶ Next to strongly rooted regional/local identities, the non-existence of a linguistic border in the this region—and thus the absence of a classic factors of demarcation between ethnic/national groups according to Central European nationalisms—gave way to this phenomenon.

Both before and after the partition, regional democratic politics only underscored that nationality was a matter of choice and not a concrete and immutable factor in this borderland. While democracy (including quasi-democracy in the Voivodeship after 1926) existed during the interwar era, nationality was an expression of electoral politics on both sides of the border. Even as their choice was often limited by terror and reprisals from nationally-conscious regional authorities, Upper Silesians had the option of voting for German or Polish political parties. As Philipp Ther points out, the number of voters for the “German Electoral Community” (*Deutsche Wahlgemeinschaft*, or the united German minority societies) within the Voivodeship Silesia—the most politically powerful minority group—commonly fluctuated during the interwar era, increasing in number

¹⁵ Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej: między utopią niemieckiej wspólnoty narodowej a rzeczywistością okupacji na terenach wcielonych do Trzeciej Rzeszy* (Katowice, 2006) 174 & 182.

¹⁶ See: Bjork, *Neither*, 4.

during times of political and socioeconomic discontent. This only demonstrated that not so much enduring national patriotic conviction drove locals to choose one party over another as instead the non-ideological, pragmatic and circumstantial factors that commonly constitute motives behind voter choice.¹⁷

The Borderland War and National Partition 1919-22

The violent and disruptive immediate post-WWI years marked the most fateful and historically important contest for the region's place on the political map of Europe. Just as WWI had ended, diplomatic officials of the new Polish state raised claims to this important coal-mining and metallurgy area against Germany—striving to take advantage of the Western Allies' desire to limit the second country's industrial might. This diplomatic dispute had military repercussions within the region. By November of 1918, the Polish and German governments *unofficially* sponsored the build up of military forces of “volunteers” led by professional soldiers to defend their “rights” to this borderland. The first bouts of armed combat between these groups erupted already in August of the following year, when Polish forces launched the so-called first “Silesian Insurgency.” Quickly put down by German forces, this offensive had been sparked by a wave of repressions that the Prussian authorities still in charge of the region had launched against sympathizers and activists of the Polish camp. To restore order and to put an end to the German government's abuse of its power to secure the territory for their nation, by February of 1920, the Western Allies placed the region under international governance by the Inter-Allied Commission. Sporadic violence between the Polish and German camps did not end. However, terror by German militants, and a war of nerves, were among the

¹⁷ See: Philipp Ther, “Schlesisch,” 183-4.

factors behind the second Polish “Silesian Insurgency” of mid-August 1920, which again engulfed parts of the region in armed combat lasting for several weeks.¹⁸

The plebiscite of 20 March 1921 was to be the Western Allies’ ultimate postwar solution to the geopolitical fate of the province. The decision sparked enormous agitation by the Polish (led by Wojciech Korfanty) and German (led by the centrist Kurt Urbanek) Plebiscite Commissions to sway locals to vote in their favor—for their homeland to remain with Germany or pass to Poland. The results of this demand to choose “either-or” went to Germany’s favor by a margin of close to 60% per cent of the voting pool. As sites of upward mobility, the main urban centers of the Industrial District—Kattowitz (Katowice), Königshütte (Chorzow), and the tri-city area (Beuthen/Bytom, Hindenburg/Zabrze, and Gleiwitz/Gliwice)—voted for Germany in decisive majorities. The surrounding rural areas opted for Poland. As recent scholarship on this epoch underscores, choosing either for Poland or Germany by no means denoted a sincere declaration of national identity on the part of the voter on plebiscite day. Just as they did when they voted for national political parties, locals were motivated by the everyday pragmatic and contingent factors.¹⁹ For many, if not most, leaving a political entity in which they had grown up and been socialized, and de facto emigrating to Poland, a completely new, largely foreign, and uncertain society, seemed too risky of a choice to make.

Already the “either-or” choice imposed on region’s natives shattered any possibility for the contest to serve as a true reflection of collective identity. The Allies’

¹⁸ See: Bjork, *Neither*, 214-53; Grosch, *Deutsche*, 21-36. Also: T. Hunt Tooley, *National Identity and Weimar Germany: Upper Silesia and the Eastern Border, 1918-22* (Lincoln, 1997). Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Kentucky, 1993) 26-8.

¹⁹ See works in preceding note. Also: Ther, “Schlesisch,” 176.

choice reflected an inherent bias in favor of the two existing national states at the cost of the disavowal of another viable option: Upper Silesia as its own independent or strongly autonomous political entity. The revolutionary atmosphere of the winter of 1919, and the creation of a *de facto* first independent Upper Silesian state by the Allies gave political expression to longstanding strong regional ties. The outcome was the short-lived Upper Silesian independence movement, the “Upper Silesian Union” (*Bund der Oberschlesien/Związek Górnoślązaków*, BdO), led by the German-leaning lawyer, Ewald Latacz. Circles that were sympathetic to the notion of Upper Silesian autonomy entertained various conceptions of this, from full autonomy to a quasi-autonomy within a German state. It remains unknown exactly how many supporters the BdO had, a possible number ranging anywhere from 3,000 to more than 300,000. What is clear is that many of the organization’s values—even if not necessarily that of a will for the Upper Silesia to become a self-standing political entity—were commonly shared ones on the part of locals. They included expressions of alienation from Germany, reservations against becoming a part of Poland, and at the same time, disdain for any projects to divide the region as an entity.²⁰ Although not given an equal standing with the Polish and German camps at the plebiscite voting urns, the BdO did not disappear from the political scene without first having served as a lasting indicator of how strong and serious regional ties and identities were in this borderland.

²⁰ Bjork, *Neither*, 197-203, 252 (and footnote 132); Grosch, *Deutsche*, 54-63; Ther, “Schlesisch,” 176; Kamusella, *Silesia*, 256-60, 268-9. Whereas Grosch and Bjork point out that the actual number of supporters that the BdO had remains uncertain, Kamusella claims that it was between 150,000 and 300,000. See also: “Von der Provinz zum Freistaat? Der oberschlesische Separatismus im Jahr 1918/1919,” in: Philipp & Holm Sundhaussen Ther, ed., *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europäischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg 2003).

Recognizing this, in an effort to capture the votes of locals, both national camps made concessions to this „Upper Silesianism” in the form of promising autonomic legal status to the region within their respective nations. Once this borderland was divided between Germany and Poland in 1922, the Polish government thus established a semi-autonomous „Voivodeship Silesia” (Województwo Śląsk, which I will refer to as the Voivodeship). This became the only voivodeship to have its own legislative government (the „Silesian Sejm”), its own school system, and also its own power to levy taxes. Although with time, nationalist politics in the region crippled the use of these institutions for this initially intended purpose, from the outset this institutional apparatus at least promised to shelter regional ways from Warsaw’s centralist standardization. In the part of Upper Silesia that remained with Germany, plans for a somewhat similar project came to naught on the basis of the outcome of another referendum. On 3 September 1922, slightly more than 74% of the electorate opted for this part of the region to remain with the Prussian State and thus not receive a special autonomous status.²¹

The final fate of the region was actually dictated not by the results of the plebiscite of March of 1921 but by the Western Allies. In fear that on the basis of the German victory of this contest they would lose most of the industrial area, Korfanty ordered the so-called third „Silesian Insurgency” to start on 3 May 1921. This final armed offensive marked an effort on the part of the Polish camp to capture by force what it did not succeed in winning through legal means. According to longstanding mainstream Polish historiography, due to the enormous participation of „émigrés,” voters who were only born in Upper Silesia but lived elsewhere in Germany, and to German terror, the

²¹ See: Guido Hitze, *Carl Ulitzka (1873-1953) oder Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Düsseldorf 2002) 491-559; and: Grosch, *Deutsche*, 61-3.

plebiscite and its results were illegitimate. At the same time—according to this view—the „third insurgency” was a local popular uprising, not one orchestrated from Warsaw, and thus reflected the will and conviction of Upper Silesians.²² In actuality, the Polish government was behind this offensive and thousands of troops from outside of the region joined the insurgents. In the same regard, the German government was behind the German forces that fought the insurgents, made up of Freikorps and Selbstschutz (Self-Defense) units of volunteers. In the words of Jim Bjork, „by the late spring of 1921, an undeclared conventional war was raging across central Upper Silesia.”²³ Lasting close to two months, this de facto German-Polish war became the most symbolically significant series of events for the „cold war” over the region that followed until September of 1939. The combat around and over the Mount of St. Anne (Sankt Annaberg/Góra świętej Anny), the main regional landmark, was particularly important for the future politicized memory of the era between 1919 and 1922.²⁴

This conflict of 1919-21 that ended in partition in 1922 set the stage for a half century long Polish-German conflict over the region that followed, including a revanchist „cold war” during the interwar era. Marking the first—albeit undeclared—*Polish-German modern war*, the warfare of 1919-21 left hundreds of casualties on both sides, including brutal atrocities that each side committed against the other. Like most modern wars, the memory of this one would deepen the wedge in relations between the two sides

²² Kai Struve, „Geschichte und Gedächtnis in Oberschlesien. Die polnischen Aufstände nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg,” in Kai Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Erinnerung* (Marburg 2003) 13-4; and: Bjork, *Neither*, 244-6. Also: Blanke, *Orphans*, 29-31.

²³ Quoted from: Bjork, *Neither*, 256 & 253-56.

²⁴ Juliane Haubold-Stolle, „Mythos Oberschlesien in der Weimarer Republik: die Mythisierung der oberschlesischen Freikorpskämpfe und der ‚Abstimmungszeit’ (1919-21) in Deutschland der Zwischenkriegszeit,” in Heidi Hein-Kirchner & Hans Henning Hahn, ed., *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Marburg, 2006) 279-99.

of the conflict for many decades to come. Next to the combat, the plebiscite contest also left a legacy of bitterness. As Waldemar Grosch points out, nationalist hatred was a core aspect of the propaganda that both national camps disseminated in an effort to convince locals to vote in their favor. The plebiscite contest saw the dissemination of a number of the derogatory stereotypes of Poles and Germans, including those of the first nationality as incompetent managers of a nation-state, and the second as brutal oppressors and exploiters. These stereotypes, along with other features of the propaganda of the post-WWI epoch continued to craft the official image of the „other“ in Poland and Germany throughout the interwar era, and became a legitimization of violent ethnic cleansing in the epochs following.²⁵ The results of the plebiscite and the national partition of the region in 1922 marked another factor fueling continuing conflict between the neighboring countries. Neither side felt it received a just deal from the western allies with regard to how the territorial issue was resolved, which deepened its antagonism against the „other,“ and particularly in the case of Germany, exacerbated resentment against the Versailles „Dictate“. German elites vocally and unrelentingly protested the cession of eastern Upper Silesia to Poland on the basis of having won the plebiscite and blamed the Allies for having sided with the Silesian Insurgents.²⁶ Refusing to recognize the results of the plebiscite as legitimate, Polish elites, particularly from the Sanacja/OZON era (1926-1939) on, also agitated for the „return“ of the western side of the region—albeit in a more tactful and subtle manner than their western neighbors.

²⁵ See: Grosch, *Deutsche*, and also his, „Deutsche und polnische Propaganda in der Zeit der Aufstände und des Plebiszits,“ in: Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien*, 69-88. Also on the politics of memory of 1919-21 during the interwar and postwar era: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Errinerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956* (Osnabrück, 2008).

²⁶ Struve, „Geschichte,“ 11-15.

Indeed, the third insurgency was what in large part swayed the Allies to settle the territorial question much more in Poland's favor than would have been the case if this was done solely on the basis of the plebiscite results. In mid-June of 1922, the Inter-Allied Commission put into effect a national border they had drawn right through the Industrial District, awarding the majority of coal mines and industrial plants to Poland, along with the largest urban centers, Kattowitz and Königshütte, the residents of which had clearly opted for Germany in majorities ranging from 65-75%.²⁷ Since the border was drawn right through a society that was inherently interwoven culturally and economically, a series of agreements were made between the national governments and the Western Allies so as to cushion the partition's impact on local level society. Devoted to protecting the autonomy of local life, particularly the rights of „minority groups,“ and the free movement of residents across the border, the Geneva Convention (1922-1937) was among the most important of these. Despite these efforts, this solution delivered from above still created havoc and discontent. Next to the loss of industries on Germany's part, the border drawing prompted a serious refugee crisis as about 100,000 individuals crossed from one side to the next, many to escape persecution and social marginalization.²⁸

The border drawing created two separate regional polities. The western side of Upper Silesia retained its name, the Provinz Oberschlesien (which I will refer to as the Province or O/S Province). Until the Nazis shut this faction out of the political scene in 1933/4, the Catholic Center Party, which in this area took the name of the Catholic People's Party (Katholische Volkspartei, or KVP), remained dominant. With 88.5% of its

²⁷ Pia Nordblom, "Die Lage der Deutschen in Polnisch-Oberschlesien nach 1922," in: Struve, *Oberschlesien*, 112. Also: Blanke, *Orphans*, 29-30.

²⁸ Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Województwo*, 80, 86.

inhabitants Catholic (compared to only 32% of this religious group making up the rest of the Reich), this was not only Germany's most Catholic region, but also where clerics played a greater role in politics than anywhere else. As Guido Hitze, the biographer of Carl Ulitzka, one of the most important cleric politician of this province, noted, in Germany proper there was concern that this borderland would turn into a „papal state” (*Kirchenstaat*).²⁹

Sociopolitical Turbulence within the Voivodeship

The story was different on the Polish side of the border. This semi-autonomous „Voivodeship Silesia“ was an area that incorporated the former Prussian parts of Upper Silesia and also northern Cieszyn (Tešín/Teschen) that had belonged to Austria-Hungary before 1919. Without a rooted Polish intelligentsia in the formerly Prussian part of the region, the elites of government and society migrated from the Cieszyn part and also from Galacia, Poznań, and other mainstream parts of Poland. A cultural and socioeconomic conflict quickly developed between this circa 40,000-50,000 (making up 2-3% of the Voivodeship's professionally active population) *newcomers*, the term I will use to refer to them and the rest of the population of Upper Silesian *natives*.³⁰ As part of the conflict, each group labeled the other with derogatory stereotypes. Such labels that natives used against newcomers included, „pieroński gorol” (damned mountaineer), and „Polack,” while those that the second group used against the first included „Schwab” (a derogatory Polish term for German), and „Germanian”—to name just a few of such

²⁹ Hitze, *Karl*, 561-2.

³⁰ These statistics from: Lech Krzyżanowski, „Kościół Katowicki wobec regionalizmu Śląskiego w okresie międzywojennym,” in: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm: historia i współczesność, Śląsk na tle innych obszarów* (Katowice, 1996) 69; According to Wanatowicz, the newcomers (ludność napływowa) constituted no more than 5% of this society during the interwar era, 3-4% of which were professionally active. This from her essay, „Rola ludności napływowej w procesie integracji Górnego Śląska z resztą ziemi Polskiej,” in: Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Ziemia Śląskie w granicach II Rzeczypospolitej: procesy integracyjne* (Katowice 1985) 79.

labels. Indeed, this demonstrated that even though according to official policy, the natives of the region were „Poles“—albeit some „Germanized Poles“—ordinary individuals treated each other on different, and nationally charged, terms.³¹ A policy that started already during the government of Wojciech Korfanty, his Christian Democratic Party (ChD) and its allies (1922-1926), Voivodeship governors openly favored giving elitist positions to newcomers over natives as a way of „Polonizing“ this borderland. The promotion of this policy was radicalized during the government of the Galician newcomer and Polish ethnic nationalist, Michał Grażyński (1926-1939), who introduced it in part as a way of crippling „German“ influence in the Voivodeship.³²

The epic conflict between Korfanty (ChD) and Grażyński (Sanacja) was one of the hallmarks of the interwar history of this region, and plays an important role in this chapter and other parts of this dissertation. A native of the outskirts of Kattowitz (Katowice), Korfanty (1873-1939) was a Polish-conscious Upper Silesian who headed the Polish national movement since before WWI and pioneered government on the Polish side up to 1926. Although he worked towards the Voivodeship's integration with Poland and its „defense“ against „German revanchism,“ Korfanty was also a champion of regional cultural autonomy and distinction from the rest of Poland. Foremost, he repudiated the use of „negative“ „Polonization“ measures, such as firing „Germans“ from industry. Józef Piłsudski's coup d'état brought Grażyński to the seat of Voivode (regional governor). A quasi-dictator, Grażyński worked to fortify his power base by defaming his

³¹ See: Tomasz Kamusella, „The Upper Silesians' Stereotypical Perceptions of the Poles and the Germans,” *East European Quarterly* 3 (XXXIII) Sept. 1999, p 395-410; and: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1982) 265-301.

³² Mieczysław Grzyb, *Narodowościowe-polityczne aspekty przemian stosunków własnościowych i kadrowych w górnośląskim przemyśle w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1978) 240ff.; Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1982) 120-136.

legendary rival as a traitor to Poland in large part for the latter's tolerant and moderate stance, and eventually drove him into exile. Coming into power in a year when the German electoral block won more votes than Polish parties in local communal elections, Grażyński launched a subtle internal war against German political, cultural, and industrial influence. Manifested in the form of violence, terror, firings, as well as limits to personal freedoms and democratic politics, this wave of nationalist repression brought the Voivode into conflict with the international community, the Germans, and also with the Church and native population.³³

Agents of Revanchism

The conflict of 1919-22 also gave birth to *border activist societies* devoted to „recovering“ Upper Silesia for their respective nations—or in other words, both to nationally integrating their own nation's parts of the region and agitating for the revision of the border at the same time. After the partition, many of these groups did not mobilize but became lasting (cultural-political) „fighters“ in the ongoing conflict over the borderland. Within the German camp, the „Union of Upper Silesian Societies Loyal to the Heimat“ (*Vereinigte Vereine Heimattreue Oberschesien – VVHO*) formed the core propaganda agency. According to the main scholar of the propaganda of the plebiscite conflict, Waldemar Grosch, this organization of 40,000 in 1920 was strongly tied to the nationalist German National People's Party (DNVP). Its higher ranks were made up largely of social elites, including civil servants and teachers, with individuals outside of the region coordinating the organization. Prominent interwar era cultural activists, among

³³ Wanatowicz, *Ludność*; Długajczyk, *Sanacja*; Serafin, *Województwo*, 148-58. Also: Blanke, *Orphans*, 103-6, 117-20.

them the folklorist and regional scholar (Heimatkundler), Karl Szodrok, began their revanchist career within this organization.³⁴

After the partition, the organization became a German-wide roof organization of political activists, scholars, and para-militants, devoted to „recovering“ Upper Silesia for Germany. In this respect it was one of various political organizations devoted to Germany’s eastern borderland affairs, the Weimar era progenitors of Nazi era Ostforschung and the Bund der Deutschen Osten (the Union of the German East). During the first decade of the partition, the VVHO enjoyed the full-fledged support of the regional government of the O/S Province, which was dominated by the centrist Catholic People’s Party (KVP, the Upper Silesian section of the all-German Zentrum Party). It also had a politically diverse membership pool, ranging from leftists, liberals, and centrists, to anti-Republican rightist.³⁵ The latter continued to play a dominant role within the society, particularly in its section in the city of Gleiwitz (Gliwice), where—according to Polish Consular reports—the organization had its greatest backing. Regional KVP leaders, many of whom, like Karl Ulitzka and Oberpräsident (regional governor) Alfons Proske, had done so during 1920-1, played a leading role in the VVHO not just because they were devoted to its revanchist cause, but because they strove to keep right-wingers from dominating it.³⁶ During the spring of 1924, Eugen Schiffer was the organization’s director, and by 1928, this function was carried out by the Middle School teacher from

³⁴ Grosch, *Deutsche*, 39-43.

³⁵ Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 90; Hitze, *Karl*, 846ff. Support for the work of the VVHO came from members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and also from former members of the Deutsche Ostmarkenverein.

³⁶ Hitze, *Karl*, 843-7.

Gleiwitz, Melchior (first name unknown).³⁷ According to Polish consular reports, by the Spring of 1923, the VVHO had seven regional chapters (including 1,000 local sections), and represented around 100,000 individuals. The same source reported that by early 1932, it carried that of 60,000 residents in Gleiwitz alone.³⁸ As the main agent of revanchist regional propaganda, the VVHO maintained a multimedia effort to reach local, nation-wide and international audiences with its core message, that all of Upper Silesia „was, is, and remained,“ a German territory. In other words, this discourse represented regional traditions, culture, and history in national German character. Working towards this end was the VVHO's academic and folklorist wing in the region, Karl Sczodrok's Union of Heimatkunde Societies („*Vereinigung der oberschlesischen Heimatkunde*“), which included prominent Heimatkundler (Heimatsforscher) such as the ethnographer Alfons Perlick, archeologist Franz Pfüntzenreiter, lyricist Alfons Hayduk, among others.³⁹

The Polish camp was much more centrally organized than the German one during the plebiscite campaign. All propaganda and activist groups from Upper Silesia and from around Poland were grouped under Wojciech Korfanty's Polish Plebiscite Commission. Among the activists were teachers from the Poznań (Posen) and Lwów (Lviv/Lemberg) regions, scouts, folk song and theatrical societies, gymnastic and other

³⁷ These from reports of: Konsulat RP Bytom, to: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (hereafter MSZ), from 11 Apr. 1924, 17 June 1924, 9 Feb. 1928, in: Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter AAN), 482 (Konsulat RP w Opolu)/8, doc. 32, 34-5, 38, 58.

³⁸ Konsulat Generalny RP w Bytomiu, To: MSZ, dot. Zjazd VVHO, 20 May 1923, AAN 482/8, doc. 23, also similar report from 12 Feb. 1932, in doc. 107. Prussian State Ministry of the Interior reports noted that in Nov. of 1926, the VVHO had only around 300 Ortsgruppen and 20,000 members: VVHO eV. Zentralstellung, 30. Nov. 1926, Geheimpreussische Staatsarchiv, Preussische Kulturbesitz (hereafter GStA PK), HA. I, Rep. 77, Preussische Ministerium des Innern (hereafter omitted), Rep. 77 (hereafter omitted), Tit. 856 „Ost-West,“ Nr. 393, doc. 221.

³⁹ OP, Abschrift betr. „Gegenwärtige Lage der Deutschen Kulturarbeit in West O/S,“ 23 Apr. 1936, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, (PA-AA) Kattowitz, 63 A (Politik, Bd. 10), doc. 12. See also: Wojciech Kunicki, „... auf dem Weg in dieses Reich“: NS-Kulturpolitik und Literatur in Schlesien 1933 bis 1945 (Leipzig, 2006) 21-72.

sports groups.⁴⁰ Just as they had on the German side of the border, the borderland wars and plebiscite contests of 1919-21 shaped some of the leading cultural-political activists and groups of the rest of the interwar era. Among them were Stanisław Ligoń, the leading publicist of a humorous propaganda newspaper in the local dialect, *Kocynder*, which was popular among locals. A half-decade after the partition, he became one of the leading radio comics working to promote the Polish national identity of the whole borderland, and enjoying fame on both sides of the border. Korfanty's leadership of the entire Polish campaign, including as diplomat, propaganda coordinator, and military leader, earned him the legendary status of „Silesia's liberator” after 1922, gave his political party, the Christian Democrats (ChD) a prominent place in the government until the May Turn (Piłsudski Coup) of 1926. Indeed, on both sides of the border (in the Province until the Nazi era) most of the leading regional politicians had played leading roles in the borderland conflict of 1919-22.⁴¹

The Polish counterpart to the VVHO was the Upper Silesian Defense Union (*Związek Obrony Górnego Śląska*). In the fall of 1921, the delegates of this organization changed its name to the Western Territories Defense Union (*Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich* or ZOKZ), and then again in 1934 to the Polish Western Union (*Polski Związek Zachodni* or PZZ). As the second and third names suggest, this was an all-Polish organization devoted to „defending” Poland's former Prussian lands against „German revisionism” and also to agitating for more territories, including a border along the Oder River. It was the prime executive agency of the ideas of the nationalist thinker and politician, Roman Dmowski, and his teacher Jan Ludwlg Popławski (1854-1908). A

⁴⁰ Grosch, *Deutsche*, 64-90; Marian Mroczko, *Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich 1921-1934: powstanie i działalność* (Gdańsk, 1977) 11, 17-24.

⁴¹ Serafin, *Województwo*, 134ff.

biologist by profession, Dmowski was not only the first notable author of Poland's tradition of geo-political theory oriented towards the Western borderlands, commonly referred to as „western thought” (*Westforschung/mysł zachodnia*), but also the founder of ethnic (as opposed to civic) nationalism. Devoted to westward territorial expansion, and to creating an ethnically homogenous society by way of persecuting Germans and Jews, and forcefully assimilating Slavic groups, Dmowski's National Democratic Movement (called „*Endecja*,” an abbreviation of the movement's formal acronym, N.D.) marked the core ideological creed of the ZOKZ. Unlike the *Endecja* political party, the former remained a „supra-partisan” group devoted to borderland activism. In this sense, it was willing to enter into collaboration with non-*Endecja* governments, including that of Korfanty and his civic-nationalist ChD (1922-1926), and thereafter the Piłsudskiite (Sanacja) government of Michał Grażyński (1926-1939).⁴²

The Polish-wide ZOKZ was made up of activists who had fought in border wars and territorial contests in Upper Silesia, Poznań (Posen/Poznań region), and Mazuria. In this regard the plebiscite period activist, Teodor Tyc, was the organization's leading figure in the first region. The Silesian section of the ZOKZ was the largest of all the others (Pommeranian, Poznanian, Central Polish), accounting for more than half, or 16,000 members in 1924 out of a total of 24,377. Its membership in the Voivodeship rose to slightly over 20,000 by 1937. These numbers demonstrate that the ZOKZ was not very successful in its plight to become an organization of the masses. In 1937, only a quarter of its members came from the working class majority of the region. In this sense, much like the VVHO, the ZOKZ remained an organization of elites, with teachers as the

⁴² Marian Mroczko, *Związek*, 13-36 and sections on Silesia; Serafin, *Województwo*, 136; Wanatowicz, *Historia*, 53; Długajczyk, *Sanacja*, 44-54.

leading occupation group represented in its coordinating ranks. Just as many of the municipal, county, and regional government officials entered the ranks of the VVHO, so too did those of the Voivodeship that of the ZOKZ. And also in similar respects to its rival across the border, the ZOKZ enjoyed the collaboration of the regional and national academic communities, including the „Silesian Society of Friends of the Sciences,” the university of Cracow, as well as academic centers of „western thought” in other parts of Poland’s western territories. In 1934 the regional academic community was expanded with the opening of the famous „Silesian Insitute” led by the prominent Endek, Roman Lutman.⁴³

Paramilitary groups were another key actor in the revanchist conflict. One of the legacies of the border wars following WWI, they existed on both sides of the border. However, unlike in the Weimar Republic, on the Polish side, they were fully endorsed by the government, flaunted and decorated during public holidays and rallies. Made up of veteran fighters of the „Silesian Insurgencies,” the so-called, „(Silesian) Insurgents’ Union” (*Związek Powstańców Śląskich*, ZPŚł.). About 62,000 individuals had taken part in the armed insurgencies of 1919-21, among them 57,000 Upper Silesians, and 5,000 soldiers from Poznań and Galacia. Thereafter the society of veteran insurgents was made up overwhelmingly of regional natives, forming the largest (officially) Polish nationalist society of this social group. Next to them were individuals who had not participated in the uprisings at all, but were allowed to join the organization to swell its ranks, and also to promote its youth group, the „Insurgent Youth Sections” (*Oddziały Młodzieży Powstańczej*).⁴⁴ The membership of this Insurgent Union ranged from about

⁴³ Mroczko, *Związek*, 25, 50, 54, 56, 64-67, and sections on Silesia.

⁴⁴ Deutsche General Konsulat in Kattowitz, 25 Feb. 1923, GStA PR, Tit. 856, Nr. 428, doc. 19.

20,000 in 1922 to close to 40,000 by 1930. Like the Silesian ZOKZ, this society was part of a nation-wide organization, the „Federation of Polish Unions for the Defense of the Fatherland” (FPZOO).⁴⁵ During the Sanacja era, Grażyński put himself at the head of this organization as he himself was a veteran commander of a battalion during the third insurgency. It was then that this organization became his de facto street army, an instrument used to terrorize „Germans” on both sides of the border via violence and public ceremony.

The final most important actor in the cultural-political „cold war” over Upper Silesia was constituted by the minority groups on both sides of the border. Indeed, not all minority groups were political pawns in the cross-border revanchist game. They are particularly important to this study as actors and observers in the various politics of acculturation promoted by governments on both sides of the border. With most of the industry in their hands up to the 1930s, the German conscious and German leaning of the Voivodeship were far more politically and culturally influential than their Polish counterparts in the Province. The Volksbund, the most important German minority society, had close to 96,000 registered members in its ranks in 1927.⁴⁶ Its leadership was made up of German camp activists of 1919-21, which included its leader, Otto Ulitz, and Victor Kauder, head of the organization’s cultural section, the Kulturbund.⁴⁷ The latter

⁴⁵ See: Tomasz Fałęcki, „Regionalism Powstańców Śląskich do 1939,” in: Maria Wanatowicz, ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm: historia i współczesność, Śląsk na tle innych obszarów* (Katowice, 1996) 51; Tomasz Fałęcki, „Powstańcy Śląscy w ruchu kombatanckim w II Rzeczypospolitej,” in: Andrzej Brozek, ed., *Powstania Śląskie i plebiscyt w procesie zrastania się Górnego Śląska z Macierzą: materiały z sesji naukowej historyków powstań śląskich i plebiscytu*, (Bytom 1993) 117, 167-170; and Tomasz Fałęcki, *Powstańcy śląscy, 1921-1939* (Warszawa, 1990) 23, 60, 242.

⁴⁶ Szymon Kędrzyna, *Oświata Dorosłych w województwie katowickim po drugiej wojnie światowej*, (Katowice 1968) 44.

⁴⁷ Viktor Kauder, „Die Kulturelle Lage, Aufgabe, und Leistung des Deutschen in polnischen Oberschlesien,” in: Viktor Kauder, ed., *Das Deutschtum in Polnisch-Schlesien: Ein Handbuch über Land und Leute*, (Leipzig, Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1932), 324-36; Danuta Sieradzka, „Niemieckie Organizacje

worked in cooperation with Szodrok's circle of Heimatkundler as a way of maintaining the German identity of the Voivodeship in expectation of a future revision of the border in Germany's favor. On the German side of the border, the „First District of the Union of Poles In Germany” (ZPwN) was significantly smaller, with a maximum of 7,000 in its ranks by the outbreak of WWII. However, there were other Polish minority organizations that numbered another estimated 17,000.⁴⁸ Having provided an overview of the region, politics, and agents that this study is concerned with, I now turn to the main subject of this chapter.

A Tale of “Industrial Chivalry”

In October of 1927, Poland's president, Ignacy Mościcki, presided over the ceremony unveiling the "Statue of the Insurgent" in the border city of Królewska Huta (Königshütte, in 1934 “Polonized” to Chorzow). This monument had already been consecrated by Catholic clergy in the previous mid-July, and now awaited its nation-wide promotion.⁴⁹ It constituted a tall statue of the “Silesian insurgent,” who is represented here foremost as an ordinary local industrial worker (**see image 1.1 – 1.3**). Although he sports the tools and uniform of a metallurgy worker, in addition to flaunting a well-built bare upper torso, the head of this figure is a bourgeois one: it was modelled after that of the historic “awakener” of Polish consciousness in Upper Silesia, the late-nineteenth-century writer and humanist, Juliusz Ligoń.⁵⁰ Raised on a tall pedestal (about 10 feet), this metallurgy worker (*Hütter/Hutnik*) also holds a medieval broad sword. Formerly the

Kulturalne na terenie Województwa Śląskiego w okresie Międzywojennym,” *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 3 (1981) 693-4.

⁴⁸ See: Marek Masnyk, “Die Situation der Polen im Oppelner Regierungsbezirk in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren. Ein Problemüberblick,” in: Struve, *Oberschlesien*, 105.

⁴⁹ Urząd Miejski Królewskiej Huty, 15 Lipiec 1927, Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (hereafter, APK), 646 (Akta Miasta Chorzowa)/21, doc. 101.

⁵⁰ See: <http://www.chorzow.eu/index.php?KAT=1975>, and: <http://www.mojchorzow.pl/p.s.381842.html>.

property of the Prussian State, this base had supported the “Germania Monument,” before Polish insurgents had destroyed the former during the borderland war. Now Polish government officials had recycled this German-built pedestal, an act they did so commonly that it hardly acquired media or government attention in Germany until the late interwar Nazi era, when propaganda agents looked for any trite detail to fuel anti-Polish vehemence.⁵¹ For the time being, what bothered the government on the German side of the border was the belligerent character of the statue, and the fact that it was unveiled and endorsed by the Polish president. To German officials, the erection of this large monument right at the border conveyed a blatant gesture of revanchism, a clear statement that Poland aimed to redraw the border at the Oder River. According to their reports “the worker who represents the Königshütte monument is turned looking at Beuthen,” the German city only a short distance away from where the monument stood.⁵²

In both Poland and Germany, the insurgencies were recognized as primarily responsible for the cession of eastern Upper Silesia to Poland. In Poland, they were exalted as such, while in Germany they were condemned for this same reason. In the second country, the glorification of the insurgencies was considered to be a provocation, since according to all political parties other than left-Social Democrats and Communists, these military uprisings constituted an armed invasion of Germany by the Polish state, and colonization of German territory. In this sense, the glorification of the insurgencies by another of Poland’s presidents amounted to the continued endorsement of “Polish

⁵¹ In the course of the late 1930s, the Nazis turned this act of pedestal recycling into a pillar of their propaganda. They claimed that „the Poles“ were using force and destruction to stamp out the „German identity“ of the Upper Silesian worker: „In Ost-Oberschlesien die nationale Gesinnung des Oberschlesischen Arbeiters,“ in series „Deutschland und Polen,“ *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*, 10 January 1937, (pages not numbered). See also: Urząd Miejski Królewskiej Huty, 30 May 1925, APK, 646/21, doc. 22.

⁵² Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. „Besuch des Staatspräsidenten Mościcki,“ 6 October 1927, Tit. 856, Nr. 733, doc. 9-12.

imperialism” against Germany.⁵³ Polish government officials were well aware of this. Nevertheless, they were more than willing to further damage relations with their neighbour by having Poland’s head of state openly glorify the post-WWI violence and unveil a tall statue of aggressive demeanour right at this controversial border. It’s no accident that such a provocatively militant statue was unveiled in this frontier city in the presence of the Polish president. Relatively new in power, the nationalist Grażyński regime aimed to make good on its promise to step up the “Polonization” of this age-old Prussian province. In one respect, this belligerent statue served as a forceful symbolic demarcation of *difference* at a border that hardly represented any division apart from a change in administrative jurisdiction. In another respect, it was an intimidating symbol of the new militant nationalist regional order in a city where either sincere or suspected “German-conscious” locals were influential in culture, economy, and local government.⁵⁴

The appearance of the officially exalted militant thugs of former insurgents and their chief, Grażyński, at the unveiling ceremony all the more marked the Sanacja regime’s intent to give this monument an aura of fear and a projection of the nationalist terror to come. And all this was done right in front of representatives of the *Volksbund*, the Voivodeship’s main German minority organization.⁵⁵ Whereas they had usually boycotted inherently Germanophobic border rallies such as this one, this time the

⁵³ See chapter 2 for more on this. Otherwise, the best and most direct statement demonstrating this is found in “Das ‘Schlesische’ Volksfest,” Kattowitzer Zeitung (hereafter KZ), 102 (4 May 1931), which calls the border rallies, among other things, the “Verherrlichung einer Gewaltat” (honoring of a violent deed.). ii. VVHO and O/S Hilfsbund flyer, “Aufruf!,” Breslau, July 1922, AAN 482/8, doc. 11; iii. Konsulat Generalny RP, Bytom, To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny Nr 82: „Rocznica Plebiscytowa”, 26 March 1924, AAN 482/196, doc. 1.

⁵⁴ See: Bernard Linek, “Die Marginalisierung der deutschen Minderheit im polnischen Oberschlesien während der Zwischenkriegszeit: Das Beispiel Königshütte/Królewska Huta (Chorzów).“ In: Mathias Beer, Dietrich Beyrau, Cornelia Rauh, eds., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950*, (Essen: Klartext, 2009), p 189ff.

⁵⁵ Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. „Besuch,” doc. 9.

presence of Poland's president called for a gesture of "loyalty" to Poland and its leaders on these minority leaders' part.⁵⁶ They thus stood in respectful and attentive presence as Grażyński and Mościcki symbolically denied German heritage and identity any significant footing in Upper Silesia. One consolation that the *Volksbund* did have for this act of their public humiliation was that the "Polish unity" that the event was meant to represent was in fact not there. Korfanty and his followers had boycotted the event, just as they had been doing with regard to all the now Sanacja-dominated border rallies.⁵⁷ Their absence did not ruin the turnout rate at the Królewska Huta rally too much. Officials following the event from the German Consulate in Katowice, who normally were the first to point out that the limits of attendee numbers at Polish border rallies, were unusually impressed this time, claiming that the turnout was "considerable due to the special nature of the occasion."⁵⁸

At the unveiling ceremony in Królewska Huta, the two governors relayed the key aspects of the popularized—and mythologized—official regional history. Since their speeches only echoed key elements of this historical narrative, I will first provide a background to the latter before turning to an analysis of their words. Moreover, I will also set their speeches in the broader context of regional and national "historical culture."⁵⁹

Inherently serving to underscore the region's eternal and enduring "Polish character," this

⁵⁶ By the term „border rallies,” I mean political festivities for the masses held at the cities at or relatively near the border, which had a revanchist purpose (in other words, they functioned specifically to underscore the region's national character, and also that it does not belong to the neighbor, as well as/or also served as a forum for the call for the „return”—or annexation—of the neighbor's side of the border). The most important, but by no means not the only of these rallies were the Plebiscite and Third of May celebrations, which I address in the next chapter

⁵⁷ Korfanty's followers usually held their own festivities commemorating the Third of May in separation from the "official" ones that were dominated by the Sanacja regime. See previous chapter.

⁵⁸ Quoted from: Deutsche Generalkonsulat, Betr. „Besuch,” doc. 9.

⁵⁹ This term, „Geschichtskultur,” denoting the content of history and the ways and forms via which it is represented to the public, is borrowed here from: Peter Oliver Loewe, *Danzig und seine Vergangenheit: die Geschichtskultur einer Stadt zwischen Deutschland und Polen*, (Osnabrück) 21, 24-30.

narrative had three key premises. The first was that of permanent *struggle* between Poles and Germans (and in the ancient era, Slavs and Germanic tribes), manifested in equal measure in open combat, peaceful work, and cultural cultivation. The second premise was a mythical schematic image of an *Upper Silesian ethnicity*, which was officially referred to as the “Lud Śląski” (Silesian peoples, pronounced as Schlonzki). Endorsed by Grażyńskiites and Korfantiites alike, this schema depicted the regional native as the core actor of the historical struggle.⁶⁰ According to the official narrative, since the middle ages, and even prehistoric times, the “Lud Śląski” had engaged in a struggle on its own for the preservation of Upper Silesia’s essential “Polish character” in the midst of “foreignness” and in isolation from its “Polish motherland.” The most important aspect of this struggle was a defensive one against the “Germanic peoples” and their age-old vendetta to dominate, “de-nationalize”—or in the official discourse, to take away the “Lud Śląski’s” eternal “Polish” character—and to “Germanize,” or to forcefully assimilate them into “German” culture.⁶¹ The notion that this was a struggle inherently against “Germans” marked the third core premise of this Sanacja-endorsed narrative.

This simple, static, and linear, depiction of regional history formed the prelude of the final chapter of this narrative, and the most politically important one: the official memory of the conflict of 1919-21. Upon taking office Grażyński rewrote this memory in a way that slurred the work and reputation of Korfanti during those years, depicting him

⁶⁰ See: Wanatowicz, “Wojciech,” 199. Here Wanatowicz demonstrates how a core ChD activist, Father Kapica, endorsed the “Lud Śląski” myth in one of his public addresses, despite at the same time urging toleration towards the German minority in the Voivodeship.

⁶¹ “De-Nationalization” (“Wynarodowanie / Entnationalisierung”) was a widely used official term. For example, a lecture broadcasted over the radio station, “Polskie Radio Katowice,” promoted the following discourse, according to German police reports: „Die Polen haben sich trotz der systematisch durchgeführten deutschen Einnationalisierungsmethoden in Westpreussen und Oberschlesien nicht entnationalisieren lassen. Hoffentlich werden sie auch in der Zukunft ihre Standhaftigkeit behalten.“ Quoted from: Der Polizeipräsident, Betr. “Polnische Propaganda durch den Kattowitzer Sender,” APK, , 27/I (UWŚl. Sprawy Ogólne – Wydz. Społeczno-Polityczny), 82, doc. 50.

as a traitor who halted the Polish armies of insurgents as they were about to capture all of Upper Silesia to the Oder River. As a further means of casting a shadow on the heroic legacy of his rival as head of the Polish Plebiscite Commission, he put an end to official public plebiscite anniversary commemorations. He endorsed only bombastic commemorations of the third insurgency (May-June 1921), during which he had served as the glorious leader of the “Combat Group South.”⁶² There were two basic functions of this “tradycja powstańcza” (“insurgency tradition”), as it was referred to by contemporary elites. One was this political instrumental use by Grażyński to forge his own “cult of the Voivode”—an issue I will discuss more of later in this, and also in the following chapter. Another was the pivotal official myth promoting the unity between Upper Silesia and Poland—the issue that I focus on here.

According to the dominating official narrative of regional identity during the Grażyński era (1926-1939), the insurgencies, particularly the third, marked the ultimate outcome of the “Lud Śląski’s” historical struggle and “fruit” of its enduring “Polish character.” More than anything the Voivode (Grażyński) emphasized the autonomous, Upper Silesian, and proletarian, character of the insurgencies. In his eyes, native workers and farmers rose up on their own, without the help of the western allies, and only once they had done so, they were supported by patriotic-minded high Polish “brothers” of which the Galician Grażyński offered himself as a prime example. In its depiction of the insurgencies as a kind of plebiscite in arms, this notion of willful “patriotic uprisings” on the part of the “Lud Śląski” marked a sort of consolation myth for the Polish camp’s

⁶² “Der Zerstörungsaktion Korfantys im 3. Oberschlesische Aufstand,” PZ 126 (3 June 1927), trans. German, in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 732, doc. 367. See also: Haubold-Stolle, who refers to this as the Polish Silesian “Dolchstosslegende” against Korfanty, in: *Mythos*, 174, 199, 209-10. Also: Małgorzata Śmiątek, “Sanacja śląska wobec tradycji powstańczych,” *Zaranie Śląskie* 2 (1981), 236-51.

official loss of the plebiscite of 1921.⁶³ There was after all more or less a consensus among politically national Poles (ChD and Sanacja) that the insurgencies, particularly the third, won Poland “the return” of *part* of its historical province of Upper Silesia.

Furthermore, both Korfantiites and Grażyńskiites concurred that this “recovered” eastern part of the region was under constant threat from German revisionism.⁶⁴

Instrumentalizing both this notion of “threat,” the nationalist and Social Darwinist Sanacja camp was particularly keen on emphasizing that the “historic struggle” for the Polishness of the “Lud Śląski” and his homeland (all of Upper Silesia) *continued* after 1922.⁶⁵

To return to the Królewska Huta rally, the Voivode and the President highlighted key parts of this historical narrative to the public in their own words. First, Grażyński took the podium, speaking the following:

The Upper Silesian population has suffered the longest [among all of Poland] under foreign exploitation and slavery. Nevertheless it still harboured a Polish heart under these difficult circumstances, so that once the fateful moment came, it demonstrated its will to freedom and to their motherland in three bloody insurgencies... The Silesian insurgencies distinguish themselves among the rest of Poland’s historical struggles for freedom by their fully self-standing character. In other words, they are pure popular uprisings.⁶⁶

Speaking next, Poland’s president echoed the preceding message:

[The insurgencies exemplify] the highest acts of heroism of this earth... You [the Lud Śląski] were cut off from the rest of the Polish nation for over half a millennium, but nevertheless you have managed to maintain the Polish language and also

⁶³ Stanisław Warcholik, „Śląsk a Polska w przeszłości dziejowej,” and Michał Grażyński, “Walka,” both in: *Śląsk: Przeszłość i Teraźniejszość*, (Katowice: Nakładem Okręgu Śląskiego, ZOKZ, 1931) 8,14; Stanisław Janicki, *Dziesięć lat przynależności Śląska do Polski*, (Katowice: Nakład i druk drukarni ludowej w mysłowicach 1932) 7, 9, 13. See also: Struve, “Geschichte,” 11-16.

⁶⁴ See Korfanty, *Odezwa od Ludu Śląskiego*, (Katowice, 1927) 10.

⁶⁵ Based on an analysis of various Polish propaganda texts, Haubold-Stolle makes the argument that this myth, which she refers to as the (Polish) „Mythos Oberschlesien,” functioned to rally the population around the Polish national parties, particularly the “nationally indifferent.” See, *Mythos*, 174.

⁶⁶ Quoted from: „Ansprache des Wojewodes an den polnischen Staatspräsidenten in Ostoberschlesien,” trans. German, 2 October 1927, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

Polish traditions, and in your hearts a burning consciousness for your [Polish] motherland. And as soon as the hope of overthrowing the ruling powers and reuniting yourselves with the rest of Poland turned gray, you reached for arms and swung yourselves to armed sacrifice for your country.⁶⁷

The leaders also made clear what the function of this age-old patriotic struggle for the border was. According to Grażyński, it was to manifest “the strongest binding that bonds this [the local] population with the population of the rest of Poland.”⁶⁸

Although the Sanacja camp’s main rival, Wojciech Korfanty, refused to be physically present at this border rally, he made sure that his own interpretation of this regional history did not go unnoticed. This he published in an open letter to the President in the ChD’s main newspaper, *Polonia* during the event. Here he did not criticize the event, but only Grażyński’s dictatorial and terror-promoting regional regime, which he claimed had “spoiled” the region’s “liberation” in 1922. According to this open letter:

We [the Upper Silesians] went to Poland in search of truth, justice and the rule-of-law, which we did not have under Prussian rule. But instead of finding these qualities we were confronted with the disrespect of injury of our national peculiarities and disregard for our holiest national and human rights.⁶⁹

Although he did not do so in this venue, Korfanty was keen on comparing Grażyński’s border dictatorship with the repressive politics of the Prussian government in Upper Silesia before the partition⁷⁰—indeed, just as the Voivode in turn slurred him as tool of Prussian capitalism. His conflict against the authoritarian Grażyński thus drove the ChD leader to play up a quasi-liberal version of the myth of “recovered Śląsk,” namely one depicting the struggle for, and winning of the region, as a search for individual right and regional cultural autonomy. He did so as a result of his strong stance against the Silesian

⁶⁷ Quoted from: Ibid., n.p.

⁶⁸ Ibid., n.p.

⁶⁹ Quoted from Korfanty, “Willkommen.” *Polonia* 269 (1 Oct. 1927), in: *ibid.*, n.p.

⁷⁰ This he did in his most authoritative statement after the May Turn: Korfanty, *Odezwa od Ludu Śląskiego*, (Katowice, 1927) 10.

Sanacja's repressive "re-Polonization" policies, including its war on "Germans" in industry and the bureaucracy in the region, and everyday terror against its political opponents, which Grażyński was keen on branding "Germans." Korfanty projected his alienation from the Voivode's politics—which was shared by most regional natives—into his conception of the region's post-partition history. According to it, he blamed Grażyński for having made Upper Silesia's "liberation" in 1922 into a "disappointment."⁷¹

Despite the severity of this ideological wedge within the Polish national-minded camp in the region, the two sides of it shared a common *fortress mentality*. By this concept I mean the recognition of the notion of a borderland threatened by the revanchist politics of the national neighbor, and the need for factional politics to end and for all to unite as in a bulwark for this territory's defense. During the Królewska Huta rally, it was Korfanty, and not the other leaders who underscored the existence of this scenario. In the words of his "Open Letter:"

The most urgent matter is the threat from the west, which necessitates that the entire population, particularly that of Poland's western lands, namely the avant-garde of the nation, to join in a closed and unanimous united front.⁷²

The promotion of fortress mentalities marked the Sanacja government's most powerful self-legitimizing tool: it warned that if emergency measures were not taken by the state, this token industrial region of Poland would be lost to German revanchist politics. By upholding the notion of an imminent threat to the border and of the need for the government to forge a bulwark of national unity, Korfanty only vented his main opponents' formidable claim to legitimacy.

⁷¹ Ibid., 10, 18-21. See Also Wanatowicz, "Wojciech," 207.

⁷² Quoted from: "Willkommen," doc. 13-14.

With the image of an endangered borderland established, the governing Sanacja faction made the Królewska Huta rally into a tautology of how the epic Germanophobic struggle of the “Lud Śląski” continued. As Grażyński pointed out in his speech, “through work, the farmer and worker now sacrifice to retain the attainments of their national deed [the “recovery” of eastern Upper Silesia for Poland].”⁷³ Poland’s president was also quick to play on this myth of permanent struggle to rally its workers to diligently sacrifice for Poland in everyday productivity—and ipso facto, conform to the Sanacja regime’s politics. According to Mościcki:

Your [the eastern Upper Silesian people’s] endurance and competence for Heroism ensures the Silesian soil an unceasing beautiful growth and development. I expect you to promote this development and have faith in this. Remember that because your earth has been so richly furnished by nature it produces great valuables, which are not only indispensable to you but to all of Poland.⁷⁴

Everyday diligent “work” marked the final chapter of “the history” of the “Lud Śląski’s” struggle for unity with Poland. This last phase of the narrative was thus a modernization discourse that recast the centuries long struggle of cultural defiance, and (after WWI) open war, into a “struggle” of working to develop and flourish the borderland and Poland. By cultivating “Polish Silesia” in both cultural and economic terms, regional residents were thus to underscore Poland’s “rights” to it before the eyes of the international community.

Government officials had echoed this message not just at this rally but at others. Months before the Królewska Huta rally, Poland’s Minister of Finance, Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, spoke to a crowd of some 100,000 gathered in the city center of Katowice.

⁷³ Quoted from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p. Emph.Mine. Analyzing the (Polish) “Mythos Oberschlesien”, largely political propaganda dealing with the memory of the insurgencies, Haubold-Stolle argues that this discourse was aimed to mobilize the local population to sacrificially work for the Sanacja regime. See, *Mythos*, 207-8.

⁷⁴ Quoted from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

He declared the need to “embark on a *battle* for the development of our own national economy” as marking the next phase of the “struggle” for Poland’s territorial integrity.⁷⁵ In this regard, he called for national unity, and also gave the “Lud Śląski,” as the worker of Poland’s central industrial district, a leading role in this fight. He used the term “warrior of work” (*bojownik pracy*) to refer to the “Upper Silesian.”⁷⁶ Already existing in the public discourse during the interwar period, this term would be co-opted and used *ad nauseum* by the postwar Polish communists and their nationalist aids. “Warrior of work” connoted the equivocation of peaceful industrial work and the Germanophobic struggle for the borderland, one whose conception was facilitated by the fact that the local working class population had made up the rank and file of the insurgency army. Indeed, the nationalist Sanacja as well as the nationalist-minded postwar communist regime had conceived of everyday *work* as a national *struggle*, and thus had every incentive to manifest the inherent ties between these two concepts. Observed by way of a bombastic rally in Katowice, the tenth anniversary of the third “Silesian Insurgency” (3 May 1931) was another occasion for promote this message, this time over the radio waves: “You [the Lud Śląski] have expressed your loyalty to the motherland actively through work, fighting, and sacrifice. Long live the Lud Śląski !”⁷⁷

The statue of the “Silesian Insurgent” unveiled at the Królewska Huta ceremony in October of 1927 symbolized the “Lud Śląski,” including that of the latter as Poland’s frontier “warrior of work.” The bronze statue depicted a bearded, muscular, and bare-

⁷⁵ Quoted from: „Manifestacja na Rynku,” *Polonia* 79 (21 March 1927): 2. See also: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 207.

⁷⁶ Quoted from: “Manifestacja,” 2. Emphasis mine. Notion of “with common wholehearted work for Poland we will have a better tomorrow,” also in: “Po manifestacji,” 13 (28 March 1926): 3.

⁷⁷ Quoted from the German translation of an excerpt from the speech of General Górecki at the midnight bivouac in Katowice, in: Polizeipräsident, Landespolizeistelle Oppeln, To: Oberpräsident Oppeln, Betr. “die durch die Kattowitzer Radiostation übermittelten Ansprache, die von den poln Staatsmaenner bei der Austfeier in Kattowitz am 2.5.1931 gehalten wurden,” 4 May 1931, APO, 1 (Oberpräsidium), doc. 35.

breasted male figure wearing a metallurgy plant worker's apron, raised on a tall pedestal (see images 1.1-1.3). This icon held a medieval sword in his right hand, and his work instruments in the other. The tale of age-old struggle for Poland against the "Germanic peoples" through work and combat were represented by several symbols: these included, the figure's historic weapon, his work instruments, the fact that this figure represented an insurgent as well as an ordinary worker, and finally—as German observers did not fail to notice—that this icon was looking over the border towards Germany. This monument in this industrial border city thus served as a visual symbol of the historical narrative of the "Lud Śląski," which Grażyński referred to as the Industrial District's "chivalric tradition."⁷⁸ The government's hope was that the population would adopt it as their common history, and on this basis, forge an inherently Polish regional ethnicity. As such, these symbols marked a core aspect of the Sanacja's *national-regionalism*—or in other words, a regional tradition inherently symbolizing the local area's ties with the nation. Calling it "regionalism" (*regionalizm*), Grażyński promoted the development of this official regional identity as a way of casting a shadow on the German counterpart, which represented Upper Silesia as an inherent part of Germany. This official regional identity was also created to win the minds of the large segment of the "nationally indifferent" part of the populace.⁷⁹

The narrative and symbolism of the "Lud Śląski" had a wider political and ideological context that is necessary to examine in order to grasp its full significance.

⁷⁸ Quoted from Grażyński's speech in: „Ansprache...,” n.p.

⁷⁹ One Grażyński's regionalism, see chapter 3, and also: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, „Między regionalizmem a separatyzmem Śląskim,” in Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm: historia i społeczność Śląska na tle innych obszarów* (1996), 18; Długajczyk, *Sanacja*, 235-8. On the Polish interwar "Mythos Oberschlesien" and its function to nationalize the "nationally indifferent," see: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 174.

This mythologized discourse marked just one component of a broader narrative depicting the native provincial peoples of the former eastern lands of Imperial Germany and its preceding Prussian Empire, including Warmia and Mazuria, Pommerania, Ziemia Lubuska (Lübzerland or Eastern Brandenburg), Poznań (Posenerland) and Silesia, as an “ancient Polish peoples.” Endorsed and developed primarily by followers of Roman Dmowski and *Endecja*, these narratives marked what scholars have called the “Myth of the (Polish) Western Territories” (*Mit Ziem Zachodnich*).⁸⁰ In actuality the latter was a two pronged *mythology*: one of its narratives was on the often native peoples of these provinces, particularly the strongly regionally-rooted and “nationally indifferent” groups⁸¹, and another was on the character of their landscapes.⁸² The first narrative based its assertion of the enduring “Polish” (or Slavic and “proto-Polish”) character of the borderland peoples on a number of factors, most importantly, the historical one: most of the “Western Territories,” including Silesia, were lands of the medieval Piast dynasty, which Polish national historians have traditionally considered “Poland’s first royal family.” By the mid-1920s, the geopolitical and social theorist, Roman Dmowski, and his disciples, including Jan Ludwigo Popławski and Zygmunt Wojciechowski,⁸³ had constructed an interdisciplinary scholarly body of geopolitical thought called “western thought” or the “Piast Idea.” Fundamentally rivaling the eastern-focused imperialist

⁸⁰ For an analysis of the “Mit Ziem Zachodnich” (also known as the “Mit Ziem Odzyskanych”), see: Linek, “Mit,” 233-46. See also: Markus Krzoska, *Für ein Polen an Oder und Ostsee: Zygmunt Wojciechowski (1900-1955) als Historiker und Publizist*, (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2003).

⁸¹ These include: the Mazurians, Upper Silesians, Kaschubians, and Poznanians. On the Mazurians, see: Richard Blanke, *German Speaking “Poles”? Language and National Identity Among the Mazurians since 1871*, (Köln: Böhlau, 2001).

⁸² The propaganda pamphlet of 1947 of the “Polski Związek Zachodni” (the name the ZOKZ took after the „Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact” of 1934) demonstrates this. See: Waclaw Barcikowski, et al., eds. *Odzyskane Ziemie—Odzyskani Ludzie: z współczesnych zagadnień Ziem Odzyskanych*, (Poznań 1946).

⁸³ See: Krzoska, *Für ein Polen*. And: Michael A. Hartstein, *Die Geschichte der Oder-Neiße-Linie*, (München 2006), 17-52.

orientation of their competing faction of Polish nationalists, represented by Joseph Piłsudski, the Dmowskiites argued that Poland's "national mission" was to "recover" the lands of "its national origins," the Piast lands, from Germany. Indeed, this was not just a quest for more lands in the west, but also one to secure those territories already "recovered" by 1922, including the Pommeranian "Corridor", Poznań, and Upper Silesia. Thus, the narrative of the "Lud Śląski" (and its annex, the "Tradycja Powstańcza") along with the whole body of the "Western Territories Myth" marked Poland's western border-oriented revanchist discourse.⁸⁴

This official geopolitical mythology sought to discursively conceptualize an ethnic and cultural border where one did not exist in reality. It did this by symbolically erasing the cultural and political diversity of this borderland. Neither the German language, ties to German history, heritage or identity, play a role in the official historical consciousness of the "Lud Śląski." Very blatantly put by the ZOKZ in one of its prime popular pamphlets: "the Lud Śląski kept itself far away from German culture and everything associated with it. It fenced itself off from its traditions, speech, and religion, as well as from the Prussian school and government."⁸⁵ Even while Upper Silesia was "trapped" in the midst of a "sea of foreignness" after the decline of the Piasts, according to the official myth, the "native peoples" preserved cultural, economic, and religious ties with the "Polish heartlands." According to the ZOKZ—the main promoter of the official Polish Upper Silesian history—(all of the region) "was a pure Polish land."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ On this tradition during interwar era, see: Marian Mroczko, *Polska Myśl Zachodnia, 1918-1939 (Kształtowanie i upowszechnianie)* (Poznań 1986), esp. 21-74, 193-5, 298-212. On the thought of Dmowski and the development of "Endecja," see: Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York 2000), esp. 129-188.

⁸⁵ Warcholik, „Śląsk,” 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

If it was “pure” and “clean” (“*czysto Polski*” can refer to both) during the Piast era and shortly after, then it became something of the opposite thereafter, when “foreign” powers (Czechs and Germans) began to rule over the region. An officially regime-endorsed regional guide book published in 1932 thus referred to the Prussian period (17th c. to 1919) as “the long illness.”⁸⁷ The ZOKZ drew on Roman Dmowski’s image of “Germans” as the historic and natural enemy of “Poles.” In its master narrative on Upper Silesia, already in pre-historic times “Germanic tribes” “migrate” in and then out again, “never belonging to the rest of the population,” while “Slavic tribes” remain sedentary.⁸⁸ In the Middle Ages, the “Germans” return as “colonizers”, and from the eighteenth-century on, or the era of “Prussian rule,” they promote their historic mission to “de-nationalize” and “Germanize” the natives in unrelenting consecutiveness. The tide begins to turn more to the favor of the “natives” only with the late nineteenth-century when Polish literati such as Juliusz Ligoń, Jósef Lompa, Karol Miarka “re-awaken” Polish consciousness and thus “spiritually prepare” the Upper Silesians for the “patriotic surges” (the insurgencies) of 1919-21.⁸⁹ Grażyński’s words offer a flair of romance to this seemingly more rational historical narrative:

From the midst of this dark and indistinct mass of peoples activists surfaced with the most chivalrous but simple and hardened names—how hardened this peoples is! These are activists who reach to the depths of this peoples’ soul to pull out its national consciousness. And so in the midst of the greatest oppression on the part of the German state, there grew an ever more powerful movement...⁹⁰

⁸⁷ See an officially endorsed popular history of the Voivodeship: Janicki, *Dzięsieć*, 2.

⁸⁸ Quoted from: a government-endorsed travel guide of the Voivodeship, Mieczysław Orłowicz, *Ilustrowany Przewodnik po Województwie Śląskim ze 130 Ilustracjami, planami*, (Warszawa-Lwów: Książnica Polska, 1924), 9. The myth of an ancient sedentary Slavic civilization is also promoted, and grounded in the archeological research of the Silesian Institute, in: Stanisław Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy Słownik Po Województwie Śląskim*, (Katowice: Instytut Śląski i Nasza Księgarnia, 1937), 54-6.

⁸⁹ Warcholik, “Śląsk,” 9.

⁹⁰ Quoted from: Grażyński, „Walka,” 13.

Humanists who took an interest in the Slavic and Polish heritage of Upper Silesia at the end of the nineteenth century were thus turned into “hard” masculine warriors themselves, and proletarianized to be equivalent to the average worker. The “Insurgent’s Monument” in Królewska Huta, where a head with a well-kempt bourgeois face rested on the muscular body of a worker and primordial warrior, marked a prime symbolic representation of this motif (see **image 1.3**). In this sense, the statue served as a pivotal icon of this mythical narrative conceptualizing a border between Poles and “Polish-Silesians” and “foreign” and “intruding” “Germans.”

This theme’s inherent principle, namely that of intellectuals “waking up” an otherwise “dark and indistinct” working-class mass to national consciousness, constituted the Sanacja coalition’s legitimating discourse for the “nationalizing” mission of the Polish state. To Grażyński’s followers, Upper Silesian natives, including members of the Volksbund, and the “nationally indifferent,” were “Poles” in principle. According to official ideology, any dissonance with this schema imposed a label of false consciousness on the misfitting individual: the latter either succumbed to the German conspiracy to “denationalize” and “Germanize” the population, in which case s/he identified with the German minority or primarily with the locality (or region) rather than with a nation. Or, in another possible scenario, the non-conforming person was a “renegade,” in which case s/he was once a patriotic Pole but consciously deserted and betrayed the Polish camp for the German one, often for material benefits and power, paid out by the Volksbund.⁹¹

⁹¹ To the Sanacja faction, the Volksbund, and its member, who the regime referred to as the “Volksbundowiec,” marked the physical embodiment of the “German” evil in the Voivodeship. According to the official line, this organization sought to “Germanize” native “Polish” souls with the support of the German government. Thus a number of “types” of members staffed its ranks, some of whom were too “Germanized” or “morally corrupt” to be “salvageable” for Poland. See: “‘Volksbundowiec:’ typy Volksbundowca,” *Powstaniec* IV:6 (June 1930), 2-3. See also: Grażyński, “Mowa Pana Grażyńskiego na

Class conflict marked another facet of this narrative of the “Lud Śląski,” and was likewise enshrined by the character of the “Insurgent’s Monument.” The agents of oppression were not just a “colonial” government but also industrially-minded Junkers (Prussian nobles) and German capitalists. During the era of “Prussian rule,” the ruling classes toss natives off their land and out of elitist social positions, thereby reducing them to second-class citizens in their own homeland.⁹² Indeed, in this industrial area of working class character such a class-conflict based myth was easy to construct and worked conveniently to accentuate the populist nationalism endorsed by the Endecja and the ZOKZ as well as the nationalist “socialism” of the (general Polish) Sanacja. Grażyński’s war story made particular reference to the insurgencies as the “most popular-based armed movement in the history of Polish struggles for liberation,” demonstrating the “patriotic conviction” of the “Polish worker and peasant.”⁹³ As a leader of one of the insurgent combat units, the Voivode likewise promoted himself as part of this mass of “patriotic” proletarian.⁹⁴ He used this image to draw a contrast between himself and his main opponent, Korfanty, a Prussian era educated bourgeois politician, who did not take part in the actual combat of 1919-21. In this sense, he emphasized the ChD leader’s camaraderie with “German” industry, and thus “treason” against Poland, and even put Korfanty on trial for this in the early 1930s. The latter on the other hand tried to combat these accusations by arguing that all classes of Upper Silesians, “landowners, bourgeois, and coal miners” united together to rise up in May of 1921, just as he also asserted that after 1922 there is no more “German industry” in the Voivodeship, but only a “Polish”

VIII walnym zjeździe Zw. Powstańców Śląskich,” *Powstaniec* 10 (1928), 1; J. Paszkowski, „Mniejszość Narodowa Niemiecka,” *Powstaniec* II:3 (May 1928), 2-3.

⁹² Warcholik, “Śląsk,” 8.

⁹³ Quoted from: Grażyński, “Walka”, 14.

⁹⁴ See: note 19.

one.⁹⁵ In this sense, the working class image of the “Insurgent’s Monument” of Królewska Huta symbolized more than just a reflection of the majority class makeup of this society: it also reflected the official principle of “Polish-Silesian-proletarian” versus “German-capitalist.”

In the (Sanacja-endorsed) master narrative under analysis, the German governments, its capitalists, and the Voivodeship’s German minority, all collaboratively conspire against the “Lud Śląski” and Poland.⁹⁶ There were also more key factors of this conspiracy: the western Allied governments, post-WWI Versailles Settlement, and the 1922 Geneva Convention. Grażyński’s coalition (including the ZOKZ) promoted their own de facto Polish anti-Allied “Dolchstosslegende” (“Stab in the Back Legend”).⁹⁷ This discourse underlined an old “fact” dating back to the Korfanty era (1922-1926): that initially the Allied governments had promised to cede all of Upper Silesia to Poland. However, they then went back on their word and “betrayed Poland” by “imposing” a plebiscite onto the region. Even Korfanty would have agreed with the argument thus far.⁹⁸ But agents of the Sanacja regime took it further: throughout the 1919-22 era, the Allied governments worked to the advantage of a German victory. The French did so, for example, by allowing the plebiscite to take place in conditions that favored a “German” majority, including by looking away while the German “Grenzschutz” (border police)

⁹⁵ „W rocznice III. Powstania na Górnym Śląsku,” *Polonia* 120 (3 May 1927), 4. And: From: O. To: Pr. MdI, 3 Sept. 1927, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 732, doc. 392.

⁹⁶ *Śląsk: Przeszłość i Teraźniejszość*; „Na pograniczu zdrady Państwa,” PZ 138 (22 May 1929).

⁹⁷ The “Dolchstosslegende” is a well-know term in German history, referring to an influential legend that Germany had been “backstabbed” by the Allies, who promised that its surrender of 1919 would be administered based on Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” but in actuality made German delegates sign the “War Guilt Clause” in the Treaty of Versailles. The “Stab in the Back Legend” also slurs the Delegates that signed this clause, the Weimar Republic, and all those political parties and elites who supported this “illegitimate Republic.” Here, I am not referring to the same „Dolchstosslegende” that Haubold-Stolle analyzes, pertaining to the Voivodeship Śląsk. She applies the term to characterize Grażyński’s denouncement of Korfanty as having betrayed the third insurgency. See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 199.

⁹⁸ Korfanty refers to the “imposed plebiscite,” in his *Odezwa*, 9.

waged terror on Polish camp agitators and pro-Polish Upper Silesians.⁹⁹ And this discourse of westernophobia transcended the immediate post-WWI era to underline the Geneva Convention's essentially "pro-German ethos."¹⁰⁰ Here the Sanacja coalition focused on criticizing the minority protection clause, thus allowing for the growth of a powerful German minority in the Voivodeship. On several occasions, the Third of May festivities in Katowice served as forums for the denouncement of the Geneva Convention, particularly since it protected the Volksbund's proliferation of German minority schooling, which Polish nationalists saw as a ploy to "Germanize" Polish children.¹⁰¹ Grażyński was certainly not shy to promote his distrust towards the Allied governments, and thus emphasize the need for Poland to rely on its military power to promote its own interests, to the broader public. For example, one of the songs that his Insurgent Union sang during border rallies, the "March to the Oder," and similar organizational events, was an openly anti-Allied one. The lyrics of this piece, entitled, "The Insurgents are not bound by the Versailles Treaties [sic!]" promotes both anti-western motifs, i.e. that the insurgents won't "beg neither Paris nor London for help" but will "reach for the machine gun" to "liberate" their "beloved *Śląsko*" ("Silesia"), and anti-capitalist ones, i.e. that the Versailles Treaty is the authorship of "bankers and cowards."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ This discourse of a de facto „Stab in the Back” is most succinctly outlined in a Sanacja-supported popular history of the region, commemorating its „ten years of belonging to Poland.” See: Janicki, *Dzięsieć...*, 7, 9, 13.

¹⁰⁰ For an official “scholarly” Sanacja-faction interpretation, see: Stanisław Komar, *Górnośląska Konwencja Genewska Pomiedzy Polską a Niemcami, 1922-1937*, (Katowice: Nasza Księgarnia, 1937), 21.

¹⁰¹ See: “Abstimmungsdemonstration in Kattowitz,” KZ 66 (22 March 1927), From: GStA PK Tit. 856, Nr. 732, doc. 93.

¹⁰² This song is taken from: Piotr Świerc, ed., *Śpiewnik Pieśni Powstańczych*, (Opole: Instytut Śląski, 1980) 76-7.

As it functioned to symbolize the ideas analyzed in this section, the “Insurgent’s Monument” in Królewska Huta thus represented the Sanacja’s ideal of an ethnically-homogenous Upper Silesian Germanophobic fortress. According to the ZOKZ, the aim of nationalization politics in the western borderlands was to “return” to a state of the “clean Polish Upper Silesia” that these ethnic nationalists believed to have once existed.¹⁰³ The discourse promoted at the opening ceremony and the broader political values that belied it, I would argue, marked a legitimating ideology for ethnic cleansing.¹⁰⁴ Limited by the protectionism of the Geneva Convention, the Sanacja was not able to actually proceed to “cleanse” the Voivodeship of “Germans” and their ways. Nevertheless, as the third chapter will demonstrate, they did promote this homogenizing ideal to a large extent both in the sense of cultural politics and policy towards “de-Germanizing” the cadres of bureaucracy and industry. More importantly, the multifaceted homogenous narrative of the “Lud Śląski” would serve as a pillar legitimating tool of the expulsion of Germans from the borderland by the Polish “nationalist communist” regime of the postwar era (chapter 5). For the rest of this chapter, I want to follow through on what my emphasis has been in this study thus far: that the official discourses promoted at this borderland, and the larger culture of representation they were a part of, were transnationally mutually influential. Mościcki’s visit to the Królewska Huta in October of 1927 in turn spurred the

¹⁰³ For an analysis of the propensity by ethnic nationalists in Central Europe to imagine an “ethnically pure” ancient and medieval historical period, and the loss of this “purity” in the course of the early modern era, see: Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 4, 35, 210.

¹⁰⁴ Throughout the whole dissertation, I apply Norman Naimark’s definition of “ethnic cleansing,” namely, “the removal of a people and all traces of them from a concrete territory.” Naimark’s study of ethnic cleansing in twentieth-century Europe includes the postwar Upper Silesian case—both the physical removal of “Germans” from the region and that of all cultural traces associated with them. See his: *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth-Century Europe*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 4, 133-6.

German government to send its own figurehead to deliver a refutation. I now turn to analyzed this event.

The “Savior” at the Border

The Polish president’s visit to the border in October of 1927 certainly made its presence felt in the neighboring German land. Besides finding it a provocation, officials also perceived it to be a state-orchestrated lie. According to reports, “Mościcki strives to promote an impression of satisfaction on the part of the provincial population, which by no means reflects their actual mood.”¹⁰⁵ Just as they were apt to do in their comments on the various rallies in Katowice, government observers underlined the fictively orchestrated nature of the event, including that many of the participants were there out of duty and not their own free will. They pointed to the German minority and crowds of children from public schools as an example. Moreover, the observers even found the banners, flags, and other official décor at the event to be “needy” and hardly a match for that of their own rivaling rallies.¹⁰⁶ Their most important criticism marked an exploitation of the ChD-Sanacja dispute on their part: pointing to Korfanty’s boycott of the event, they argued that the rally lacked the support of native Upper Silesians.¹⁰⁷

Despite their marginalizing remarks, the event did make enough of an impression on the O/S Province’s governors to merit a “response” of similar symbolism and significance from them. They answered with a visit of their own president, Paul von Hindenburg, to the Upper Silesian border area. According to the Polish Consulate in Beuthen, German officials began to plan the event soon after the Królewska Huta rally,

¹⁰⁵ Quoted from: Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst (RZf.H), Grenzbericht für Oktober 1927, GStA PK Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, doc. 43.

¹⁰⁶ See: *ibid.*, doc. 43, and also: Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. „Besuch,” doc. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. „Besuch,” doc. 9-10.

seeing Hindenburg's visit as an opportunity to have this head of state voice their call to revisionism with the entire Upper Silesian population enthusiastically rallied around him. Von Hindenburg made his visit in mid-September of 1928.¹⁰⁸ One month prior, he sent a supporting message to the regional assembly of the revisionist VVHO—which the Polish Consul made good note of—underscoring that he was looking forward to learning about the pains and yearnings of Upper Silesians.¹⁰⁹ On 17 September 1928, Hindenburg travelled to the provincial capital of Oppeln and presided over an official ceremony there, where he and regional government chiefs gave speeches. In the next days he went on a tour of the border, visiting, and occasionally giving speeches, in the industrial cities of Hindenburg (Zabrze), Beuthen, Gleiwitz, and Ratibor.¹¹⁰

Before heading to the border, Germany's President made a stop in the village of Stubendorf (Izbicko) within the county of Gross Strehlitz (Wielkie Strzelce/Strzelce Opolskie). In terms of Polish-German relations, this move was a risky one. The district carried heavy political symbolism. Not only had it been a center of intensive fighting between the insurgents and the German militant bands in May of 1921, but it lay nearby to the epitomal symbol of the national violence of the immediate post-WWI period altogether, the Mount of Saint Anne. The Mount's political significance stemmed on the one hand from the fighting that occurred over it in 1921, and on the other, from its legacy as one of the most important Catholic religious symbols of the entire Upper Silesian province: for centuries it served as one of the centers of pilgrimages in this religiously

¹⁰⁸ Poselstwo Polskie w Berlinie, To: MSZ, 29 Aug. 1928, AAN, Ambasada RP Berlin, 279, doc. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Poselstwo Polskie w Berlinie, To: MSZ, Re: Sprawa przyjazdu Hindenburga, 5 Sept. 1928, doc. 9.

¹¹⁰ On the internal political affairs of Hindenburg's visit, and particularly on how KVP leader, Carl Ulitzka, sought to profit politically from it, see: Hitze, *Carl*, 633-8.

active region, a site of important churches and shrines, as well as of a Franciscan monastery. Moreover, it was an important center of local tourism and an area of rest and retreat particularly for the industrial district's working class population. The Mount was a beautiful green, clear-aired, and elevated contrast to the otherwise smog-covered heavily industrialized lowland lying east of it. Both its religious and tourist significance made it into a recognized historical epitomal landmark for the region, a legend that in turn gave birth to its political significance.¹¹¹

Hindenburg did not hold a rally right atop of the Mount of St. Anne. The site was a symbol of Polish-German war, and thereby also a favorite ground for nationalist paramilitary rallies, which not only denounced the cession of "Ostoberschlesien" to Poland but also undermined the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic.¹¹² An official visit at this site by the president would thus have not only been an outright gesture of belligerence against Germany's eastern neighbor but also of endorsement of opposition to the state of which he was at the head. It is very likely that Hindenburg thus purposely avoided appearing atop the Mount and instead hoped to avoid stirring international controversy and still memorialize the post-WWI border war by visiting Stubendorf, the more modest area in its vicinity, instead. There he paid homage to the veterans who defended the region during 1919-21, and who looked up to him as a former soldier and as

¹¹¹ See: James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, „The Annaberg as a German-Polish ‘Lieu de Memoire’,” *German History* 25:3 (2007) 379-386. Also: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, “Der heilige Berg Oberschlesiens—der Sankt Annaberg als Erinnerungsort,” in: Marek Czapliński, Hans Joachim Hahn and Tobias Weger, eds., *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region*, (Görlitz 2005); and her similar article, “Góra Świętej Anny w niemieckiej i polskiej tradycji politycznej,” in: Juliane Haubold-Stolle and Bernard Linek, eds., *Górny Śląsk Wyobrażony: wokół mitów, symboli i bohaterów narodowych*, (Opole and Marburg, 2005).

¹¹² See: Bjork, „The Annaberg,” 386, and: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 117-8; and her, „Der Gipfel der Symbolik: Der Sankt Annaberg als Verkörperung Oberschlesiens,” in Christian Pletzing, Tomas Serrier, Peter Oliver Loew, eds., *Wiedergewonnene Geschichte: Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas* (Wiesbaden 2006).

the celebrated commanding general of the eastern front in WWI. In Stubendorf the president was received by the legendary commander of the Selbstschutz (Self-Defense), General Karl Hoefer, and 3,000 veteran border fighters, some of whom were now organized in local paramilitary bands called the “Union of Regional Defenses” (*Landeschützenbund*), while others in similar groups, such the Stahlhelm. The German press, as well as O/S Province’s governor, Alfons Proske, publicized Hindenburg’s visit to this locality.¹¹³

Hindenburg’s caution did little to salvage relations with Germany’s eastern neighbor. The press in Poland was not much warmer in reaction to his visit to a close-by area of the Mount of St. Anne than it would have been had he actually appeared atop this site. His meeting with the Selbstschutz in the mere proximity of this landmark gave the Silesian Sanacja government exactly the ammunition it needed to fuel its self-legitimizing Germanophobia. This governing faction’s official daily, *Western Poland* (*Polska Zachodnia*), interpreted the president’s gesture as a war-mongering provocation, and official heroization of the German military bands of the post-WWI period and the “atrocities” they committed. According to this press, the veteran fighters “took an opportunity to show Hindenburg Annaberg at least from afar and to underline that the conquest of this high ground by the Selbstschutz defended the rest of Upper Silesia all the way to the Oder River from being united with Poland.”¹¹⁴ The pro-government venue immediately jumped to the opportunity to now criticize national-minded Germans for endorsing the growth of paramilitarism, or in other words, to echo the charge the former

¹¹³ See: „Ansprache des OP beim demnächsten Reichspräsidentenbesuch in Oberschlesien,” 17 Sept. 1928, and: *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* 441 (17 Sept. 1928), *O/S Volksstimme* 259 (18 Sept. 1928), all from: GStA PK Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

¹¹⁴ Quoted from: “Heller Beweis der deutschen Revanche-Bemühungen...,” PZ 260 (19 Sept. 1928), trans. German, from: *ibid.*, n.p.

had been making against Grażyński. *Polska Zachodnia* held Hindenburg's gesture as "proof" that the Germans lied about not officially endorsing a "Selbstschutz tradition"—a counterpart to the "insurgency tradition" (*tradycja powstańcza*). They noted that Hoefer purposely welcomed the German president "near this place of honor," the Mount of St. Anne, to inspire this paramilitary "tradition," of which Hindenburg was the symbolic head, to further develop and proliferate.¹¹⁵ The Korfanty faction, the main Polish opposition to Sanacja, only supported and extenuated this propaganda, claiming that the German "bands of shock troops" (*bojówki*) were present at the president's visit, and went off to state that the Catholic priest and KVP head, Carl Ullrich, was a "shock troop band leader."¹¹⁶

Indeed, Hindenburg's visit to the border area had a stronger echo in Polish society than Mościcki's similar visit eleven months prior had in Germany. This was at least partly because Hindenburg was not just a significant figure as head of the Reich ("Weimar Republic"). As the former military commander of the eastern front during WWI he was himself a provocative symbol to the national Polish elite. As the defender of the Prussian Partition he was an icon of historical German expansion to, and colonization of, the East, a tradition derogatively stereotyped in Poland by the German phrase "*Drang nach Osten*" (drive to the East). This track-record made him the face of the "eternal German plight" to deny Poles land and a self-standing state of their own in the eyes of Polish nationalists.¹¹⁷ To the German-conscious in the O/S Province he was referred to as

¹¹⁵ Quoted from: *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Quoted from: „Polens Wut über Schlesiens Begeisterung,” *Der Tag* 20 Sept. 1928, from: *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Polonia* underlined the provocative symbolism that Hindenburg embodied. According to the report of the German Consulate on an article in its issue no. 260 (19 Sept. 1928): “die Reden des Präsidenten Hindenburg sind von Revanchegelüsten, sie seien ein Ruf aus der autoritativsten deutschen Mund, nicht nur aus den Munde des Staatspräsident, sondern aus der grossten deutschen Helden der Neuzeit, des gesamten deutschen Volkes, für die Vorbereitung des Kampfes mit Polen um die Entreissung

“the saviour of the German East and Oberschlesien during the “[First] World War.”¹¹⁸ In the border area he had an official cult, the high mark of which was the industrial border city of Hindenburg (Zabrze).¹¹⁹ Known for a long time as “Germany’s largest village,” this conglomerate of communes and settlements did not receive its municipal rights until 1922, when it also started to sport the General’s name as a city.¹²⁰ His mythical stature in Germany’s eastern borderlands was exactly the motive behind the President’s visit.

According to the Polish Consul in Beuthen:

My initial presumption that the Germans are going to want to turn Hindenburg’s visit to Upper Silesia into a political circus has proven itself correct. Hindenburg’s reputation as the saviour of the German East was to have a particular symbolic significance in this contested province.¹²¹

Indeed, the chief of state’s legend prompted outrage on the part of the whole Polish press, as the German Consulate in Katowice carefully following the reaction in Poland emphasized. Its officials noted that the outrage was all the greater since it took Polish elites by surprise: after all, a Social Democratic (SPD) German Chancellor, Hermann

Schlesiens.” (Emphasis Mine). Quoted from: Bericht des Deutschen Generalkonsuls Kattowitz, „Stellung der polnischen Press zu den Besuch des Reichspräsident Hindenburg in Deutsch Oberschlesien,” 21 September 1928, GStA PK 856, 637, n.p.

¹¹⁸ „Retter des deutschen Ostens und Oberschlesiens im Weltkriege“ quoted from: „Reichspräsident von Hindenburg in Oberschlesien,” *Der Oberschlesier*, 10. Jg., 10. Heft (Oct. 1928), 1. Also cited in Hitze, *Carl*, 638.

¹¹⁹ Hindenburg had a German-wide personality cult based on his heroic “defense” of the eastern German provinces. See: Jesko von Hoegen, *Der Held von Tannenberg: Genese und Funktion des Hindenburg-Mythos*, (Köln & Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), 77-156. For the specific meaning of Hindenburg in the contested eastern provinces, see: Andreas Kossert, „Masuren als ‚Bollwerk’: Konstruktion von Grenze und Grenzregion von der Wilhelmischen Ostmarkenpolitik zum NS-Grenzland- und Volkstumskampf, 1894-1945,” in: Etienne François, Jörg Seifarth, Bernhard Struck, eds., *Die Grenze als Raum, Erfahrung und Konstruktion: Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, (Frankfurt/M., 2007), 221.

¹²⁰ Hindenburg was originally the name given to one this would-be city’s communes, that of Zabrze, in 1915 to honor the General. See: Barbara Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Pomiędzy praktyką a utopią: trójmiasto Bytom-Zabrze-Gliwice jako przykład przemysłowego czasów Republiki Weimarskiej*, (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003), 96.

¹²¹ Poselstwo Polskie w Berlinie, To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny nr 195, Z pobytu Hindenburga na Górnym Śląsku niemieckim, 19 Sept. 1928, AAN Amb. RP w Berlinie, 279, doc. 61.

Müller, was in office, and his party was one of the few that opposed such high-handed revanchist gestures.¹²²

Hindenburg's legend was also a magnet of large popular turnout. Once he came to the tri-city area, not only did local residents come to see him, but so did crowds of curious spectators from across the border. As the German Consulate in Katowice noted:

From the areas that lay near the border such as Kattowitz, Königshütte, etc., the Germans have flooded into Beuthen in such noticeably large numbers to receive the president that the local transportation system can hardly cope with this stream.¹²³

Although it certainly appalled Polish authorities, this commute of spectators to the event from the Polish side of the region did not necessarily signify their "German national patriotism," nor even protest against Polish authorities. Rather, the mystic character of Hindenburg's stature most likely did its own to draw the crowd: on the one hand, he was President of one of Europe's most powerful nations, and on the other hand, a legendary general under which a part of the male native population in the Voivodeship had served during WWI.¹²⁴

The contents of the speeches made by the President and also the Oberpräsident Alfons Proske did their own to spur outrageous reaction from all over Poland. Proske made sure that the event in Oppeln would serve as a direct refutation of the ceremony unveiling the Statue of the Insurgent in Królewsta Huta, over which the Polish president had presided almost a year prior. Giving out guidelines for the drafting of speeches that would be given in Hindenburg's presence, the Oberpräsident gave all speech writers the following instructions:

¹²² Bericht des Deutschen Generalkonsuls in Kattowitz, Betr. „Stellung der polnischen Presse zu den Besuch des Reichspräsidenten von Hindenburg in Deutsch Oberschlesien," 21 Sept. 1928, GStA PK, 856 „Ost-West," 637, n.p.

¹²³ Ibid., n.p.

¹²⁴ See: OP, Betr. "Ansprache," n.p.

Among other things, the addresses that will now be given by us have to convey a conscious—and if not direct then at least a subtle—substantial rebuttal to the Polish speeches, which had contained a glorification of the insurgencies to which we in large part owe the loss of Oberschlesien.¹²⁵

Taking advantage of the attention and authority begot by the chief of state's visit, Proske moved to attack foremost the narrative of the "Lud Śląski" head-on. This he did at the official ceremony welcoming Hindenburg to the Province, held in Oppeln on 17 September 1928. In his speech to the president, Proske moved to dispel any notion of there having ever been any significant amount of Polish national consciousness in the region. In his words:

The *German- and Polish-speaking population* in Oberschlesien has been intertwined in natural unity with one another for centuries, based on passionate love of their Heimat and therewith of the Reich and of Prussia.¹²⁶

The KVP thus did acknowledge that the province was a bilingual one, where high Polish was spoken along side of high German. However, they claimed that language had nothing to do with the locals' collective identity (ethnicity/nationality). Here their views were at discord with the German nationalist right, which refused to give Polish a place in their imagined ethno-cultural landscape of the region. Rather, the rightists contended that the local population spoke a Slavic dialect that was too far-fetched from the high language of the eastern neighbour to be legitimately labelled "Polish."¹²⁷ Here the root of the discrepancy was each camp's conception of collective identity: the nationalists were ethnic-minded, and thus held language to be a core marker of ethnic/national character.

¹²⁵ Quoted from: OP, Betr. "Ansprache," n.p. I don't mean to imply that refuting the Polish rally of Oct 1927 was the sole or even driving purpose of Hindenburg's visit. Rather, the KVP sought to use this mythical figure that carried the support of the right to de-radicalize politics in the Province and to dampen the right's anti-republican tone. The purpose of the event was also to promote German national interest in this peripheral border province. See: Hitze, *Carl...*, 632-4.

¹²⁶ Quoted from: *ibid.* Emphasis mine.

¹²⁷ See: "Zur Frage des Oberschleischen Volkstums," Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu (hereafter APWr.), 171 (WSPŚl.)/863, doc. 146.

The centrists espoused a civic notion of nationality: to them national belonging was based on common recognition of a regional homeland and national Fatherland, while mother tongue was less essential as a criteria in this regard.

Proske's statement demonstrated the primacy of regional bonds. Foremost, the province's regional inhabitants were tied to their regional homeland or Heimat.¹²⁸ "In far overwhelming majority" they were not "German" in the ethnic sense, but rather—in Proske's words—"German-state conscious."¹²⁹ More importantly, this national consciousness was not a self-standing value on their part, but an inadvertent one: Germany, and Prussia, was—in Proske's words—the "motherland" of "Oberschlesien," and thus in being tied to the latter, the native population was automatically a part of the larger political entities of which the Heimat as a de-facto "child" to.¹³⁰ This discourse exemplified the centrist Katholische Volkspartei (KVP)'s own national-regional historical narrative—one that inherently strove to tie Upper Silesia to Germany. This discourse strove to tap into the strong regional ties that bonded Upper Silesians on both sides of the border, on the one hand, and also to account for a sense of national belonging

¹²⁸ My translation of the difficult to translate term "Heimat" here is a pragmatic one. This study does not deal with the genesis, multifarious character, and complexity of notions of Heimat. Rather, I use this term since it was the used in the contemporary official discourse to denote the German character of Upper Silesia. Indeed, its use in this manner followed the mainstream German means of conceptualizing the nation. As Celia Applegate, one of the major scholars of this topic, has pointed out, regional and national identities in Germany did not clash but rather reinforced each other in the process of nation-building. The nation was to a large extent conceptualized based on the local and regional folk culture and history. Moreover, by the mid-1920s, and particularly during the Nazi era, governments made an effort to instrumentalize Heimat folklore for their own ideologically-based nation-building efforts. As she and others point out, the phenomenon of "regionalism" was not just particular to Germany but was an all-European phenomenon, one that was not necessarily at odds with nation building. See: Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley 1990); same author, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999) 1157-1181; Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, (Rochester, 2002); Philipp Ther and Holm Sundhaussen, eds., *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europäischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg 2003); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill and London, 1997).

¹²⁹ Quoted from: Proske, OP, Betr. "Ansprache...", n.p.

¹³⁰ "Mütterland" quoted from: *ibid*, n.p.

that tended to be weaker than the regional one, on the other. To the centrists, neither cultural otherness (i.e. the everyday use of a different language) nor a feeling of alienation from the larger nation were factors of exclusion from the German national community.

The notion of Polish and German speakers living side by side in peace and in loyalty to the German Fatherland marked the German liberal myth of the “Oberschlesische Volk” (Upper Silesian peoples)—an opposing counterpart to the Polish “Lud Śląski.” During his speech, Proske was sure to emphasize that this myth of civic nationalist principles differed from the German rightists’ counter-myth based on ethnic notions of regional national community. Refuting the rightists claim that “German blood” united the “Oberschlesische Volk,” the provincial governor affirmed that social community in this border region was based instead on the following: “loyalty to the Fatherland,” “to the Constitution” (of the Weimar Republic), and “to the German Volk united under the Republic.”¹³¹ By no means was this patriotism to be devoid of an emotional component: the governor hoped that the president’s charisma would rouse the population’s “love and indivisible connection to the Fatherland in passionate excitement.”¹³²

Despite these differences, there were enough commonalities in the discourses of nationalists and centrists to persuade militant anti-republican groups even to adorn pro-Weimar symbols. For one, Proske’s predisposition to the Versailles settlement was a critical one. The original version of his Oppeln speech made reference to the “*so-called* Peace Settlement” of 1919, before the German Foreign Office made him strike this

¹³¹ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹³² Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

adjective from the phrase.¹³³ Nevertheless, his critical stance resonated quite well even after he made this cautious revision. According to the provincial governor: “as paradoxically as it sounds, the Peace Settlement first brought the war into Oberschlesien, and even in doubled form: a spiritual and national civil war.”¹³⁴ This statement refers not only to the Polish-German conflict that broke out after 1919, but also the “Allied occupation” of Upper Silesia.¹³⁵ This common conception in public discourse referred to the three years in which the German government lost its complete sovereignty over Upper Silesia to the Allied Mixed Commission led by Felix Calonder, and when the region was policed by the French military. Proske was thus sure to underline that “our opponents at the time (the Allied Powers in 1919)” intended to “partition Upper Silesia from the German Reich,” referring here to the original intention of the Allies to cede almost all of Upper Silesia to Poland.¹³⁶ According to the governor, it was neither goodwill nor reason on the part of the Allies that led to the introduction of a plebiscite to decide the fate of this borderland. Rather, “the whole *Oberschlesische Volk* arose spontaneously in such a violent outcry that they [the Allies] did not dare to carry out their first intention.”¹³⁷ This resentment towards the allies and the post-WWI settlement, and notion that whatever concessions were won were not owed to the justice of international law but to the patriotic uprising of the German people, were principles thus commonly held by liberals and nationalists alike in the Province.

¹³³ Auswärtige Amt (AA), To: OP, Oppeln, 4 Sept. 1928, in: GStA PK. Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

¹³⁴ Quoted from: Proske, O., Betr. “Ansprache...,” n.p.

¹³⁵ See for example: *Land unterm Kreuz: ein Film von oberschlesiens schwierigsten Zeit*, dir. Ulrich Kayser, 1927, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv.

¹³⁶ Quoted from: Proske, O., Betr. “Ansprache,” n.p.

¹³⁷ Emphasis mine. Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

By no means did Proske laud the “concessions” that the “Oberschlesische Volk’s uprising” won from the Allies. Quite coincidentally, he was in agreement with Grażyński on this, namely that the plebiscite was a “tragic imposition” by the Allies, and for similar reasons, namely, the turmoil and violence it wrought. According to Proske, the announcement of the plebiscite by the Allies cast “ruin” and confusion,” and spurred a “murderous armed struggle” of “brother against brother.” In short, it tore apart this “since time immemorial unified and peaceful native population,” “grounded in” and consciously identifying with “the soil of the same Heimat (regional homeland).”¹³⁸ Moreover, it gave the real culprits—the “Poles”—the opportunity to carry out their deed: in Proske’s works, “faced with the hopelessness in winning the spiritual war,” or in other words, of “imposing onto the native Upper Silesian population” the will to cast a pro-Polish vote in the plebiscite, the Polish camp sought to take the region by arms. They wrought terror, death, and destruction on the land, laying homes, bridges, and industries to waste, and causing 1,500 “brothers” of the “Oberschlesische Volk” to fall.¹³⁹ With regard to the latter, he referred not just to Upper Silesians fighting against the insurgents, but to those within the ranks of the latter.

This myth of the “Oberschlesisches Volk” was key to Proske’s argument. This construct was one of an “Upper Silesian peoples” united in peaceful recognition of a German Fatherland, and struggling against “our enemies,” which was Proske’s “politically correct” term denoting “foreign,” “violent,” and “imperialist” Poles. The governor confidently declared that support for “our opponent’s cause” would have “never ever arose among the native population on its own.” Moreover, in spite of agitation,

¹³⁸ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, n.p.

terror, and violence on the part of the Polish camp, “the widely overwhelming majority of the German-state conscious population remained uninfluenced” by the Polish camp.¹⁴⁰ In this sense, Proske promoted the myth in very similar terms to the opposing Polish one, that of the “Lud Śląski.” Both imagined ethnic schemas were inherently defiant in their patriotism. More importantly, both proved their “patriotic loyalties” by rising up for the national cause in the region, including to protest rallies, to the plebiscite ballot, and to armed combat, where they were joined by their “brothers” from other parts of their respective nations. As outlined in Proske’s speech, in the German case, the “Oberschlesische Volk” arose first in 1919 to prevent the Allies from ceding their whole Heimat to Poland without popular consent, in March of 1921 went to cast the majority vote for Germany, and particularly in May of that year, arose in arms. Like the Lud Śląski, the German centrist mythical conception of Upper Silesian ethnicity performed these deeds on its own, without governmental or outside instigation.¹⁴¹

Just as in its Polish counterpart’s case, the “Oberschlesische Volk’s” engagement in combat in defense of their Fatherland marked the most worthy display of national patriotic loyalty. In his speech, Proske gave the military acts of 1919-21 a disproportionate amount of attention and praise. His emphasis was that speakers of both languages united in arms against the invading Polish enemy:

At a time of most urgent need thousands of Upper Silesians streamed together, German- and Polish-speaking, and were gladly willing to sacrifice all the blood of their heart so as to keep the Heimat with its motherland, Germany.¹⁴²

This story of heroism thus underlined nationally patriotic values that were to be a model for the population as much as those of the insurgents were to be those of the neighboring

¹⁴⁰ All quoted and drawn from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁴² Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

society. In the discourse of the Sanacja regime's spokespersons, the notion of spilled blood and sacrifice of personal life on the part of locals in the insurgencies manifested the highest symbol of bonds between the Upper Silesian region and Poland.¹⁴³ Proske's speech demonstrates that this was also the case in that of the governing officials of the neighboring province. According to the Province's governor, the bilingual "Oberschlesische Volk" "took the defense of the region and its peoples into its own hands on its own," "fighting in perilous struggles until they put an end to the state of violence."¹⁴⁴ In similar respects to the story told by the Voivode, here the symbolic unity of the borderland with the nation was manifested by another tale of "brotherhood" in the trenches between regional natives and high-nationals. This war story told by the Oberpräsident is one of "countless brave brothers from the Reich rushing to Oberschlesien in the ranks of Freikorps to support the native battalions of the Selbstschutz."¹⁴⁵

At the end of his statement on these military struggles, the Oberpräsident spoke of how in his visit to the borderland, President Paul von Hindenburg met with and thanked "the most praise-worthy leader of this [act of regional] self-defense," General Karl Hoefer.¹⁴⁶ All of this certainly gave credibility to the Polish accusations that the centrists are cultivating a militant borderland tradition of their own. By no means was this "tradition" first invented in 1928. Rather it developed on the basis of the wreath-laying

¹⁴³ This is a point that Haubold-Stolle makes. See: *Mythos...*, 188-9.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted from: Proske, O.P., Betr. "Ansprache," n.p.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., n.p. The anti-Republican faction, or "Alldeutscher Verband" of nationalists and radical rightists (i.e. DNVP and NSDAP) were keen on emphasizing a community of all-German Freikorps, of which the Selbstschutz and the high-German "defenders" of Upper Silesia were part. The symbolic figure head of this national Freikorps tradition was Albert Leo Schlageter. The Nazi opening of the Amphitheater and monument atop Annaberg in 1939 played on this myth of all-German Freikorps "heroism", which inherently served to delegitimize the Weimar Republic. See Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos...*, p 120, 144-5, and Bjork, "The Annaberg..."

¹⁴⁶ Proske, O., Betr. *Ansprache...*, n.p.

ceremonies, and the proliferation of sarcophagi and other monuments heroizing the Selbstschutz.¹⁴⁷

Just as the “tradycja powstańcza” the “Selbstschutz tradition” (although it was not called this officially) functioned as an official folk tale meant to promote “positive” social and moral values among locals. On 25 May 1931, KVP leaders, including Carl Ulitzka, Hans Lukasczek, along with General Hoefer, and other leaders and fighters of 1921, took to the heights of the Mount of St. Anne to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the third insurgency. This larger festivity, which later on in the day gathered a few tens of thousands of participants, and ended with a brawl between pro-Republicans and ruffians from the local cell of Hitler’s National Socialist Party who came to disturb and denounce this centrist- and liberal-led event, began with a small official ceremony inside a church.¹⁴⁸ Attended only by members of the regional government and the former Selbstschutz leader, this event marked the unveiling of a plaque inside the Youth Hostel of the Franciscan Cloister, an important rest area for pilgrims and visitors to the Mount. Aimed to teach youth the Catholic centrist interpretation of the events of 1921, the plaque emphasized that “in love and loyalty to the Heimat,” the “Oberschlesische Volk” had “defended itself against the enemy of thieving passions [*feindliche Raubgelüste*], and thereby saved a large part of German land from foreign yoke” (see **image 1.4**). Moreover, the plaque also emphasized that the “Upper Silesian peoples” carried out this feat with

¹⁴⁷ See: chapter 2.

¹⁴⁸ „Oberschlesien darf nicht verloren sein! Gelobnis der Selbstschutzkämpfer bei der Zehnjahrfeier des Annabergsieges,” *Der Tag* 26 May 1931; „Die Annaberg Feier,” *Frühausgabe*, Wollf’s Telegraphisches Büro, Als Manuskript gedruckt, 82:1086 (26 May 1931); „So sehen sie aus: die Helden mit der Trillerpfeiffe,” *OSV* 144 (27 May 1931), all in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 390, doc. 125-133. Although she makes mention of neither the plaque nor the beginning church ceremony, Haubold-Stolle does examine the outdoor event that followed mainly in the context of the internal politics of the Province. See, *Mythos...*, 120-3. Another more political than cultural analysis, which does take the opening ceremony into account, is that of Hitze, *Carl...*, 1060-1.

the support of “national comrades [*Volksgenossen*] of all German roots [*aller deutschen Stämme*].” On the top end of the plaque appeared sculptures of the faces of Father Ulitzka on one side, Hans Lukaszek (also KVP) on the other, and Hoefer in the center. Meant as a pedagogical tool primarily for the Catholic youth of the province, this plaque marked the centrists’ effort to write their mythologized regional history into Upper Silesia’s religious tradition. Thus, pilgrims to this holy Mount were not only to engage in religious worship but also to learn the narrative symbolizing Upper Silesia’s ties with Germany, one that officialized an image of “Poles” as territorially-hungry aggressors. This plaque marked the first national political monument placed on this site, and thus the inauguration of the Mount of St. Anne as symbol of revanchist politics.

During Hindenburg’s visit, the Centrists did not shy away from trying to account for the dissonance between their idealized ethnic schema on the one hand, and the much more complex picture of regional history on the other. Upper Silesia was a variegated society of strong regional identity, but also of various strands of pro-Polish and pro-German sentiment. Thus, in 1921, a substantial part of the population did vote for their homeland to be a part of Poland, and also fought on the Polish side. Moreover, the vast majority of the insurgents were regional natives.¹⁴⁹ A rather tactless claim underlying “false consciousness” among those who did not side with the German camp followed in the governor’s address. He referred to siding with the Polish camp in the following manner that observers on the other side of the border clearly noted and took to heart:

In wide overwhelming majority it was about a transitory phase of confusion and erroneousness, which has since long turned to follow the more clearly insightful alternative will, and thus has made a return [to siding with Germany].¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Only about 10% of the insurgents were from outside the region. See: Cmiala, “Obchody Rocznic Plebiscytowych na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1924-1927,” *Kronika Katowic* (1996), 148.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted from: GStA PK. Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

This bold statement thus literary labelled pro-Polish consciousness and sympathy an “error” and pointed to a trend towards the “return” of its non-existence, a notion that is here implicitly represented as a norm or natural state. His dismissal of “pro-Polish” sentiment as “superficial” differed little from the refusal of his rivals, Grażyński and Korfanty alike, to recognize „German consciousness” as anything more than an undoable mark imposed by “Germanization.”

In his own address, which he delivered right after that of Proske, Hindenburg underlined this idea:

The *national rebuilding* [nationale Wiederaufbau] that has been taking place in Upper Silesia is also to my particular satisfaction. I am pleased that the Polish speaking part of the population, as far as it followed foreign influences during the plebiscite period, has also *again* united itself on the inside in national terms with the overwhelming majority of the Upper Silesian population. (Emphasis mine)¹⁵¹

The German president thus also gave legitimacy to a myth of a once existing peaceful society that was united in at least the recognition of a common German “motherland.”

This imagined past was implicitly distraught and ruined by the postwar territorial settlement, the grass-roots and armed conflict over the region imposed from without, and finally, the partition of the borderland. Now, by proclaiming it as already under way, and thus beyond any question of discussion, Hindenburg valorized the plight to “recover,” or in his words, “rebuild” this lost society. Although he did not spell out the logistics of the means, he made the ultimate ends clear: working towards the subsiding of pro-Polish sentiment, and the promotion of social assimilation along German national lines.

Symbolically, Germany’s chief of state officially delegitimized Polish identity in the

¹⁵¹ Quoted from: „O/S Grenzbericht für Juli-August-Sept. 1928,” GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, docs. 111-117.

Province as a something marginal, temporary, contrary to the current historical path, and foremost, unwanted.

In his speeches during the visit to the border, Hindenburg echoed a discourse that was very familiar to locals and to Polish official observers by this time:

It will always remain incomprehensible to us Germans that in spite of the results of the Plebiscite on 20 October 1921, the League of Nations decided to give to Poland a large part [of territory]. In all contradiction of economic reason, [they] thus tore up an industrial area united that had firmly grown together in the unity of its population and in that of its resources.¹⁵²

In this sense, the notion of one “Oberschlesisches Volk” went hand-in-hand with that of its Heimat, “one indivisible Upper Silesia.” This discourse protesting the partition focused inherently on the region and perils done to it, rather than on how the “loss” of the eastern part of the province detrimentally affected the “German nation” as a whole. In focusing of the region, the official argument of protest underlined the social and economic suffering wrought by the drawing of the border, and thereby concluded that the welfare of Upper Silesia depended on its united belonging with the Prussian State and Germany—and not with Poland.¹⁵³ This stress on the primacy of the regional Heimat and its needs was a key feature of the KVP’s discourse of protest. It was yet another factor marking the party’s strategy of using regionalism as a means to tie the borderland symbolically to Germany.

This protest based on the primacy of the region was a variegated one. On the one hand, as Hindenburg’s statement notes, the plea for the un-reason of the partition was made. Here officials argued, for example, for the inherent unity of infrastructure (i.e. water supply) communication lines (i.e. roads, rail lines), industry (i.e. coal mines and

¹⁵² Quoted from: *ibid.*, docs. 115-117.

¹⁵³ See chapter 3 for further discussion of this.

plants) of both parts of the region, and the disruption of the normal functioning of these once the national border was drawn. In the words of Germany's president, with the partition, „the interwovenness between production areas and deposit markets were interrupted, government, economic and cultural institutions were partly destroyed and partly torn apart and had to be formed anew.”¹⁵⁴ A second important argument focused on the hardship done to the “Oberschlesische Volk.” In Proske's words:

The partition tore apart a bilingual, Polish and German, population that had been inherently unified and interwoven since time immemorial in their nationality (Volkstum), their citizenship, their passionate love of the Heimat, their culture and economy.¹⁵⁵

His statement included the statistics of this suffering: the death of 1,500 “brothers” (regional natives) during the violence accompanying the drawing of the border, and the forced movement of 100,000 refugees, who “lost their Heimat, their possessions and well-being.”¹⁵⁶

These “empirical factors” served to support an official language of protest that was often graphic and emotional. It was well exemplified in Proske's speech, which referred to post-1922 Upper Silesia as “maimed and from many wounds bleeding, and robbed of the roots of its livelihood.”¹⁵⁷ Officials used these notions of “amputation” and then “unrelenting bleeding” to naturalize their notion of the inherent “oneness” and “invisibility” of “Oberschlesien” by depicting the latter as a “body of flesh.”¹⁵⁸ Apart from the “bleeding wound” officials also frequently used the more religious-based slogan

¹⁵⁴ Quoted from: *ibid.*, docs. 115-117.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted from: OP., Betr. “Ansprache,” n.p.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁵⁸ Juliane Haubold-Stolle demonstrates this in her extensive analysis of the discourse of “the bleeding border” and “Oberschlesien” as “Land unterm Kreuz” from selected sources. See: *Mythos*, 112, and also 109-115.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 109-10.

“Oberschlesien, the land under the cross” (*“Land unter dem Kreuz”*) to refer to the region’s suffering. These terms were the Upper Silesian regionalist versions of the larger German national myth of Germany’s eastern “bleeding border.” Endorsed by liberals, conservatives, and right-wing radicals alike, this myth underlined the inherent illegitimacy of Germany’s borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

All of these notions of the “ruin” of the region first by Polish attack, and then by partition, gave way to Hindenburg’s call to “national rebuilding” (*nationale Wiederaufbau*).¹⁵⁹ This rallying cry was the German counterpart to Grażyński’s call to diligent “work” on the basis of the „logic” established by his „Lud Śląski” narrative. Like the latter, the German president’s notion of “rebuilding” was inherently grounded on myths of “threatened borderland” and the need to form a “national united front”—or in other words, on fortress mentalities. In his speech in the border city of Ratibor (Raciborz), Hindenburg thus stated: “unity, its attainment and its maintenance, is needed more in this endangered and weakened border area than elsewhere.”¹⁶⁰ These words demonstrate how the German President imagined the existence of a state of extraordinary circumstances at the border, which in turn necessitated an end—or at least significant limit—to political factionalism.

Instead, all were to unite to flourish this “Bulwark of German *Kultur*” or “Bulwark of Germadom in the South-east” as the western border area was frequently

¹⁵⁹ The term “Aufbau” was often used in conjunction to German building in the East. Here it connoted the notion of the superiority of “Deutsche Arbeit (German work)” and “Kultur (a peculiar “organic” German culture)” over the “inferior” counterparts of these among the Slavs. The term was particularly frequently used by the Nazi regime to conceptualize their ethno-cleansing-based social engineering in the territories of occupied Poland. See: Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, “The Languages of Occupation: Vocabularies of German rule in Eastern Europe during the World Wars,” in: Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 132.

¹⁶⁰ “In diesem gefährdeten und geschwächten Grenzgebiet ist diese Einigkeit noch mehr als anderswo vonnöten, sie zu erreichen und zu erhalten.” Quoted from: OSV (260) 19 Sept. 1928, in: GStA PK. Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

officially referred to (**see image 1.5**) in propaganda pamphlets published by the government of the Province, which underlined the “injustice” of 1922. One such pamphlet, addressing the hardships that the border drawing brought to Beuthen, had a caricature on its cover based on the exact same motif conveyed by the Polish “Insurgent’s Monument” in Królewsta Huta. This drawing by a Carl Wittek was another depiction of a local metallurgy plant worker, again bare-breasted and in his work apron, holding his work tool (a sledge hammer) in his left hand and sword in his right (**see image 2.7**).¹⁶¹ The theme that the two (the caricature and the monument) convey is clear: work in this borderland was the equivalent of the waging of an epic Polish (Slavic)-German (Germanic) struggle.

Certainly all the heroization of armed conflict against, and scorn launched at the “invasion” of the eastern neighbor, made right-wingers and Stahlhelm units present at Hindenburg’s visit feel right at home ideologically. All these values endorsing a fortress mentality of unity against the “evil” work of the western powers and Poland may even have been what swayed these paramilitary ruffians to adorn Republican symbols—even if only for a day.¹⁶² But Hindenburg’s visit did not just fan the flames of German nationalism in the Province, but also served to, inadvertently, stir Polish nationalism across the border. I now turn to address this issue.

¹⁶¹ Beuthen O.S. [Oberschlesien] : die Schädigung der Stadt durch die Grenzziehung und ihre Bedeutung als deutscher Wirtschafts- und Kulturfaktor im Osten : ein Bildwerk / hrsg. von Verkehrs- und Wirtschaftsamt der Stadt Beuthen O/S ; Inhalt von Wilhelm Matzel. - Breslau : [b. w., 1925] (Grass, Barth und Com).

¹⁶² Poselstwo RP w Berlinie, To: MSZ, Raport polityczny nr 195, z pobytu Hindenburga na Górnym Śląsku niemieckim, 19 Sept. 1928, AAN, Ambasada RP Berlin, 279, doc. 5.

The Neighbor's Reactions:

Hindenburg's visit spurred criticism and outrage all over Poland. In the Voivodeship Silesia, both the ruling Sanacja faction and its opposition underlined the revisionist intentions of the event. Korfantiites argued that "the greatest German heroes of contemporary times and of the entire German peoples" had expressed his "passion for revanche," and "cried for territorial revision." And—according to their daily, *Polonia*—this marked "a call from the most authoritative German mouth ... to prepare for a struggle against Poland aimed at tearing away (eastern Upper) Silesia."¹⁶³ The nationalist ruling faction could hardly outdo its centrist opponents' in radical and eccentric words. Instead, those of *Polska Zachodnia* merely echoed that Hindenburg's speeches amounted to a "call for a new struggle in Upper Silesia."¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, both factions also emphasized that not only did the event drive a wedge in Polish-German relations, but also discredited the intentions for international peace, gestured to over the years by German officials, and manifested by the signing of the Locarno Accords.

The ruling faction's hack-writers took to carefully scrutinizing and analyzing every word, sign, and gesture that their western neighbors brought to the public forum. German newspapers and the Polish consulate reports were food for thought to these authoritarian nationalists. Indeed, hardly a word uttered by Hindenburg or Proske did not go unnoticed or unused as a pillar for their Germanophobic discursive prism. First off, these writers took note of the graphic discourse that the governor and president used to depict the Upper Silesian territorial settlement, including as an act of "tearing apart," "breaking up," and "robbery," of a region "naturally unified" in its regional bonds and

¹⁶³ Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. „Stellung der polnische Presse zu den Besuch des Reichspräsidenten Hindenburgs in deutsch Oberschlesien," 21 Sept. 1928, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

also in German and Prussian patriotic consciousness. The regime's hacks argued that this language aimed to "invigorate the German spirit of 'longing for Upper Silesia.'"¹⁶⁵

Second, they also saw a malicious motive in Proske's notion of the false-consciousness of anyone who sided with the Polish camp just after WWI or at any time thereafter, an ethos they captured well by pointing to the Oberpräsident's use of the terms "spiritual confusion (*geistige Verwirrung*)," and "erring (*Irrung*)," as well as claim that the "insurgency [of May 1921] came in [to the region] from the outside."¹⁶⁶ They saw an even greater conspirational motive behind this statement that certainly took some creative imagining on their part: "what Proske really intended to say (with these words) is fear nothing you Ostoberschlesier (Eastern Upper Silesians), everything will be forgiven if you help us unite Oberschlesien."¹⁶⁷ In other words, *Polska Zachodnia* depicted Hindenburg's visit as an effort to raise revanchist fifth-column insurrection in the Voivodeship. With this accusation, the regime could now raise resentment not just against Germany but the German minority within, as well as the ChD centrists who shared the former's anti-Sanacja plank.

The tunnel-vision in the Sanacja regime's discourse was quite clear. Its hack-writers aimed to paint all Germans—particularly government elites and political actors—in one "German/pro-German" color. Thus, they jumped to the opportunity to point out that Hindenburg not only stood next to veterans of the Selbstschutz and members of the Stahlhelm, and VVHO, but also echoed "their motto," namely "that what was torn away

¹⁶⁵ Quoted from: "Heller Beweis...", " n.p.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.; also: Poselstwo RP w Berlinie, To: MSZ, Raport polityczny nr 195..., doc. 5.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p. Also in: *ibid.*, doc. 5.

from us (Ostoberschlesien) will never be forgotten or ceased to be longed for.”¹⁶⁸ In pitting this statement of the German president, and all the other “conspirational” discourse, together with—the icing on the cake— Hindenburg’s visit with the former border fighters in the vicinity of the Mount of St. Anne, Grażyński’s propagandists drew a conclusion of epic proportions:

One notices that upon the field of centuries of Slavic-Germanic and Polish-German war, the son of the German East tapped into his Tannenberg spirit, and unveiled his Teutonic Knight’s soul.¹⁶⁹

This romantic statement depicting Hindenburg as a torch-carrier of the anti-Polish German colonizing myth marked the crux of the mythical Germanophobia endorsed by the Sanacja. It had all the ingredients that were ripe for extenuating the Sanacja regime’s essential political values: historical conspiracy, a timelessly demonic and ever-threatening neighbor, and a never-ending struggle.

The Korfantiites were certainly more modest in the larger conclusions they drew from their critical views of the German president’s visit. The Korfanty faction’s more lengthy comments on Hindenburg’s rallies reflected its regionalist plank. Rather than following the Sanacja’s line of attacking Proske and Hindenburg with Germanophobic nationalist stereotypes, the ChD turned to pit their own Polish national-regionalism against the German one of the KVP. They thus turned to strike at Proske’s bipolar conception of a German-minded “Oberschlesische Volk” versus a “foreign,” territory-hungry, and belligerent “Poles.” *Polonia*’s writers counter-attacked this notion with a regionally native “us” versus outsider “them” construct of their own. They thus claimed

¹⁶⁸ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.; ii. Poselstwo RP w Berlinie, To: MSZ, Re: „Komentarz...”, AAN, Amb. RP Berlin, 279, doc. 51.

¹⁶⁹ “Man sieht, dass auf dem Gebiet des Jahrhundertlang slavischen-germanen und polnischen-deutschen, ‚der Sohne des deutschen Ostens‘ in sich ‚den Tannenberggeist‘ fühlte und seine Kreuzritterseele enthüllte.“ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

that the German presidential visit was marked by an official entourage of “foreign” high-Germans coming into to the region to “fictively organize a demonstration under the bayonet of a disfigured soldier [Hindenburg].”¹⁷⁰ Moreover, according to this venue, the words the German president spoke were likewise fictive and foreign, written for him by the “all-German Secret Council” (*Alldeutscher Geheimrat*). Moreover, they emphasized that the revanchist nature of the event aimed to disrupt peaceful life in the borderland and threatened to engulf Upper Silesia in violence again. In this sense, just as the KVP blamed high-Poles for disrupting a “peaceful Heimat” after WWI, now the ChD were counter-accusing high-Germans of importing nationalist conflict into the region.¹⁷¹ All this is a good example how in contrast to its nationalist rivals, the ChD strove to engage in the conflict over the borderland in a similar respect as the KVP, and indeed, also the Volksbund: by giving primacy to the welfare of Upper Silesian culture, rather than Poland. In doing so Korfantiites strove to address exactly the audience that their German centrist counterparts were speaking to: the regionally-rooted and Catholic native masses, whose ties to South-eastern Prussian culture were at least as strong as their affiliation with the local historical Slavic heritage.

The rising flames of nationalism in this contested region placed a damp on the ChD’s efforts to avoid being engulfed in them—and more importantly, to refrain from fanning them. More significant than *Polonia*’s critical reflections on Hindenburg’s visit were the broader conclusions its writers drew, namely that “the Polish government can’t

¹⁷⁰ “...künstlich unter den Bajonetten einer entarteten soldates organisierte Demonstration.” Quoted from: „Polens Wut...“, in *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁷¹ Bericht des Deutschen Generalkonsuls in Kattowitz, Betr. „Stellung der polnischen Presse...“, in *ibid.*, n.p.

let provocation and this attack on our border go unnoticed.”¹⁷² Thus, it called on a mass protest against the rallies in the Province: “the population of the Voivodeship Śląsk rises up in flaming protest against the thieving lust [*Raublust*] of the Germans with Hindenburg on top.”¹⁷³ The ChD’s calls on locals to unite in defense against the “German threat” thus reinforced the Polish national fortress mentality that Grażyński was so adamant to promote and to use for his own political gain. Indeed, it was not just he and his closest circles who had benefited from this unanimous recognition of a state of emergency by the mainstream Polish national parties, but so did the militant and authoritarian elite-based ZOKZ, as well as the Insurgent Union.

Heeding not just Grażyński’s but also the ChD’s call for unified protest, these radical nationalists organized counter-rallies to the Hindenburg visit, not just in the Voivodeship but also in other parts of Poland. For example, on 7 October 1928, the ZOKZ held a protest rally in the hall of a cinema in Warsaw attended by about 1,500, mostly from among the working class. The rally marked an occasion for a united swearing of an oath to “spare neither blood nor welfare” in the defense of Poland’s borders in the face of the “German threat” that Hindenburg’s borderland visit marked. And it was also an occasion to fan the flames of this nationalism across borders: namely to underline that “800,000 Poles” were still living within Germany’s borders, but that on account of its “righteousness,” the Polish government does not take up its “just claims” to these lands, unlike its blatantly revisionist neighbors.¹⁷⁴ The ZOKZ and also the

¹⁷² Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁷³ Quoted from: *ibid.*, n.p.

¹⁷⁴ From: Deutsche Botschaft in Warschau, To: AA, 11 Oct. 1928, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p. For the phenomenon of “nationalizing states” agitating for their minority groups in Central Europe, see: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), 140 and rest.

Insurgent Union marched at a similar rally in Katowice on 14 October 1928. This event was not just another saber-rallying call to “united frontier guard” against the “German temptation for territory,” but also an occasion to denounce all those who worked “together with the Germans,” particularly Korfanty, his ChD, and their allies.¹⁷⁵ Thus in helping to promote fortress mentalities, the Korfanty faction was giving Grażyńskiites a weapon to use against it.

CONCLUSION:

The rallies on each side of the border served as an occasion for “regional histories” to be staged before the public. In this chapter I have moved in to focus closely on two significant events that promoted this purpose, the visits of the Presidents of Poland and Germany to the border area. These episodes serve, above all, to illustrate the effects that the “cold war” over the Industrial District (and the larger Upper Silesian region) had on politics both within and between the two nation-states involved. I have argued that one of the important results was the promotion of *fortress mentalities* on both sides of the border. Based above all on the recognition of a historical and ongoing “struggle” to “defend” the borderland from the “aggressive neighbor,” this term was marked by a discourse that conceptualized Upper Silesia as a sort of “bulwark:” a place of political exceptionalism that called for an end, or at least significant limit, to factionalism, for unified national patriotic “work,” and engagement in armed struggle if necessary. On both sides of the border, the discursive valorization of this “unified front” was not merely a product of conflict over the region, but also of the propensity of the political forces to instrumentally promote it for their own ends. Thus shaped by both

¹⁷⁵ Quoted from: Deutsche Konsulat, Kattowitz, Betr. “Beinhaltung der Resolution der Aufständischen gegen den Reichspräsidenten,” 16 Oct. 1928, GStA PK Tit. 856, Nr. 637, n.p.

domestic and international political strife in this borderland, by the early 1930s fortress mentalities emerged as a transnational consensus of certain political values: among them was a common recognition among Polish and German national-minded elites that all political forces, including cultural agents, should be mobilized to represent “united popular will” to the international community at the border.

The official histories and ethnic schemata promoted during the two presidential visits marked the discursive prisms through which this one, and other aspects, of the consensus were imagined. For all their superficial contrastive discord, the master narratives of the “Lud Śląski” and the „Oberschlesische Volk” were similar in form. An inherent part of both these mythical constructs were tales of historic valiant and tragic “struggles” that functioned to demonstrate an “emphatic union” of the borderland with its pertaining national “motherland.” In both narratives this tie between the former and its de facto “daughterland” was based on the recognition of danger, ongoing conflict, and particularly, on imagining the national neighbor and its (national) culture as a “foreign” and “antagonistic” element in the region. A timeless, and homogenous, ethnic picture of the region was thus inherent to these ethnic schemata: both narratives promoted the idea of a “golden age” when the region was “free” from the influence of the national other, even if—as in the story of the “Oberschlesische Volk”—this concept accounted for linguistic and cultural pluralism. Each narrative called for the waging of a struggle for the “recovery” of this imagined utopia, a discourse conceptualized by the terms, “Polonizacja”, “Aufbau,” with reference to each side’s own part of the region, and of the quest to “liberate” the part each had claims to from “foreign yoke.” All of this made these

official folk tales of Upper Silesian ethnicity narratives of modernization, nationalization, and revanchism.

The mythological schemata of the “Lud Śląski” and “Oberschlesische Volk” mark the foundation of both the ideology of revanchism, and its function of promoting the notion of the eternal “German”/“Polish” character of this region. They are thus also a core feature of the means by which this discourse of territorial “recovery” was constructed—as I argue throughout this work—through cultural politics, and particularly the effort of inventing national-regionalist traditions. In focusing on this duel of two presidents, I have aimed to demonstrate how two mutually conflicting discourses did have an exchanging influence on one another. In the next chapter I turn to examine how an entire transnational culture of representational spectacles that promoted this revanchist symbolism evolved as an inherent part of the German-Polish “cold war” over the borderland.

CHAPTER 2

Celebrating Revanchism: The Transnational Development of a Tradition of Border Rallies, 1922-1934

“We demonstrated under the slogan of ‘we will not give up our native land!’ They demonstrated under that of ‘Drang nach Osten [Drive to the East]’ We are willing to heed to international laws, but they are not...”

-- *Polska Zachodnia*, 11 Apr. 1926¹

“Germany celebrated the commemoration based on a voluntary rally of the Upper Silesian people. The Poles celebrate the victory of violence and everyone who lived through the insurgencies would agree with the following, which even Polish speakers echo: that it’s outright frivolous to commemorate the most appalling days of Upper Silesian history with such pomp.”

-- *Oberschlesische Volksstimme* 3 May 1931²

The political strife, war, and national partition of Upper Silesia in the early post-WWI years left enduring social, economic, and political scars on both the German and Polish sides of this borderland. Soon after the Allied forces had drawn the border through this region in the summer of 1922, these problems became politically voiced by government agents on both sides, prompting the development of a Polish-German conflict over the memory of the events of 1919-22. Manifested in a conflict of Polish and German border mass rallies, this dispute over memory marked a major aspect of the Polish-German “cold war” over the Upper Silesian borderland. Indeed, the “duel of the presidents” that I examined in the last chapter was a part of these competing rallies. In the present chapter I place this exchange between the heads of state in its larger interwar era

¹ Full citation: Jan Pyrlik, “My i Oni: charakterystyka polskich i niemieckich obchodów plebiscytowych,” PZ 15 (11 Apr. 1926) 1.

² Full citation: “In Ostoberschlesien wurden die Aufstände gefeiert,” O/S Volksstimme (hereafter OSV) 204 (3 May 1931) in: Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (hereafter, APO) 1 (Oberpräsidium Oppeln, hereafter OP)/181, doc. 57.

context. I examine how on each side of the border, the internal public commemorations of the post-WWI border conflict gave way to a contest of mass rallies. These border rallies served as the basic means by which the Polish-German “cold war” over the borderland was waged. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the development of this contest of rallies was inherently transnationally interwoven and interactive in character. A Polish-German official tradition of border rallies thus developed during the interwar era, marking the core staple of a strongly entangled German-Polish revanchist cultural politics.³ In the space that follows, I will address the how these rallies emerged from the conflict of 1919-22, and the societies that had been active in it. I then turn to examine their evolution, including organization techniques, symbolism, role in international and intra-national politics, and also reception both by national elites and ordinary Upper Silesians.

The Inertia of War and Partition:

Current scholarship concerning the competition of rallies “commemorating” the anniversary of the plebiscite and insurgency begins the analysis with the Province in 1924, and does not turn to address this topic for the Voivodeship earlier than March of 1926.⁴ In contrast, here I study this issue in transnational and interactive approach from

³ By revanchism (revisionism), I mean not only each state’s agitation for the gain of territories, but its quest to integrate its own parts of this borderland into the nation. In other words, the term here refers to both the work to annex areas belonging to the neighbour, and to *nationalize* remote provinces that easily integrate with the culture of the national/ethnic “other.”

⁴ See: Andrzej Michałczyk, „Deutsche und polnische Nationalisierungspolitiken in Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen: ein Vergleich auf Makro und Mikroebene,” in: Dieter Bingen, Peter Oliver Loew, Kazimierz Wóycicki, eds., *Die Destruktion des Dialogs: Zur innenpolitischen Instrumentalisierung negativer Fremd- und Feindbilder, Polen, Tschechien, Deutschland und die Niederlande im Vergleich, 1900-2005*, (Wiesbaden: Harrsowitz Verlag, 2007) 67-72. Also a similar English language article by same author, “Celebrating the Nation: the case of Upper Silesia after the plebiscite in 1921,” in: Claire Jarvis, Daniel Brett, Irina Marin, eds., *Four Empires and an Enlargement: States Societies and Individuals in Central and Eastern Europe* (London 2008) 49-62; and, same author, “Polsko-niemiecka walka narodowościowa na Górnym Śląsku: mit historiograficzny a kwestia tożsamości górnośląskiej,” in Jarosław

1922 on. I do this because the agents of this contest did not just emerge in the mid-1920s. Rather, these were the former agitators and fighters of both the Polish and German camps during 1919-22. On the Polish side, they included societies of veteran insurgents, the “Silesian Insurgent Union” (*Związek Powstańców Śląskich*, ZPŚl.), and the “Defense Union of the Western Territories” (*Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich*, ZOKZ). On the German side they included the “Union of Upper Silesian Societies Loyal to the Heimat” (*Vereinigte Vereine Heimattreue Oberschlesien* – VVHO), and to lesser on an extent also in non-government-sanctioned, sometimes outright illegal paramilitary groups like the “regional defence groups” (*Landeschützverbände*) and the *Stahlhelm*. In 1922 these societies continued to wage the conflict over the borderland, albeit in different forms. The border rallies were one of the most notable of these. Having given an overview of some of these organizations in the last chapter, here I turn to demonstrate how—and why—they re-established themselves *in conflict with one another*, thus becoming the leading agents of the “cold war” over Upper Silesia.

To a large extent, these actors of 1919-22 did their part to fuel this recast conflict over Upper Silesia precisely so that they could maintain their prestigious roles as patriotic “border fighters” (*Grenzkämpfer/Bojownicy*). The development of the society of veteran insurgents illustrates this point. On 25 February of 1923 a rally of several tens of thousands of former insurgents who travelled to Katowice (Kattowitz) from both sides of the border took place in the city square (*Stadtring/rynek*). They called for the reestablishment of the “Insurgent Union.” Polish authorities had disbanded this organization once the militant conflict over the borderland officially ended after the

Allied partition of the region.⁵ The banners the demonstrators carried read “away with German civil servants!,” “down with the Jews!,” and “up to free our brothers in Śląsk Opolski [German Upper Silesia]!”⁶ Expressed in this Germanophobic and anti-Semitic language, the xenophobia of this group was partly reflective of the social marginalization that threatened its individuals once the insurgency army demobilized. Like many members of paramilitary organizations throughout post-WWI Europe, these individuals had been born into the working class at the end of the nineteenth century and had little more than an elementary, and partial secondary, school education before the outbreak of WWI. As soldiers fighting first for the Kaiser and then for Poland, after 1919 they had the opportunity to quickly rise up the military ranks and enjoy a prominence that they would have hardly been able to attain at such a young age during times of peace. But the coming of the latter took this away from them. A prime example of this was the experience of Rudolf Kornke, one of the leaders of this society of insurgents. During 1919-21 he quickly rose from the social margins to stand at the head of the insurgency movement and served as head editor of the latter’s main political venue, the newspaper *Powstaniec (Insurgent)*. All this prominence came to an abrupt end in 1921, when Kornke had to leave the Polish cause and opened up a restaurant. His comrade, Stanisław

⁵ It’s important to note that there were Polish insurgent societies both in the Voivodeship, and in the Province, where these veterans organized as part of the Polish minority. Hardly ever was a precise head-count of attendees done at rallies such as this one. Germans sources note that 50,000 were present. Polish sources count 30-35,000. Very commonly such statistics are politically driven. Here the Germans wanted to point out how large this community of anti-German militants was, which in turn demonstrated the great threat posed to their borderland, thus supporting their petition form more money and aid to the O/S Province in front to the government in Berlin. Deutsche General Konsulat in Kattowitz, 25 Feb. 1923, Geheimpreussische Staatsarchiv, Preussische Kulturbesitz, (hereafter GStA PK), Rep. 77 (hereafter omitted), Tit. 856 „Ost-West,” Nr 428, doc. 19. And: Leitendes Grenzkommissariat in Reg. Bez. Oppeln, Einschreiben, Geheim!, 6 April 1923, Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (APO), 1 (Oberpräsidium der Provinz O/S, or OP)/242, doc. 33. And: Tomasz Falecki, *Powstańcy Śląscy*, (Warszawa 1990) 56-8. According to this author, Korfanty was also present at this event.

⁶ Same sources as previous note.

Mastalerz, a lower-ranking officer in the Polish army and battalion commander during the third insurgency, fell into destitution that same year.⁷

Having lost their social ranks to the official end of German-Polish hostilities, these veteran fighters thus made every effort to organize, and to denounce the source of their problem: the Geneva Convention of 1922, which had brought peace and order to this war-torn borderland. Denouncing this peace for “unjustly” partitioning the province, as opposed to ceding all of it to Poland, the radical-wing of the Insurgent Union called for an ongoing war for the “recovery” of Western Upper Silesia (“Opolian Silesia”), and thereby a “reunion” of the region. In the words of the demonstrators at this rally:

The decision of the [Allied] diplomatic commission [Botschafterrat] to establish the Polish-German border has cut the living organism of the Polish peoples in Upper Silesia in two parts, thereby creating a situation, which we insurgents have never recognize and will never recognize.⁸

This conception of Upper Silesia as a naturally unified biological entity was a mirror image of the “bleeding border” discourse propagated by the VVHO and endorsed by various German political parties from the center to the right.⁹ Radicals among this society of insurgents demanded a war for *Śląsk Opolski* (Opolian Silesia). This official Polish name for western Upper Silesia served to erase the memory of the German name, the O/S Province, among Poland’s public as a way of denying Germany’s “rights” to this territory. The Insurgent Union also called for forceful “Polonization” measures within the

⁷ Tomasz FałECKI, “Powstańcy Śląscy w ruchu kombatanckim w II Rzeczypospolitej,” in: Andrzej Brozek, ed., *Powstania Śląskie i plebiscyt w procesie zrastania się Górnego Śląska z Macierzą: materiały z sesji naukowej historyków powstań śląskich i plebiscytu* (Bytom 1993) 167-70.

⁸ Quoted from: Deutsche General Konsulat, doc. 19. By no means was the protest against the partition on the part of the insurgents a one-time event. Just after the 25th of May 1921 another large rally of these nationalists took place in which the demonstrators protested against the partition, claimed that they would not recognize the Geneva Convention, and demanded the cession of Western Upper Silesia to Poland. See: *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 29 May 1923, in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 428, doc. 85.

⁹ See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen*, (Osnabrück 2008) 109-110.

Voivodeship, primarily repressions against those they considered to be “Germans,” but also against “Jews,” the group that they considered to be agents and supporters of the first.¹⁰ More importantly, they demanded that their restored Insurgent Union be given a prominent place in the politics and official history of the Voivodeship. Dominating regional politics in the early 1920s, Wojciech Korfanty’s Christian Democratic Party (ChD)—an officially centrist party from 1926 on—maintained a restrained attitude towards the organization’s militancy as well as its radical nationalist and anti-democratic ethos. Nevertheless, Korfanty they did authorize the Insurgent Union’s establishment.

The renewed activism of the insurgents, as well as the establishment of the Silesian section of the ZOKZ that same year, all caused the VVHO to remain active in politics on the German side. A flyer rallying locals to attend an assembly of the VVHO and its financial wing, the Oberschlesische Hilfsbund, called for the unified mobilization of all cultural organizations in the Province to “defense” against “Polish irredentism” and “Polish imperialism.” This flyer also quoted a speech by Wojciech Korfanty, the leader of the Polish camp during 1919-22, in which he stated that the “decision of the [Allied] delegate commission does not mark the final solution to the [Upper Silesian] question,” and called on Poles to support the “Polish population” still living in western Upper Silesia.¹¹ To the VVHO this constituted a call for the revision of the border in Poland’s favor—or in other words, an impending “Polish threat” against Germany. The organization

¹⁰ See: *ibid.*, 177. Also, Jacek Piotrowski, “The Policies of the Sanacja on the Jewish minority in Silesia, 1926-1939,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 14 (2001): 150-5. .

¹¹ All quoted from: “Aufruf!,” July 1922, Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter, AAN), 482 (Konsulat RP Opole)/8, doc. 11-12.

began one of the important aspects of its new post-partition era mission: mobilizing the German nation to protect western Upper Silesia against “Polish revanchism.”¹²

This society also had its own revanchist agenda. Like its Polish nationals, the organization regarded the partition to be an injustice, which also marked the stance of the entire German government. Refusing to recognize the cession of the eastern part of Upper Silesia to Poland, the society—and indeed, German government as a whole—also refrained from officially calling the area by its new name, Województwo Śląskie (Voivodeship Silesia). Instead, to underline the official revisionist stance, German elites referred to it as “Ostoberschlesien” (eastern Upper Silesia). Although both Poles and Germans held claims to the neighbor’s part of the borderland, the VVHO was more vocal and open about protesting the “loss” of Ostoberschlesien than the Poles were of not having acquired Śląsk Opolski. After all, the Germans were the big losers of the way the Allied forces drew the border, ceding 65% of its industry, and two of its largest metropolises to Poland. The VVHO’s post-partition mission of agitating for the “lost” province and seeking to “guard” against Polish attack preserved the socio-political importance of many key German plebiscite activists. Moreover, it kept influence of right-wing nationalists strong even as centrists and liberals also filled its leading ranks. Fueled by mass discontent over the partition and also by the militant nationalist groups arising across the border, the VVHO took to voicing its complaints by organizing small-scale rallies.

Starting in 1922, the VVHO began to mobilize its members to annual protest rallies on the anniversary day of the plebiscite (“Plebiscite Day,” 20 March), which

¹² Haubold-Stolle also notes that the notion of impending threat of a Polish invasion, and also “Polish imperialism,” marked an important premise of the German Upper Silesian “lobbying groups,” see: *Mythos*, 95, 107-109.

demanded that an “undivided” Upper Silesia be German again. As a good example of how the rallies of Polish and German nationalist organizations fueled each other’s activism, the VVHO legitimated staging their annual plebiscite day protest rally in 1923 by pointing to the significant size and “threat posed” by the Insurgent Union’s February rally in Katowice. On the twentieth of March, the day before the VVHO’s own event, the society published a newspaper article in one of the mainstream centrist newspapers on the German side of the border, *O/S Zeitung*, in order to mobilize locals to the demonstration. Here the authors deliberately overestimated the size of the Katowice event as that of “over 50,000 insurgents” and also claimed that the latter adopted “a resolution declaring that an attack would soon take place on German Upper Silesia.”¹³ The authors thus went on to claim “that Polish imperialism is still not satisfied with the [advantageous] conditions created for it by Geneva’s ruinous verdict [Genfer Schandspruch].”¹⁴ The authors went on to denounce in addition to the whole “Versailles dictate” (“*Versailler Diktat*”), both the Poles and the French for “invading,” “occupying,” and “stealing” German land. Here they were not just referring to the take-over of Upper Silesia by French troops in 1919, and the Polish insurgencies, but also the French occupation of the Ruhr, which began in January of 1923.¹⁵

The rivaling activism of the VVHO and ZPSł. led not only to the staging of aggressive rallies, but also contributed to outbreaks of real violence. The first organization’s Plebiscite Day rally in 1921 spurred violence and harassment against German minority members by local sections of the Insurgent Union in the Voivodeship.

¹³ Quoted from: „Denkt an Oberschlesien,” *Oberschlesische Zeitung* 65 (20 March 1923), n.p. Sometimes the festivities of Plebiscite Day were held on 21 March or other days depending on when during the week the anniversary fell in a particular year.

¹⁴ Ibid., n.p.

¹⁵ Ibid., n.p.

In Ruda Śląska (Friedrichsdorf) on the outskirts of Katowice, members of local insurgent groups went from house to house demanding that all Germans leave Poland within three days “for the sake of preserving peace in the Polish Reich [sic!].”¹⁶ This exemplifies how from early on the prospect of expelling all “Germans” from Poland was already a real prospect for this society. In the border area of Świętochłowice (Eintrachthütte) the aggression seemed to have been even better premeditated. Here without revealing their real Polish nationalist demeanor, activists of the ZOKZ, which commonly worked with the ZPŚl., called a general-interest meeting for locals who were either bent on, or were considering, sending their children to German minority schools. Once they came to the assembly hall, these parents discovered one hundred insurgents waiting for them armed with knives and batons. Keeping the rest of the crowd suspended inside in terror, these ruffians then dragged selected individuals out of the hall to beat and cut them bloody. Although no one was killed, some were seriously injured and needed hospitalization. Lasting two and a half hours, this assault was apparently not enough to satiate these militants. After the event they roamed the streets and greeted locals passing by in German, harassing and battering anyone who answered back in that language.¹⁷ Similar attacks in other localities drove officials from the German Consulate in Katowice (Kattowitz) to complain to the Voivode (governor of the Voivodeship). Doing so brought them little consolation, as Polish officials called these incidences “reflexive reactions” to rising rumors of a “plan to attack Polish Upper Silesia” that were spurred by the VVHO’s

¹⁶ The use of this word most likely marked a means of equalizing the power status of Poland to Germany, which carried the official name of „das Deutsche Reich”. Quoted from: Deutsche Generalkonsulat in Kattowitz (hereafter D Gen. Kons.) , To: AA, „Bericht und. Anzeichen für eine bevorstehenden polnischen Aufstand,” 17 April 1923, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 428, doc. 8.

¹⁷ “Blutiger Terror in Eintrachtshütte: wo war die Polizei?,” *Oberschlesische Kurier* (hereafter OSK), 85 (17 April 1923), from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 428, doc. 75.

plebiscite rally. Consular officials took this message to heart, reporting back to the German foreign office that “we can’t overlook the fact that [the rallies on the German side] are significantly impeding the success of our efforts to intervene to Polish authorities on behalf of Germans here [in the Voivodeship].”¹⁸ Indeed, nationalist groups on the Polish side of the border were not the only aggressors here. There were sporadic attacks on activists of the Polish camp of 1919-21 as well as members of Polish organizations on the other side of the border.¹⁹

The first few years after the partition marked a particularly heated time of cross-border violence. Not only did suspicions of impending German attack circulate along the border in the Voivodeship, but similar rumors of a Polish attack also circulated on the German side. In the spring of 1923 local groups of the ZPSł. conducted military drills in which they fired their guns during the night right near the border, startling locals and in turn fueling up “rumors of a Polish putsch.”²⁰ The recent wave of violence against “Germans” in the Voivodeship—and indeed, fresh memories of the Polish insurgency of May 1921—stirred up this fear, along with the beginning of the French occupation of the Ruhr in January of 1923.

With its Ruhr chapter shut down by the occupying authorities, VVHO officials conceptualized the “loss” of Ostoberschlesien, revanchist gestures by Polish paramilitary

¹⁸ D Gen. Kons., To: AA, doc. 8.

¹⁹ It is important to note that the German government did not condone these attacks or any other form of discrimination against Polish speakers until the rise of Hitler. Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Historia społeczno-polityczna Górnego Śląska i Śląska Cieszyńskiego w latach 1918-1945* (Katowice 1994) 154-8; Marek Masnyk, „Die Situation der Polen im Oppelner Regierungsbezirk in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren, Ein Problemüberblick,” in: Kai Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Erinnerung* (Marburg 2003) 107ff.; and same author, “Around the problems relating to the Polish minority in Opole Regency in the period between the wars,” *Slezky Sbornik*, 103 (2005) 196, 199.

²⁰ “Nachtübung der Aufständischen,” 25 June 1924, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 429, n.p. It is likely that they were firing blanks.

groups, and the French occupation of the Ruhr, as part of one Allied conspiracy to take Germany apart. This mentality fueled nationalist passions at the organization's Reich-wide assembly in the Upper Silesian city of Neisse (Nysa), former hometown of the eminent German romantic writer, Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, in May of 1923. Denouncing the "occupation" of both regions, the delegates called for stepping up a politics of grassroots mobilization in the Province to form a united front in "defense of continuing plans for theft [*Raubpläne*] on the part of Poles."²¹

Their fears that the eastern neighbor was getting ready to invade were not only shared by border residents but also by German government officials. In April the German Consulate in Katowice reported to the German Foreign Office that "it suspects that the French in the Ruhr will do everything in their power in the next days to take away the military's attention from German Upper Silesia to pave way for a Polish attack."²² Believing that the Insurgent Union was about to strike Beuthen (Bytom) and Gleiwitz (Gliwice) and continue to move towards the Oder River with the Polish army moving in in support, the Consulate turned to negotiate with the Voivodeship's governor (Voivode), Antoni Schultis.²³ Receiving the latter's assurance of non-aggression was not enough to console German authorities, who only started to calm down by 17 May 1923. This was thanks to the work of the Gleiwitz police, whose informers had penetrated local border

²¹ Quoted from, Konsulat Generalny RP w Bytomiu (hereafter KG Bytom), To: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (MSZ), dot. Zjazd VVHO, 20 May 1923, AAN 482/8, doc. 23.

²² Quoted from: D Gen. Kons, To: AA, „Bericht und. Anzeichen für Eine bevorstehenden polnischen Aufstand,” doc. 5. Also in this file, this rumor is promoted to the public by press: „Ordnung!“ *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*, (17 Apr. 1923):1. The Polish Consulate's verified the existence and serious nature of these rumors in the O/S Province. See, KG Bytom, To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny nr. 37, „Sytuacja Ogólna,” 11 Apr. 1923, AAN 482/8, doc. 15.

²³ D Gen. Kons..., doc. 5.

area groups of the ZPSł. and found out that in fact the insurgents were not mobilizing for an attack on Germany.²⁴

Just as all this tension reached its height in May of 1923, it also entered a new phase: the invention of a *government-endorsed* “tradition” of revanchist border rallies. Neither the KVP governing the Province, nor the ChD governing the Voivodeship endorsed paramilitary violence, let alone haphazard violent attacks on locals. However, the large, politically diverse, and scattered nature of the various societies of former fighters and activists made it difficult to control these excesses. In localities on the Polish side of the border, members of paramilitary insurgent societies also formed the rank and file of the local police, making it all the more difficult to keep their violence at bay.²⁵ The invention of the larger mass rallies by the regional governments on both sides was partly motivated by the former’s effort to bring this war of nerves under control. I now turn to the development of these government-endorsed rallies devoted to propagating an official memory of the 1919-22 conflict.

First Intentions

The Polish “Third of May”

The first significant rally of this sort was the premier observance of the Poland-wide annual Third of May (formally called the “Day of the Third of May” or “Constitution Day”) in the Voivodeship on 2-3 May 1923. The commemoration of this holiday was particularly important in this new territory of Poland. This was because this holiday did not just celebrate the ratification of the Third of May Constitution in 1791,

²⁴ From: Staatskommission für Öffentliche Ordnung, Bericht Betr. Polnische Bewegung in Oberschlesien, 17 May 1923, GStA PK, Tit. 856 „Ost-West,” Nr. 428, doc. 83-84.

²⁵ Ibid., doc. 84. See also: Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Kentucky, 1993), 136.

and thereby the attempt to found the first independent Polish state, but also the beginning of Poland's struggle for national independence against the partitioning powers.

According to national history, whereas the 1794 rebellion of General Tadeusz Kościuszko marked its beginning, the "Silesian Insurgencies," marked its end—at least as far as of "Poland's resurrection was concerned. Because of the importance of these events to the official national and also Polish regional history, the annual Third of May festivities in the Voivodeship were devoted foremost to observing the memory of the insurgencies.²⁶

The authorities chose Katowice, the former Prussian administrative center of the Upper Silesian Industrial District, and the regional capital of the Voivodeship Śląsk, to serve as the main staging ground for the May Third—and most other—official rallies. Moreover, the city's large and decorative municipal square (*Stadtring/rynek*), which had served as a center of rallies on the eve of the 1921 plebiscite, lay only about twenty miles away from the border. Although Katowice was to serve as the Voivodeship's representational capital, this and most large-scale rallies were also organized in small-scale form by authorities in local areas, especially in the major industrial border areas such as Piekary Śląskie (Deutsche Piekar), Tarnowskie Góry (Tarnowitz), Królewska Huta (Königshütte), Świętochłowice, and Rybnik. Polish minority societies on the German side of the border also organized festivities on this occasion that took on more of a small scale, quiet, and private character than the rowdy, sizeable, and bombastic events in the Voivodeship. The premier Third of May Festivity contained all the core features that the annual echoes of this event sported for the rest of the interwar period. Its purpose

²⁶ For Prussian State reports on this: 54: D Gen. Kons., Betr. Feier des 3. Mai, 7 May 1928, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 733, doc. 54. See also: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 214.

was both domestic and international: it was meant to raise the local public to Polish national consciousness and patriotism, and to demonstrate to officials in Germany, and to the rest of Europe, that Upper Silesians stand united in their will to be “Poles” and to remain with Poland.²⁷

The Third of May Festivities actually began on the night of May second, the day that the third insurgency had begun. On this day in 1923 the Insurgent Union, the main guests of honor during the festivities, invented a self-gratifying esoteric ceremony for its own members, high-ranking (at this time, only regional) government and military officials, and whatever bystanders turned out at midnight. In front of the turn-of-the-century Prussian theater in the Katowice city center, veteran insurgents assembled in rank and file order for a military bivouac. They were fully armed with rifle and canon as if about to make a real assault. A large bon-fire was lit right in front of the theater, officially labeled the “fire of freedom” to commemorate the military takeover of this borderland for Poland as an act of its “liberation from Prussian/German yoke”. While the flames were blazing and the soldiers stood at attention, their organization’s leader read out the original official orders for the initiation of the third insurgency. And then, in the hours well past midnight, while most of the border area, including the German side, was peacefully resting, the soldiers unleashed a loud barrage of rifle and artillery fire, and according to German sources, also hand grenades. According to the Lower Silesian German press, the insurgents moved around through the city and into the outskirts, returning to the city center with their weapons still blasting after it was already past three o’clock in the morning. They then hung their flag on the theater building and celebrated

²⁷ Michałczyk and Haubold-Stolle point out this two pronged function of the rallies in their studies of some of them. See: Michałczyk, „Celebrating,” 51ff; and his, „Deutsche,” 67-74. And Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 213.

their “victory” in loud expressions of joy.²⁸ The German press ridiculed the event as the “storming of Kattowitz” (*Sturm auf Kattowitz*), in which the “combatants only fought against an imagined enemy.” In actuality the sound of ongoing gun fire was more than enough to wake the residents on the other side of the border in a great startle. Indeed, during this violent and insecure time-period, the event quickly gave rise to suspicions that the Poles were about to invade. Moreover, the German minority (Volksbund) press, *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, blamed this event for mobilizing local insurgents to attacks on Germans, including a bomb attack on the home of one notable, the Freiherrn von Reizenstein in Pielgrzymowice (Pilgramsdorf), who was fortunate not to be home at the time. This was a charge that the main newspaper in the Province also echoed.²⁹ In succeeding years, the mock “storming of Kattowitz” was not just limited to Katowice, but involved an all-night affair of insurgents marching from the center of this city to the border, firing off their weapons there, and laying wreaths at official monuments to their fallen (so-called “insurgent’s monuments”).³⁰ Rumors of impending attack also erupted in succeeding years as the insurgents engaged in this new annual “tradition.”³¹

After this war-mongering start, the events on the actual third of May were less directly provocative. The official celebrations, which took place in the municipal park, started with an outdoor (Catholic) mass, which was celebrated by the head of the Polish Silesian Apostolic District, August Hlond, the future eminent Polish Cardinal of the

²⁸ This paragraph based on accounts provided by the a centrist newspaper from the Province, *Oberschlesische Grenzzeitung*, as well as a more nationalist-leaning Lower Silesian newspaper from Breslau (Wrocław), *Schlesische Zeitung*: i. „Der Feier des 3. Mai,” *Oberschlesische Grenzzeitung* 51:101 (4 May 1923): 1; ii. „Die polnische Nationalfeiertag in Kattowitz,” *Schlesische Zeitung* 206 (4 May 1923,) in, APO 1/180, doc. 1-2.

²⁹ „Bombenattentat auf die Wohnung des Freiherrn von Reizenstein in Pilgramsdorf,” *Kattowitzer Zeitung* 199 (5 May 1923), also in *Oberschlesische Volksstimme* 122 (5 May 1923), in, APO 1/180, doc. 8.

³⁰ Bogdan Cimińska, „Rocznice Powstań Śląskich,” 154.

³¹ The records indicate this for 1925: Leitendes Grenzkommissariat der Regierungsbezirk Oppeln, To: OP, Betr. Nationalfeiertag am 3. Mai in Polen, 10 May 1925, APO 1/180, doc. 47.

postwar period. After the “heroism” of the insurgencies was thus given official clerical sanction, it was then given an official one in the speeches of various elites, including Wojciech Korfanty himself. He underlined that it was thanks to the insurgencies that this festivity was being celebrated under Polish flags. After this phase of the event, the park became the center of an official folk-festival, marked by popular entertainment for the masses, including sports and music. Indeed, this served to break the high-strung political ice and make this event attractive to the working-class masses. As German official sources, which normally emphasized how poorly visited Polish rallies were, reported, until the economic crisis of 1925, events such as this one were widely visited by locals.³²

The “Plebiscite Festivity” in the Province:

The state orchestration of this mass rally in turn gave way to a similar approach to the revanchist protest rallies on the German side of the border. About a week before the third anniversary of the plebiscite, the Oberpräsident (governor) of the O/S Province, Alfons Proske, sent around a confidential circular to all county governors and municipal mayors. In it he underlined the need to counter the work of their Polish rivals. According to Proske, “the communal leaders and the chiefs of police know with what diligence the effort is made from the Polish side, and supported by the political resources of the now independent Polish state, to undermine the [German] national spirit of the land [Upper Silesia].”³³ In other words, he saw in the Polish rallies an aim to “Polonize” (or raise the Polish national consciousness of) the natives of *both* sides of the border. He saw a clearly revanchist motive behind all this: the Polish rallies constituted the “preparatory work for

³² The border police of the O/S Province reported in 1925 that normally the working class engaged „heavily” (*Gross*) in these events, but this year of economic crisis caused by the spark of the German-Polish tariff war changed this. Ibid., doc. 47.

³³ Quoted from: Der Oberpräsident der Provinz Oberschlesien an die Herren Landräte und die Herren Oberbürgermeister des Bezirks, Streng vertraulich!, 17 March 1924, APO 1/32, doc. 17-18.

a final separation of also the part of the plebiscite area that still remains with us.”³⁴

Proske thus urged that the Germans answer by staging popular-based border rallies of their own. Although only a week’s time remained for this, he demanded that all local governors start a campaign to mobilize locals for a “commemoration festivity” (*Gedenkfeier*) on Plebiscite Day. He called for this rally to serve “the need to demonstrate before the eyes of the part of the province that was torn away from us [Germany], as well as the whole world, that *the whole [Upper Silesian] population* remains conscious that in overwhelming majority they had decided *to remain with Germany on 20 March 1921* and thus do not really recognize the righteousness of the decision from Geneva” to partition the province.³⁵

The discourse by which he characterized the event already demonstrates that he intended the German rallies to carry a different shape and appearance than those in the Voivodeship. This was certainly not just for the sake of diplomacy towards the eastern neighbour, but also so as not to fire up nationalist passion in his own province, which would only benefit the anti-republican right. Right-wingers, or in other words, anti-republican nationalists (*völkische*-oriented parties and individuals),³⁶ found common cause with the openly anti-Polish and anti-western overtures promoted by the rallies protesting Upper Silesia’s partition. And they intended to use this revanchist spectacle

³⁴ Ibid, doc. 17-18.

³⁵ Emphasis in original. Quoted from: *ibid*, doc. 17-18. As Michałczyk notes, the purpose of these commemorations was to 1) underscore that Germany won the plebiscite, and also, 2) that Upper Silesians belong to the *deutsche Volksgemeinschaft*, see: Michałczyk, “Deutsche,” 68, and his, “Celebrating,” 51-2.

³⁶ These right-wingers included the more mainstream political German National People’s Party (DNVP), with its prominent daily in Beuthen, Hans Schadewaldt’s *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*. They also included the more marginal at the time Nazi party as well as outright illegal paramilitary groups such as the *Stahlhelm*, *Freikorps*, and veteran *Selbstschutz* formations. Many of these right-wingers were also in the ranks of the VVHO, another reason why the centrists sought to master this organization and its activities, the plebiscite commemorations in particular. See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 90-3; and: Guido Hitze, *Carl Ulitzka (1873-1953) oder Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Düsseldorf 2002) 843-7.

not just to demand the “return” of the borderlands, but to undermine the legitimacy of the Republic, its inherent credo of cultural tolerance, and its supporters, the strong-based KVP in particular.³⁷

To keep nationalism on both sides of the border at bay, Proske certainly had no intention of sporting the kind of glorification of military prowess, rank-and-file organization, and blatant government presence that marked the Polish events. On the contrary, he and his centrist allies shared the vision of a democratic, legal, and foremost peaceful way to border redrawings. They wanted the Plebsicite Festivities to take on the character of *spontaneous*, popular-based mass protests aimed at lobbying Geneva for a legal and peaceful “return” of eastern Upper Silesia to Germany. Moderate leftist, centrists, and liberal parties believed that constant large-scale mass protests would eventually convince the Allied forces of their “mistake” and drive them to correct it. To underline the spontaneity of the discontent and the peaceful will of this event, Proske additionally urged officials and the press to use the word “commemoration” rather than “protest” to characterize the rallies. The latter were thus given the official name “Plebiscite Commemoration Festivities” (*Abstimmungsgedenkfeiern*) or just “Plebiscite Festivities” (*Abstimmungsfeiern*). Nevertheless, protest is what he clearly had in mind. To him the point of the festivity was to demonstrate to the international community that the

³⁷ The right wing press, *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*, was doing this on occasion of Plebiscite Day in 1924, according to: Kon. Gen. RP Byt., To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny Nr. 82: Rocznicia Plebisctytowa, 26 Mar 1924, AAN 196, doc. 1ff. In 1927, the *Väterlandische Verbände*, namely rightwingers from VVHO, Stahlhelm, Landesschutzverbände, Nazis, and others organized their own rally in Gleiwitz independent of the official festivities staged by pro-Republicans. See page 36 of this chapter. See also: Haubold-Stolle, “Mythos Oberschlesien in der Weimarer,” 297-9.

cession of eastern Upper Silesia to Poland was an “act of injustice, the revision of which will one day have to come.”³⁸

Right from the outset, KVP officials knew the kinds of rallies they wanted would be difficult to realize. As Proske stated at the beginning of his circular, “it would naturally be for the best if the public itself would initiate the commemoration of festivity.”³⁹ However, he was aware that “unfortunately the majority of our population lacks the initiative for a conscious national rising.”⁴⁰ Proske therefore mandated that the state, particularly all local administrators and VVHO circles, organize the rallies and mobilize the population to attend. He was not so much concerned about the public’s sincere will to participate, stemming out of a genuine patriotic conviction. His concern here was foremost to make the events massive in size right from the very beginning. His impatience in this regard stemmed from fear that “if the population itself demonstrates apathy towards Upper Silesia’s great fateful day after only a short time after the plebiscite, then our endeavour for justice will lack resonance.”⁴¹

Like the Third of May spectacles, the Plebiscite Festivities were to serve as a live re-enactment of recent history. Officials aimed foremost to demonstrate to the international community that the broad masses continue to demand the incorporation of both parts of Upper Silesia into the German nation, as they had done at the voting urns in March of 1921. Also, like that of the third uprising in the Voivodeship, the memory of the “German victory” in the plebiscite was to serve as an ideology to “strengthen the

³⁸ Quoted from: Der Oberpräsident der Provinz Oberschlesien an die Herren Landräte..., doc. 17-18.

³⁹ Quoted from *ibid*, doc. 17-18.

⁴⁰ „Leider fehlt aber in einem grossen Teil unserer Bevölkerung die Initiative zu einem gewissen nationalen Schwung, wodurch der deutsche Gedanke der nationalpolnischen Bewegung gegenüber leicht benachteiligt werden kann.“ Quoted from *ibid*, doc. 17-18.

⁴¹ Quoted from *ibid*, doc. 17-18.

locals' patriotic spirit."⁴² Just like on the Polish side, it was aimed at integrating locals into the nation, particularly the "nationally indifferent" whose identification with the region outweighed that with the larger nation. And the Plebiscite Festivities were to serve as a showcase of how massive the support for the German character and all of Upper Silesia is. As Proske's flyer to rally public turnout to this events stated, the crowd was to signify how "fired up we are to stand firmly together to guard against all further threat."⁴³

Proske's appeals to local governors to mobilize their crowds to rally on 21 March 1924 were heeded. Rallies were held in the tri-city border area (that encompassing the cities of Beuthen, Gleiwitz, and Hindenburg) and also in other locations throughout the Province, particularly in larger cities and towns. As was typical for these early events, they were marked with crowds marching behind signposts protesting the partition, and by speeches echoing this message made by VVHO officials and other regional political notables, including Proske himself.⁴⁴ Nowhere was the turnout impressive enough to be particularly noted by the press or by the Polish Consulate in Beuthen, which was observing these events throughout. Nevertheless, the events did make their mark on political relations between the two parts of the province. The Consul at the time, Edward Szczepański, reported to the Polish central government that unlike last year, when the plebiscite anniversary served as an occasion for small, sporadic, and geographically as well as politically fragmented protests, this year the activities of the day were of a completely different nature. In Szczepański words, they were marked by "flaring

⁴² Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 17-18. And: i. Alfons Proske, „Oberschlesier!“, 20 Mar. 1924, OP 1/32, doc. 9; ii. Landeshauptman Piontek, „Zum 20. März“, OSV 78 (20 Mar. 1925) from: same file set, doc. 73.

⁴³ Quoted from: Alfons Proske, „Oberschlesier!“, doc. 9.

⁴⁴ From: Kon. Gen. RP Byt., To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny Nr. 82: Rocznica Plebisetytowa, 26 Mar 1924, AAN 482/196, doc. 1.

government orchestration.”⁴⁵ He underlined that unlike in years past, during the third plebiscite anniversary the government organized all participants, without regard to political allegiance, under one common voice. His reading of the latter emphasized a “united German” protest against the “injustice imposed by the League of Nations in contradiction to the popular will” and also the desire to make “Upper Silesia an international question again.”⁴⁶ This event in turn drove the government and its patriotic societies on the other side of the border to stage a countering one. By mid-1924, the duel of revanchist rallies was fully underway. I now turn to focus on its further development, starting with an analysis of how these events were logistically orchestrated.

The Contest for Crowd and Importance

Initially, Polish patriots and government officials saw little reason to commemorate a plebiscite that Poland officially lost. This was all the more since the officially-endorsed memory of this referendum held it to be unfair due to two major reasons: first, the violence and terror that German police agents unleashed against pro-Polish individuals, and second, because the German camp transported hundreds of thousands of born Upper Silesian who no longer lived in this province for some time to vote for its cause. Regarding the plebiscite to be unlawful and its results null and void, government officials and patriotic societies thus staged the Third of May festival and other similar events that heroized the insurgencies instead.⁴⁷ This changed once the Plebiscite Festivities in the neighboring parts of the land got underway. Already in 1925

⁴⁵ Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, raport polityczny nr 82, dot. rocznica plebiscytu, 26 Mar 1924, AAN 482/196, doc. 7.

⁴⁶ Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 7.

⁴⁷ “Senatmarschall Trameczyński und die Abstimmung in Oberschlesien,” (German trans.) Polonia 81 (22 March 1926), taken from: Polizepräsident Gleiwitz, To: OP, 27 March 1926, APO 1/180, doc. 85-6. Also see: Michałczyk, “Celebrating,” 55. .

the Silesian section of the ZOKZ organized rallies “protesting against German revisionism” in the days just before the Plebiscite Festivities as a way of delivering a precocious refutation to them.⁴⁸ The increasingly large and loud nature of the German border area rallies in turn drove the Poles to make theirs more and more internationally noticeable. Starting with the fifth anniversary of the plebiscite (1926), they orchestrated grandiose annual counter-rallies held on the same day as those on the German side in an effort to outdo these. In addition to this, Polish officials also continued to stage grand spectacles during the Third of May festivities, which reached the height of their size and bombast in the course of the 1930s.

On both the Polish and the German side of the border, the rallies were numerous in participants.⁴⁹ Participation in the Plebiscite Festivities and Third of May Festivals from 1925 to 1931 numbered from anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 at each event. No accurate counts of participants are available at any of these rallies, since—indeed, like most statistics dealing with such highly contested matters—each side that did the counting had a vested interest in exaggerating or underscoring the numbers to their own advantage. Polish and German officials tended to overestimate the participation rate at their own events, while underestimating the size of the crowd at their rival’s rallies. Despite this, one can observe that the turnout rate was not so impressive with regard to local (native Upper Silesian). For example, during the 20 March 1925 festivity in

⁴⁸ Several tens of thousands (i.e. circa 50,000 according to *Polonia*) participated in these events that were held in Katowice, and in the border areas, including Rybnik and Tarnowskie Góry. The ChD worked with the patriotic societies to mobilize the turnout. See: Cimiała, “Rocznice Powstań Śląskich,” 149.

⁴⁹ Andrzej Michałczyk’s research focuses on the extent to which the Abstimmungsfeste (not the Third of May festivities) succeeded in altering the collective identity of the local population, particularly the strongly regionally conscious („nationally indifferent“). Even as he argues that the festivals did not succeed in this regard, he still notes that these events, especially those staged on the fifth and tenth anniversary of the plebiscite, were “mostly very well visited.” See his, “Deutsche und polnische,” 75.

Gleiwitz only a few thousand (at least 3,000) took part out of a city of 90,000.⁵⁰ This was hardly the kind of numbers worthy of re-enacting the turnout to the plebiscite voting urns in 1921, nor demonstrating the “will” of locals to a German united Upper Silesia. In their effort to increase crowd size authorities turned to a number of resources, from organizational activism, to technological use. These strategies were one of the features of these rallies that developed as an outcome of their transnational contested nature.

Patriotic societies on both sides of the border utilized various strategies in an effort to attract greater participation. Since its inception, the VVHO functioned as a refugee aid society, in addition to being a cultural-political society and pressure group. As modern wars almost always do, the military conflict over Upper Silesia between 1919-21 spurred the mass flight of civilians, including 100,000 from the Voivodeship to the Province up to 1922. The region’s national partition prompted the movement of another 117,000 in this direction between 1922 and 1925.⁵¹ War, political persecution, and both perceived and real loss of social status, were behind this flight, which left many homeless, jobless, and in need of aid. While taking thousands of refugees under its wing, the VVHO also used them as tools for its revanchist propaganda. Officials referred to these refugees of the border struggle as “*Verdrängten*” (those “driven out”). The 1925 Plebiscite Festivity in Gleiwitz provided a good example of how these living victims of the partition functioned in the government’s propaganda effort. First, the refugees walked

⁵⁰ This statistic is likely to be underestimated. See: Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., dot. “manifestacja antypolska na Śląsku niemieckim a rząd niemiecki,” 482/196, doc. 35. This turnout was all the more dismal if we are to believe the reports of the Polish Consulate in Bytom, which note that Gleiwitz was a VVHO right-wing strong hold with an extensive following—circa 60,000 in early 1932, which is probably over exaggerated. See: From: Kon. Gen. RP Byt., To: MSZ, Reg. VVHO, 12 Feb. 1932, AAN 482/8, doc. 107. Guido Hitze also notes that the city was a strong hold of the VVHO’s right-wing (nationalist) faction in his, *Carl*, 1054.

⁵¹ These statistics taken from Hefner and Leisiuk, „Ekonomiczne i Społeczne skutki podziału Górnego Śląska w 1922,” in Andrzej Brożka & Teresa Kulak, eds., *Podział Śląska w 1922 roku*, (Wrocław 1996) 148.

in rank and file holding protest signs, including one that read, “we refugees from the stolen part of Upper Silesia protest against the tearing up of our Heimat.”⁵² During the culminating event of the protest rally, they stood by local government officials, who referred to them as the prime examples of the “borderless suffering” that the drawing of the border had caused.⁵³ In other events, VVHO officials also mobilized these dependents to support their argument that Europe’s security against the radicalization of politics and “Bolshevization” of the masses depended on Geneva’s initiative to redraw the border in Germany’s favour and thereby restore to the *Verdrängten* their Heimat and property.⁵⁴

In the Voivodeship those who took flight from Germany to Poland after WWI also served as pawns in the “cold war” over the border. These numbered about 60,000, who left up to 1923, and another 100,000 in the following years. Indeed, the factors behind this migration to Poland were no different than those for that in the other direction.⁵⁵ The ZPŚl. was one organization devoted to providing welfare to refugees, primarily those who fought in the insurgency, or were active in the plebiscite rallying effort, and on this account had to flee Germany in fear. Referred to as “refugees” (*uchódcy*) in the official discourse, they also served as the living faces of “injustice” at the Insurgent Union’s events from the latter’s inception. In the rally marking the founding of the ZPŚl. in February of 1923, refugees, as well as insurgents from the Province, were

⁵² Quoted from: Szczepański, Kon. Gen. RP. Byt. To: MSZ, „Raport Polityczny nr 118,” 26 Mar 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 35.

⁵³ Ibid., doc. 35.

⁵⁴ From: Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, dot. „niemiecka organizacja Heimattreue a kwestia wschodnia rzeszy,” 22 July 1927, *ibid.*, doc. 54. This argument marked an echo of another claim made by refugees warning that if their demands for welfare and the restitution of lost property, and even the Heimat were not met, it would result in the outbreak of radicalism and violence in German society. Already in 1922 this social group in Beuthen (Bytom) accented that “every Upper Silesian refugee (Flüchtlinge), when he [sic!] is unsatisfied, poses a danger to German Oberschlesien in that new acts of terror can break out.” Quoted from: Oberbürgermeister Beuthen, To: Herrn Regierungspräsidenten Braunweiler in Oppeln, 28 July 1922, APK 635 (Akta Miasta Bytomia)/4335, doc. 1.

⁵⁵ See Hefner and Lesiuk, „Ekonomiczne,” 148-51.

at the forefront of the demand for Poland's "recovery" of areas such as "Gleiwitz."⁵⁶

Otherwise, a more concerted effort to turn migrants from the western side of the region into political tools of revanchist politics first began with the establishment of a pro-Sanacja Union of Silesian Refugees (*Związek Uchódców Śląskich*) in 1927, and its participation in Grażyński's Third of May festivities and other border rallies.⁵⁷

The Polish Consulate's reports on the Gleiwitz rally commemorating the fourth anniversary also demonstrate other strategies the VVHO utilized to amplify the echo of such an event. During the rally itself, the organization's activists went around to onlooking spectators, women in particular, and worked to coax them into joining the protest parade.⁵⁸ When this still did not bring the kind of large turnout that the organization desired, the latter used its political influence to posit one. Thus, local government officials used their status to speak "in the name of the 90,000 residents" of this city, rather than the meager 3% of this number present, as they read the "resolution" protesting the "theft of eastern Upper Silesia."⁵⁹ Otherwise, the VVHO used the press to give the event the kind of public resonance and popularity that its limited turnout could not provide. Having turned the 20th of March, or Plebiscite Day, into a de facto official holiday, the organization and the Province's government used the occasion to have the press publish special articles reflecting the official memory of this event and its meaning. The Polish Consul Szczepański was quite impressed with the regional government's propensity to mobilize their centrist press to feature an array of articles, including

⁵⁶ See sources in note 5.

⁵⁷ This refugee's organization also functioned as a lobbying group for refugee aid from the government at the Voivodeship and national levels, and in this respect was similar to the VVHO, whose refugee sections promoted a similar function. See: Protokół, dot. "Walny zjazd delegatów i prezesów Związku Uchódców Śląskich w Katowicach," 27 July 1927, APK, UWŚl., 27/I (Wydz. Społ-Pol)/491, doc. 296 (and others in this file set).

⁵⁸ Quoted from: Kon. Gen. RP. Byt. To: MSZ, Raport Polityczny nr 118...., doc. 35.

⁵⁹ Ibid., doc. 35.

statements by the public “heroes” of the Plebiscite, such as former head of the German Plebiscite Commission, Kurt Urbanek, who was now county chancellor (Landrat) of Beuthen.⁶⁰ All of these tactics were also practiced by officials on the Polish side of the border. For example, in March of 1925, the ZOKZ and ZPŚl. mobilized a crowd of 10,000-15,000 participants in the border areas of Rybnik and Tarnowskie Góry to deliver a refutation to the Plebiscite festivities that were about to take place in Gleiwitz and elsewhere.⁶¹ Moreover, Voivodeship officials used Third of May festivities and other insurgency anniversaries to mobilize pro-Polish propaganda by way of the regional press.

All these tactics were of vital use as both sides staged competing Plebiscite Festivities on the same day by 1926. The importance of the occasion drove German officials to step up their efforts to mobilize locals for the 1926 festivities marking the fifth anniversary of the plebiscite. They decided to compromise between the desire to stage an entirely populous event, urged by Proske, and a grandiose government-centered spectacle that would take on an all-German national character.⁶² The first kind of festivities took place in the border tri-city area on the traditional date, the 20th of March, while the second sort a week later in Oppeln (Opole), the administrative capital of the O/S Province. The reasons for why the staging of this second, more symbolically important event, was delayed was so that it would not interfere with the nationally-important festival commemorating the anniversary of the “liberation” of the Ruhr from “French occupation.” During preparations for the mass-based events, Proske again urged local administrators to make the crowd of ordinary regional inhabitants rather than

⁶⁰ Kon. Gen. RP Bytom, To: MSZ, Raport Pol. Nr 82,..., doc. 1.

⁶¹ Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, AAN, 9 Apr. 1925, 482/196, doc. 20. And: Cimiała, „Rocznica,” 149.

⁶² From: OP, To: Herrn Preussische Ministerpräsidenten, Betr. Abstimmungsfeier 20 März 1926, APO, 1/32, doc. 166.

government officials the visible center of these events.⁶³ He was weary of giving the Polish government grounds for complaining to the Allied Mixed Commission, as they had as done after the 1925 Plebiscite Festivity, that the German government was staging “anti-Polish” propaganda circuses.⁶⁴ Moreover, he also wanted to give the event the character of a spontaneous demonstration, and thus prohibited organizations, such as the VVHO, from mobilizing their members to march in rank-and-file. Not just Proske but also local government officials of the border area warned chief demonstrators against making any provocative statements or promoting symbolism of this sort. As in previous years, underlying that the event was to be a “day of commemoration” rather than a “protest,” they urged the local administrators to make sure that no outright statement or gestures be made neither against Poland nor the League of Nations.⁶⁵ Their motive for this caution was also fear—one that was shared by the German minority Volksbund in the Voivodeship—that any provocative gestures would give paramilitary groups on the other side of the border an excuse to unleash terror and violence against German minority members, as had already happened after rallies in the Province. The latter’s government also wanted to make sure that nationalist passions at the Plebiscite Festivity would not spur violence against the Polish minority there.⁶⁶

In an effort to maximize the number of local participants for the rallies the Province’s government drafted rallying posters in both the Polish and German languages, which were signed in Proske’s name. Teachers mobilized the attendance of their pupils, and other civil servants, such as fire-fighters, were also sent. In an effort to give the

⁶³ Der Regierungspräsidenten Oppeln, To: various officials, 7 March 1926, APO 1/32, doc. 296.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 296; and, Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, 9 Apr. 1925, ..., doc. 20.

⁶⁵ Der Bürgermeister, Beuthen O/S, To: OP, 1 Apr. 1926, APO 1/34, doc. 363-4.

⁶⁶ Der Regierungspräsidenten Oppeln, To: various officials, doc. 296. And: Landrat Dr. Urbanek, To: OP, 8 March 1926, same file set, doc. 301. Proske ordered police protection for the Polish minority.

border events the popular appeal of fun and entertainment, local plants and schools had their choirs and orchestras perform and play.⁶⁷ But neither this nor any other mobilizing efforts did very much good. The turnout at the border area events was not much more significant than in the previous year. According to the account of the events that day of the Bürgermeister (Mayor) of Beuthen,

unfortunately the Plebiscite Festivity has not taken on the character of a great popular rally, the kind that other festivities in Beuthen have developed. And the reason for this is that it was decided that participation in closed ranks at this festivity would be prohibited. ... The festivity showed that without the mobilization of the organizations (Vereine) in closed formation the staging of an effective popular rally in Beuthen is impossible.⁶⁸

Statements like this contributed to the regional government's move away from efforts to give the events the character of spontaneous grass-roots popular protests.

On the Polish side, in contrast, officials hardly cared to limit the volume of organized mobilization. On the day of the fifth plebiscite anniversary, the German regional government's experiment of spontaneous grass-roots protest at the border had to compete with a centrally orchestrated effort to outdo it on the part of Voivodeship political elites. Polish government officials in the Voivodeship were merciless and unrelenting in their use of all sorts of means to orchestrate a more grandiose turnout for the Polish Plebiscite Festivity than the German one. According to one national-leaning regional newspaper, the grandiosity of the event was to represent a "second plebiscite, this time one that has not been falsified by the Germans."⁶⁹ The organization of the event was in the hands of the ZOKZ, ZPSł., and the pro-Piłsudski political faction (Polish

⁶⁷ See: "Deutsche vergesst est nie!" OSV 80 (21 March 1926), n.n And: Kon. Gen. RP Byt., To: MSZ, 18 Feb. 1926, AAN 482/196, doc. 39.

⁶⁸ Quoted from: der Bürgermeister, Beuthen O/S, To: OP, APO 1/34, doc. 363-4.

⁶⁹ „Hundertausend Menschen haben in Kattowitz zum Beweis ihrer heissen Anhänglichkeit an Polen manifestiert,” (trans. German) *Goniec Górnosłaski*, 77 (22 Mar. 1926), from: APO 1/180, doc. 93.

Socialist Party, or PPS) rapidly rising in strength in the region, which gave the rally more of a nationalist, militant, and state-orchestrated character than that sported by the counterparts on the German side of the border. The patriotic groups in charge of the events called out to Poles from all over the country to come to demonstrate against “the German revisionist provocations.”⁷⁰ There was no echo here of Proske’s pleas for the rally to take on a spontaneous and populous character. Rather, the event was dominated by organizations of all sorts marching in closed-ranks. Paramilitary groups from all over Poland were among the most important of these. Otherwise, youth were mobilized in ranks of Polish Scouts, women activists in those of women’s organizations, and also school teachers in their own groups. To counter their neighbours’ mobilization of Verdrängten, Polish officials mobilized their own ranks of refugees from Gross Strehlitz (Wielkie Strzelce/Strzelce Opolskie), Oppeln, and Gleiwitz.⁷¹ The regional government had plants and coal mines mobilize their workers to march as well. Given the current difficult situation caused by a raging tariff war between Germany and Poland, many feared for their jobs and heeded orders from their supervisors to join the parade.⁷² Just as they almost always did during the Third of May festivities, miners marched in their traditional blue ceremonial uniforms, the appearance of which had not changed since Prussian times.⁷³ Indeed, the goal on the part of Polish officials of having them do so here was to demonstrate to the world that the working-class crux of this industrial society openly supported the Polish cause.

⁷⁰ „Na straży potężny głos!” PZ 13 (28 March 1926): 1-6. And: From: Leitendes Grenzkommissariat Oppeln, To: OP, 24 Mar. 1926, APO 1/180, doc. 82.

⁷¹ See: „Katowitz,” *Oberschlesisches Kurier* 83 (19 March 1926), APO 1/180, doc. 83; „Hundertausend,” doc. 93; and: „Abstimmungsdemonstrationen in Kattowitz,” KZ 66 (22 March 1927), from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 731, doc. 94.

⁷² „Abstimmungsdemonstrationen...,” doc. 94.

⁷³ See: „Hundertausend...,” doc. 93.

One new strategy that was introduced for the orchestrating of these rallies was the use of railroad trains to transport people not only from the Voivodeship but from all over Poland to this event in Katowice. Unable to rally a massive following of locals, officials turned to transportation technology to mobilize patriots from outside of the region, including school teachers, paramilitary groups, scouts, and others. They implemented at least ten special trains and offered either reduced or entirely free fare prices as an incentive to acquire tourists from Lwów (Lemberg/Lviv), Warsaw, Krakau, Poznań (Posen) and Częstochowa, as well as the Southeastern parts of the Voivodeship bordering Czechoslovakia (Śląsk Cieszyński or Teschen Silesia).⁷⁴ The fruits of all of these efforts were an event of unprecedented size, numbering as many as several tens of thousands of participants. Very similar tactics were again employed to orchestrate another voluminous participation rate two months later for the Third of May rally, and for both events during succeeding years. Indeed the importation of high Poles (or inhabitants of mainstream regions of Poland) to this so-called “second plebiscite” was an ironic move on the part of the government considering that according to its official line, the original plebiscite of 1921 was invalid because the Germans had transported voters from outside of the region. Just as nationally-minded Poles underlined the regionally “foreign” character of the pro-German victory in March of 1921, officials from the Province now were also quick to point out the non-regional and orchestrated character of this Plebiscite Festival. As they did in their reflection on almost every Polish rally, they were quick to dispute the boastful six digit statistics of attendees given by the Polish press, and instead claimed that no more than 10,000 (as opposed to the figure of 100,000 given by the Poles) were present during

⁷⁴ „Kattowitz...“, doc. 83. RZf.HD, O/S Grenzbericht für April 1926, doc. 153ff.

the Polish Plebiscite Festival and no more than 100,000 (as opposed to 150,000 given by the Poles).⁷⁵

Those who could not travel to the western border to heed the government's patriotic call had the option of doing so in Poland's major cities. Polish borderland activist societies held smaller echoes of the Plebiscite Festivities in the Voivodeship in the city center of Cracow and also in Warsaw.⁷⁶ In this respect they were rivalling a similar effort on the other side of the border that the VVHO had initiated weeks earlier. The organization's officials utilized their contacts to the academic community to mobilize universities throughout Germany to "celebrate" a "Plebiscite pre-Festivity" (*Abstimmungsvorfeier*) in late February and early March of 1926. Taking advantage of inter-semester (spring) break, institutions of higher learning in Bonn, Geissen, Berlin, Munich, Königsberg, and Breslau, mobilized their students to public rallies, and also sent delegations of students to the "Plebiscite Day" events at the border a week later in Oppeln.⁷⁷ Otherwise, both in Germany and Poland school children were also sent to participate in these events, including (in the Province) to perform in orchestras and school choirs, and (in the Voivodeship) to march in Scout's uniform. When they could not attend in person, they could participate in spirit: in the Province "Plebiscite Day" became an occasion for a morning session of prayers for and discussions in favour of the revisionist cause in public school classrooms.⁷⁸ All of this not only turned the border rallies into events that took on an increasing all-national character both in Germany and Poland, but

⁷⁵ i. „Kattowitz...“, doc. 83; ii. RZf.HD, O/S Grenzbericht..., 153ff.; iii. Polizeipräsident, Gleiwitz, To: OP, 27 Mar. 1926, APO 1/180, doc. 87.

⁷⁶ RZf.HD, O/S Grenzbericht..., 153ff..

⁷⁷ „Deutsche vergesst...“, n.p.; ii. Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, 1 March 1926, AAN 482/196, doc. 36.

⁷⁸ Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, 23 March 1926, *ibid.*, doc. 81.

also made them catalysts of a new interwar era phenomenon in this region—border tourism.

Tourism in this sense referred not just to travel to the border area of one given nation, but also to cross-border movement. With the events of each side competing with one another on the same day, locals on each side of the region had a choice of which to attend. After all, the residents of most parts of Upper Silesia possessed “circulation cards,” or passport-like identification cards that allowed them to cross the border at will. This scenario prompted an effort on the part of minority organizations and borderland activist societies, particularly the VVHO and ZOKZ, to rally locals to attend one nation’s events over that of the other. Here the activism of the Volksbund in the Voivodeship was noteworthy. Although repeatedly underlining its loyalty to Poland, and praising the existence of an independent Polish state, the Volksbund nevertheless openly shared the revisionist stance endorsed by German centrists and liberals, and thus boycotted all Polish Plebiscite and Third of May Festivities. According to reports by the Voivodeship Police, whose agents worked to penetrate the organization’s activities, this German minority union’s trustees were making an effort to gather up a crowd of would-be Polish patriots to cross the border to attend the German Plebiscite Festivities. Taking advantage of the economic downturn caused by the Polish-German tariff war, among industry on the Polish side, they made appeals to unemployed workers, including veteran insurgents, as well as those who only had part-time jobs. According to the police reports, the Volksbund was “buying off” participants, offering them 50 zlotys, and/or the prospects of a job on

the German side of the industrial district, in return for their cooperation.⁷⁹ On the German side of the border, managers of coal mines and industrial plants used their power as employers to pressure employees who were Polish citizens and lived in the Voivodeship to attend the rallies—a tactic that Polish bosses also used to spur participation.⁸⁰

As a countermeasure to this activism, Polish patriotic societies and law enforcement agents worked to dissuade the potential “victims” of this agitation from succumbing to the lure of attending the “wrong” event. Apart from using the media, including the Polish minority press in the Province, to propagate that attendance at the “right” event was a patriotic duty, and doing the opposite a show of traitorous or “renegade” behaviour,⁸¹ these organizations also applied various intimidation tactics. One favourite of these—employed by German and Polish border guards—was to question, as well as to note down the names, circulation pass numbers, and other personal information of suspicious crossers on Plebiscite Day. Moreover, in an effort to dishearten border crossers from attending the events of the “other,” authorities made sure that he/she was aware that his/her behaviour would be under their surveillance.⁸²

Being caught attending the “wrong” event carried potential social and economic consequences. These were common to all “renegade” activities, such as joining the organizations and attending events of the “other’s” minority, and sending one’s children

⁷⁹ Komenda Policji Województwa Śl. (hereafter Kom. Pol. Woj. Śl.), dot. obchód rocznicy plebiscytowej na terenie Śląska Opolskiego, 21 Mar. 1926, APK 38 (Policja Województwa Śląskiego)/172, doc. 54.

⁸⁰ Kom. Pol. Woj. Śl, dot. Roczniczy plebiscytowej na terenie Śląska Opolskiego, 18 Mar. 1926, *ibid.*, doc. 57.

⁸¹ „Renegade” was most a term used by nationalists, i.e. the ZPŚl. See: “‘Volksbundowiec’ – typy volksbundowca,” *Powstaniec* 6:IV (June 1930): 2-3.

⁸² Komenda Policji..., doc. 54. Not only did Polish officials note down personal data, i.e. numbers of circulation cards, but at the March 1926 rally Polish patriotic societies ran a sign up list for attendees. According to German sources, this was so as to have records of who is “loyal” and who is not. See: *Leitendes Grenzkommissariat...*, doc. 82. Lists and addresses of border crossers were also kept by the German border police: APO 1/180, doc. 137A.

to the “other’s” minority schools. Being labelled a “renegade” carried the treat of loss of job, circulation card (for border crossing), and other social privileges. These punitive repressive measures were imposed in systematic fashion particularly in the Voivodeship during the Grażyński era (1926-39), and in the Province during that of National Socialism (1933-9). In this sense the Polish-German cross-border competition for local attendees to the border rallies was part of a greater rivalry between Polish and German officials to mobilize adult Upper Silesians to either majority or minority national political and cultural organizations, as well as their children to schools of this sort. During one of the most significant aspects of this rivalry, an annual German-Polish struggle within the Voivodeship to persuade parents to send their children to each camp’s respective (Polish majority or German minority) schools, the competing sides utilized many of the same tactics as they did during the contest for border rally participants. Each year, Polish borderland activist societies (ZOKZ/ZPSł.) accused the German minority organizations of “paying Polish parents off” to sign their children up for German schools, and thus of “stealing Polish souls.”⁸³ Intimidation, extortion, and blacklisting were this Polish camp’s favourite tools in this contest. These terror tactics turned sign-ups for German minority schools in the Voivodeship—and for Polish minority schools, particularly during the Nazi era—into an official “heroic national struggle.” This was also the case with border crossing to attend the rallies. Since the Polish insurgent rally in Katowice on February of 1923, to which hundreds of insurgents living in the Province travelled to share in the cry of “we demand Gleiwitz (for Poland),” the border rallies had attracted people from the opposing side of the region—particularly among Polish/German minority members.

⁸³ For the conflict over school sign-ups in the Voivodeship, see: Matthais Kneip, *Die Deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitssprache in den Jahren 1921-1998*, (Dortmund 1999) 75-115; and: Blanke, *Orphans*, 103-5.

However, once officials on both sides of the border started to suspect that their citizens were being purposely mobilized to attend the events of the “other,” and so also implemented tactics to counter this, both the Polish and German camps started to regard border crossing as a heroic act of defiance. Thus, at the German Plebiscite Day rally of 1925 in Gleiwitz, local officials opened their addresses to the crowd by commending “our brothers from Ostoberschlesien who came to be with us today.”⁸⁴ Moreover, since 1924 singing societies of the Polish minority of the Province demonstrated their own defiance by travelling to and performing at the rallies in the Voivodeship.⁸⁵

By 1926, among the travellers to the border rallies were also high-ranking nationwide government leaders and other elites. Held in Oppeln a week following the actual Plebiscite Day, the rally observing this occasion marked the first Upper Silesian event of this sort to exhibit a nation-wide character. This brought the chiefs of the regional and Prussian state government together, including the KVP’s Reichstag representative and leading regional political figure, Father Karl Ulitzka. It also featured the presence of officially-dubbed “heroes of the O/S Heimat,” namely the civilian activists and veterans of the military Selbstschutz that had served and fought for the German camp in 1919-22. The former commander of this army of local volunteers, Karl Hoefer, was one of the main guests of honor at the event. The highest ranking government officials present, the liberal German Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Külz (DDP), along with that of the Prussian State, the social-democratic Gustav Severing (SPD), credited Hoefer with having “saved” at least part of Upper Silesia for Germany. Next to these leaders, over a hundred other government personnel, and elites from all

⁸⁴ From: OP, To: Preussische Minister des Innern, 25 Mar. 1925, APO 1/32, doc. 114-5, 117-8.

⁸⁵ „Die Fünfjährige des I. und II. Aufstandes,“ (German trans.), *Polak* 195 (24 Aug. 1924), APO, 1/180, doc. 18.

over Germany, including academics, university students, leaders of the Protestant Church and various Jewish communities throughout the country travelled to this event.

The Oppeln rally marked a significant departure from Proske's initial conception of the Plebiscite Festivities. Indeed, it had brought a formal end to the KVP's attempts to give these events a spontaneous and popular rather than orchestrated and governmental appearance. It also marked the next step in the evolution of this transnational tradition of border area rallies: from now on, national and no longer just regional, government agents and elites were present at these events. In his reports of this event to the Polish Foreign Ministry, the Polish Consul in Beuthen did not hesitate to underline that the unprecedented presence of all-German state officials meant that the revisionist gestures once made by local patriotic societies now constituted official national policy.⁸⁶ It is important to stress the seriousness of this charge: in light of the strong recollections of the partition of Poland by Prussia in the late eighteenth-century, a memory that national-minded Poles had been raised with, in their eyes these "German" calls for border revision equalled those to a fourth partition of Poland.

In reaction to the all-national character of the Oppeln event, the Polish Consulate urged Poland's government to give rallies in the Voivodeship a similar nation-wide character.⁸⁷ And a year later in 1927 the Polish Plebiscite Festivity now had the presence of officials from the central government, including the national Minister of Finance, Edward Kwiatkowski. This time more orchestration and mobilization went into forging a

⁸⁶ See: i. „Uroczystość rządowa w Opolu,” *Katolik Codzienny* 72 (30 March 1926): 1; ii. From: Kons. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, Notatka w sprawie obchodu rocznicy plebiscytu gornoślaskiego w Opolu, material dla aide-memoire, 30 Mar. 1926, AAN 482/196, doc. 60, and also same agent, raport polityczny nr 147, dot. „nie uznajemy tego kraju za stracony,” same date, same source, doc. 65; iii. „Die Abstimmungsgedenkfeier in Oppeln,” *O/S Zeitung* 88 (29 Mar 1926), n.p. Also: Michałczyk, „Deutsche,” 68-9; and: Cimiało, „Rocznica,” 151-2.

⁸⁷ Kon. Gen. RP. Op....raport pol. Nr 147, ..., doc. 65.

grandiose crowd than ever before. Double the amount of transportation technology was mobilized to ship high Polish patriots to the border area. At least twenty special rail-road trains helped put together what regional government officials claimed was a crowd of 150,000. German minority leaders challenged this statistic, insisting that the crowd hardly overstepped the 100,000 mark.⁸⁸ In either case, the event's size overshadowed those on the other side of the border, which were not organized to be extensive in 1927. Local administrators of the O/S Province had urged their superiors not to overdue staging these festivities on an annual basis, lest they would become mundane and their public, and international resonance, would be compromised.⁸⁹ In contrast, Sanacja officials on the Polish side had spent 200,000 Złotys on their event, a hefty sum that earned them criticism from their domestic political opponents.⁹⁰ And again, only two months later, regional governors and national elites invested a similar weight of resources to stage an equally grandiose Third of May festivity in Katowice and smaller counterparts in various border vicinities.⁹¹

There was a reason for why they made these sizeable efforts despite the not particularly significant anniversary year, and an economy still ailing from the effects of the German-Polish tariff war. In May 1926, the history of Poland took a significant turn when (the Marshall) Joseph Piłsudski staged a coup d'état in Warsaw, ending democracy

⁸⁸ To play up the regionally „foreign“ character of this event, German sources, including the KZ, also noted that anywhere between 46 and 78 special trains were mobilized. See: i. „Abstimmungsdemonstrationen in Kattowitz,“ KZ 66 (22 March 1927), n.p.; ii. From OP, To: Pr. MdI., Betr. Polnische Abstimmungsdemonstration, 20 Mar. 1927, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 732, doc. 208; iii. RZf.HD, Grenzbericht O/S für Monat March 1927, same file set, Nr. 592, doc. 321ff. Also: Andrzej Michałczyk notes the orchestrated character of these rallies in: „Deutsche,“ 75-8; and, „Polsko-Niemiecka,“ 225-7.

⁸⁹ Der Landrat Gross Strehlitz, To: OP, Betr. „Gedenkfeier anlässlich des Jahrestages der Abstimmung,“ 12 Mar. 1925, APO 1/32, doc. 58.

⁹⁰ See: Wojciech Korfanty, „Po Manifestacji,“ *Polonia* 80 (22 Mar. 1927), 2.

⁹¹ See: i. RZf.HD, Grenzbericht O/S f. Monat Mai 1927, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 592, doc. 358-9; ii. „Der Nationalfeiertag in der Wojewodschaft,“ OSV 121 (4 May 1927), from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 732, doc. 233.

and placing into power his authoritarian Sanacja regime. In the politics of both parts of Upper Silesia this event also marked a turning point, as Poland's new dictator, Piłsudski, installed the radical nationalist, Michał Grażyński, to the seat of governor (Voivode). Unlike his main rival Korfanty, Grażyński had little respect for democracy, the rule of law, and minority rights. Rather, he believed in instrumentally using the state and legal system to forge a homogeneously "Polish," state-dominated, and dictatorial, society. An ardent Germanophobe, Grażyński came to power with the promise of defying "German revanchism."⁹² The Plebiscite Festivity of 1927 marked his first occasion to show off to a "weak" centrist government on the other side of the border that he had forged a massive "united Polish front" to defy them.

This move was as much a self-serving political instrument for the Voivode and his Sanacja faction as it was a sincere effort to demonstrate that his government would be a better "guardian of the border" than that of Korfanty. 20 March 1927 marked the last time that the latter and Grażyński joined strength to stage a grandiose festivity in "defiance of the German revisionist threat." By that same year in May the Voivode represented himself, as the former battalion leader of the third insurgency, and now also the "chief insurgent" and head of the Insurgent Union, as Upper Silesia's (sole) "liberator," a title that up to now had been associated with his main political opponent, Korfanty.⁹³ To do this, Grażyński turned the Third of May Festivity into his main self-legitimizing political spectacle. Moreover, in an effort to kill the heroic legend of Korfanty, which was forever entwined with the memory of the Polish cause to win the plebiscite of 1921, the Voivode

⁹² Blanke, *Orphans*, 116-20, 129-36; Edward Długajczyk, *Sanacja Śląska, 1926-1939: zarys dziejów politycznych* (Katowice, 1983), 44-82.

⁹³ Mainly Germans labeled him with promoting this effort: Aufzeichnung über der Erinnerungen Grayznskis..., Abschrift zu IV PO 6891-21, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter PA-AA), Warschau 47 (P17), n.p.

also put an end to official commemorations of Plebiscite Day in the Voivodeship. Instead, he organized annual rallies on the 20th of March in official observance of “Piłsudski’s Nameday,” thereby promoting the all-Polish “Cult of the Marshall” (Piłsudski) in the border area.⁹⁴ Once the border rallies became a tool of the new dictatorship, Korfanty and his followers started to boycott these occasions, undoubtedly undermining the message of “united national front” these were supposed to send to their western neighbours. German officials and occasionally the press were keen on underlying this wedge in the Polish political scene in the Voivodeship as a way of exploiting the weaknesses of the Sanacja government’s support base.⁹⁵

Ironically, in March of 1927 a similar phenomenon was evident on the opposite side of the border. Due to an internal dispute about the logistics of the staging the festivity, right-wingers of the VVHO joined the Stahlhelm and various groups of the paramilitary Landeschutz to hold a rally of their own in front of the “Monument to the Fallen” in Gleiwitz. This occurrence in turn gave Polish officials the occasion to underline that the effort to display a “united front” on the neighbor’s side had fallen apart as well.⁹⁶ All of this demonstrates how nationalists on both sides of the border, rightists in Germany and the Sanacja in Poland, were working to usurp the border rallies for their own political uses. The revanchist and nationalist ethos of this transnational “tradition” of

⁹⁴ See: i. Ostpreussische Zeitung 22 Mar. 1927, from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 732, doc. 188. ii. Deut. Gen. Kons. Kat., 21 March 1928, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 733, doc. 45; iii. From: Polizeipräsident Landespolizeistelle Oppeln, To: OP, 24 Mar 1931, APO 1/181, doc. 9; iv. „Warum veranstalten die Schulbehörden in Polnischoberschlesien keine Abstimmungsfeiern ?!“ (German trans.) *Polonia* 2317 (19 Mar. 1931) from: same, doc. 15. On the Piłsudski Cult, including in the Voivodeship, see: Heidi Hein, *Der Piłsudski-Kult und seine Bedeutung für den polnischen Staat, 1926-1939* (Marburg 2002).

⁹⁵ APO, 180/1, doc. 87; ii. D Gen. Kons. 6 Oct 1927. Betr. Besuch des Staatspr. Moscicki, doc. 9, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 733 (Ostoberschlesien), doc. 9; iii. D. Gen Kons., 21 Mar 1928, same file, doc. 45; iv. D Gen. Kons. 7 May 1929. Betr. Besuch des staatspr. in Katt., same file set, doc. 129, as well 135, and 138, which demonstrate how German officials were following Korfantiite criticism of Grażyński.

⁹⁶ Kon. Gen. RP. Op., To: MSZ, raport polityczny nr 175, dot. szósta rocznica plebiscytu na Górnym Śląsku niemieckim, 22 March 1927, AAN 482/196, doc. 107.

rallies made it a convenient tool for the authoritarian regimes seeking to capitulate on fuelling conflicts with the neighbor.

Once they started to take on this character, the border rallies maintained, and in some years even escalated, their blatant government-dominated and orchestrated character. In October of 1927, Poland's (pro-Sanacja) president, Ignacy Mościcki, held a rally in the border city of Królewska Huta (Königshütte/Chorzow), and otherwise presided over similar festivities in the Voivodeship in a number of years thereafter. Germany's President, Paul von Hindenburg, travelled to the border in October of 1928 in response to his Polish counterpart's visit in the months prior (see previous chapter). Thereafter, Germany's chief of state, the Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, presided over the "Plebiscite Festivities" of 1931 in the tri-city area (Beuthen, Gleiwitz, and Hindenburg), competing with the presence of Poland's president. Before turning to the important rallies of 1931, I will next address two more important developments in this transnational culture of border rallies: the application of media technology to these events, and the building of facilities for their staging of these events.

The Contest for Resonance across Borders

Although the 1927 Plebiscite Festivities in the Province were dismal in terms of size in comparison to the Voivodeship, the Germans outdid the Poles with regard to the resonance of their revanchist propaganda that year. Here they mobilized a relatively recently existing form of media technology to serve their revanchist cause—motion picture. The heads of the regional government in the Province endorsed the making of a film to "enlighten" the nation and the international community on the perils that in their view had been imposed on "Oberschlesien" by war and partition. Directed by Ulrich

Kayser, and produced by Bundesfilm AG Berlin, “The Land Under the Cross: a Film on Upper Silesia’s Most Difficult Times,” was a half hour-long silent work of motion picture. Indeed, the title reflected the revanchist official slogan for the Province, which depicted the area as a “victim” of violence on the part of the Poles and partition imposed by the Allied Powers. Although choosing not to organize as grand a rally on that day as the Polish government on the other side of the border had staged, German officials did use Plebiscite Day in 1927 as an occasion to hold the film’s nation-wide grand premier at the Deulingpalast Cinema in Gleiwitz.⁹⁷ The thousand of attendees at this screening were mainly regional and all-German elites, including government heads of the Province and Prussian State. In his address at this premier, the former “German plebiscite hero,” Kurt Urbanek, described the film as an example of the continuing “victorious march of Kultur to the German East.”⁹⁸ This centrist politician thus echoed one of the classic German nationalistically chauvinist stereotypes—that of Germans, and not Poles/Slavs, having historically brought “culture” to Upper Silesia, and neighboring borderlands.⁹⁹ In and of itself the film served to echo the essential discourse that the rallies and propaganda of the Plebiscite Festivities had been doing all along: namely, underlying the “German character” of all of Upper Silesia, denouncing the partition, and emphasizing the harm it

⁹⁷ See: Urszula Biel, „Płonące premiery: z dziejów Polsko-Niemieckiego pogranicza na Górnym Śląsku,” in: Andrzej Gwóźdź, ed., *Kino niemieckie w dialogu pokoleń i kultur: studie i szkice*, (Kraków 2004) 329-21.

⁹⁸ Kon. Gen. RP. Op., raport polityczny 175..., doc. 107.

⁹⁹ See: Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German myth of the East, 1800 to the present*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 132. And: same author, “The Languages of Occupation: Vocabularies of German rule in Eastern Europe during the World Wars,” in: Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 128.

did, especially to the region's locals, of which scenes of refugees trekking through the winter snow on foot with their life's belongings in hand served as a prime example.¹⁰⁰

Two days after its grand premier, the film started to be screened all over the country, starting with another festive showing in Berlin.¹⁰¹ Outraged by all of this, Polish officials protested against what they considered to be the work's revanchist and "anti-Polish" overtures to both the German government and the Allied Mixed Commission. This caused the film's screenings to be suspended for several months in 1927. Nevertheless, when the showings resumed, this work of propaganda was shown in 180 cinemas throughout the country, including 10 in Berlin alone, and in at least one in all of Germany's largest cities of the Reich. Among the places it was screened included other major cities near contested Polish-German borderlands, where the film helped rouse revanchist zeal, such as Breslau (Wrocław), Danzig (Gdańsk), and Königsberg (after 1945, Kaliningrad). To use it as tool of "public enlightenment (*Volksbildung*)" in the O/S Province, the regional government offered reduced admission prices for its viewing in cinemas, and had it shown in public schools and in selected restaurants.¹⁰²

Once information leaked out to Voivodeship authorities that the Germans were so much as starting to produce the "Land Under the Cross," Polish elites almost immediately initiated the making of a rival.¹⁰³ By late 1926, the "cultural section" of the Insurgent Union took to this task. The organization commissioned the making of a Polish

¹⁰⁰ Kon. Gen. RP. Op., To: MSZ, dot. "górnśląski film," 28 February 1927, AAN 482/190, doc. 44. And: Dr. Ulrich Kayser, „Land unterm Kreuz: ein Film von Oberschlesiens schwierigsten Zeit,” from: Bundesarchiv – Filmarchiv.

¹⁰¹ Kon. Gen. RP. Op., To: MSZ, dot. niemiecki film propagandowy „Land unterm Kreuz,” 30 Mar. 1927, AAN 482/190, doc. 89.

¹⁰² Kons. Gen. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, 8 Mar. 1927, AAN 482/190, doc. 53. Biel, „Płonące,” 321-5.

¹⁰³ Polish officials urged the production of a rivaling film from the Polish side. See: i. "Śląski Film propagandowy," PZ 45 (24 Oct. 1926); ii. "Prowokacyjny film antypolski został uroczystie wyświetlony w Gliwicach," PZ 65 (21 Mar. 1927): 2.

propaganda film entitled, “Silesia, Poland’s Pupil,” to the director Konstanty Pawlukiewicz and the “propaganda cinema film agency,” Kapefilm. Grażyński along with various heads of the national government were the film’s official patrons. Almost twice as long as its German counterpart, the film had served the exact same function as the latter: to disseminate the propaganda relayed thus far by way of speeches and the printed media in motion picture form. The work not only emphasized the eternal “Polish character” of the entire region, but also heroized the insurgents for “recovering” part of the region for Poland, including through showings of crowd-filled pictures of the various Third of May rallies in Katowice.¹⁰⁴ Although, the film was still not ready to be featured at the grandiose Third of May festivity of 1927, it did open in the Voivodeship capital on the last day of that month, and thus only a few weeks after the premier of its German rival.¹⁰⁵ It was screened all over Poland, including for President Ignacy Mościcki within the Royal Palace in Warsaw, and at the 1927 “Nation’s Universal Convention in Poznań,” which marked one of the nation’s most significant “world’s fairs” of the interwar era. Based on these performances, the film’s makers concluded that it had “attained a record-wide successful propaganda effect.”¹⁰⁶ In spite of this optimistic note, unlike its Polish rival, “Land unterm Kreuz” was screened not just within its own country but also in England, France, and Austria, and thus appeared to have more international renown. The fact that the German media and government hardly gave the Polish film any

¹⁰⁴ Biel, „Płonące,” 329-330.

¹⁰⁵ „Pokaz filmu Śląsk Żrenica Polski,” PZ 123 (31 May 1927).

¹⁰⁶ “Kape-Film,” To: Magistrat Pszczyński, 22 Apr. 1929, APK Oddział Pszczyna, 26 (Akta Miasta Pszczyna)/3319, doc. 191.

attention, while the Polish press poured out articles that denounced and protested against the German also demonstrates the wider resonance that the latter had achieved.¹⁰⁷

In similar respects to other features of this transnational revanchist feud, the employment of media technology escalated as the cross-border competition intensified. For the first time, the rallies on both sides of the border in 1928 were broadcasted by regional radio stations and transmitters. The preparation for this began with the opening of the radio station and tower in Gleiwitz on 15 November 1925, which served foremost to strengthen the signal of the broadcasting station in Breslau and other parts of Germany, allowing their programs not only to be well received on the German, but also the Polish side of the border. According to the radio official Hans Christian Bredow at the opening ceremony of this facility, “by way of the Gleiwitz broadcasting station our brothers on each side of the border will be given the opportunity to take part in the cultivation of the national (*Volkstumliche*) arts and general high culture.”¹⁰⁸ Apart from general programs in the high-German language, the radio stations also occasionally—and especially around Plebiscite Day—broadcasted the work of the VVHO’s Heimatkundler section, which aimed foremost to represent the borderland in all-German character.¹⁰⁹

Still in 1926, the event organizers in the Voivodeship did not have a regional broadcasting station to compete with their German neighbors in this regard. Instead, as the *Sanacja* daily, *Polska Zachodnia*, underlined, powerful amplifiers had been set up in the center of Katowice, where the Plebiscite Festivity events were held, allowing

¹⁰⁷ Reports by Kon. Gen. RP. Byt., in: AAN 482/190, doc. 46-89, and also: Biel, „Płonące,” 320-30.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted from: RZfHD Grenzbericht O/S für Nov. 1925, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 592, doc. 117. Also: Kon. Gen. Op. Byt., To: MSZ, dot. stacja radjonadawaczna w Gliwicach, AAN 482/192, doc. 8.

¹⁰⁹ See Margrit-Esther Schauerte, „Die Oberschlesienfrage in der Schlesischen Funkstunde in Breslau, 1924-32,” (Unpublished Manuscript, Deutsches Radioarchiv Frankfurt am Main), 74-94. On general coverage of the Polish-German „radio war,” see: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 248-54.

speeches and public singing of the Germanophobic “Rota” song to be heard throughout much of the inner city. According to the paper, this gave the event the character of “an American-style of grandiosity.”¹¹⁰ Instead of radio, journalists used photography to capture the “sea of heads” in the city center during all the Polish rallies.¹¹¹ Published in the press, these manipulative visual representations of the “greatness” of these events served as a substitute for any effort to precisely count how large their crowds actually were. One of the advantages that the Polish side had during this contest of rallies was a legitimate central place to hold them. With a population of 150,000, the status of a regional capital, a large central municipal square from the Prussian period, a location near the border, and in the middle of the Industrial District—the most hotly contested part of this region—Katowice served this purpose quite well. Lacking an equivalent central site for their own events, the Germans dispersed their border rallies across the tri-city area, which gave them a more meager appearance than that of the counterparts in the Voivodeship’s capital. The Polish Consulate in Beuthen jumped to the opportunity of exploiting this situation to Poland’s advantage. It urged the regional government to send pictures of the 1925 Third of May Festivity in Katowice next to those of the Plebiscite Festivities held in the center of Beuthen that year to international newspapers in order to accentuate how comparatively “large” the following was at the Polish events and “small” at the German ones.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Quoted from: „Na Straży Śląskiej Poteżny Głos”, PZ 13 (28 March 1926): 1-3. On “Rota” song, including a translation, see Tomasz Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: the emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848-1918* (West Lafayette 2007) 170-1. For the Silesian version of this song, see: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 194.

¹¹¹ Quoted from: “Na Straży...,” 1-3.

¹¹² Kon. Gen. RP Op., To: MSZ, 9 Apr. 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 20.

Already during the 20th of March festivities in 1926, Sanacja regime spokespersons underlined the need to open up a radio station to compete with that of the Germans. Their main daily, *Polska Zachodnia*, expressed how “wonderful it would be” to have the world hear vast crowds sing the “Rota” song. On 4 December 1927, Grażyński festively opened the radio station, “Polish Radio Katowice” in the Voivodeship’s capital. Its cross-border nationalizing purpose was not different than that of its rivals: namely to make “our dear brothers in western Upper Silesia hear the Polish word and song ... and thus on a daily basis feel as if they were in their [Polish] fatherland.”¹¹³ Starting in 1928, the radio station aired not only all the rallies in Katowice, but also programs on “regional knowledge” similar to those of the Germans, based on the cultural work of the ZOKZ and the Silesian and all-Polish “western thought” (western borderlands oriented) academic consortium.¹¹⁴ And thus on both sides of the border by that year the propaganda spectacles that were part and parcel of the rallies were now no longer just disseminated by the printed media. They were now broadcasted over the radio waves, which gave the propaganda a greater trans-border reach than ever.

Apart from new forms of media, the organizers drew on another form of technology in their struggle for ever greater publicity and resonance: the building of symbolic spaces of official memory. The contest over this started already in the first years after the partition, when the patriotic societies sponsored the erection of various

¹¹³ Quoted from: RZfHD, O/S Grenzbericht für Dezember 1927 und Januar 1928, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, doc. 71.

¹¹⁴ Records of examples of such auditions are mainly from the 1930s: i. „Sprawozdanie z działalności Związku Obrony Kresów Zachodnich za czas od 1 lipca 1930 do 31 Marca 1932“, Nov. 1932, APK 27/I (UWŚl. Społ-Pol.)/54, doc. 91-3; ii. „Sprawozdanie z Dział. Okregu Śląskiego PZZ za czas od 1.IV.1935r. do 1.XII.1936r.“, same, doc. 142; iii. Sprawozdania 1930-2, APK 38 (Policja Woj. Śl.)/153, doc. 137-41; and Spr. 1 XI 1931 to 31 XII 1938, same, doc. 174-8.

smaller sized statues around the border area. These included a “Monument to the Unknown Insurgent” in Katowice, which was actually just a tall pedestal of the former “Monument to the Two Kaisers” the insurgents had detonated. The erection of this work in turn gave way to the unveiling of the “Monument to the Fallen Selbstschutz” fighters in Beuthen in September of 1925, as well as similar monuments and plaques in Hindenburg and Gleiwitz in years immediately. These statues were symbolic centers of sites that authorities on both sides chose for the holding of their border rallies. And as with many other features of the festivities, the cross-border rivalry fueled the building of more sophisticated and monumental symbolic spaces over time. In early October of 1927, Poland’s president Ignacy Mościcki, unveiled a provocative large statue of a ten foot tall worker wielding a broad-sword atop a pedestal that had once been the local “Germania Monument” in the border city of Królewska Huta (Königshütte). During that same visit, he also presided over the ceremonious opening of a stadium. The latter was not only to serve as a place where soccer matches here held, but also where local echoes of the border rallies staged primarily in Katowice were held. Over the next few years, the Germans built their own rivaling stadium in the city that neighbored Królewska Huta to the west, Beuthen, the use of which the German Chancellor Brüning, who belonged to the Catholic Center Party, personally inaugurated during the Plebiscite Festivity of 1931.¹¹⁵

The Voivodeship held the advantage in this phase of the transnational contest of revanchist spectacles—namely, the building of symbolic sites. Foremost, its semi-autonomous status provided this edge. Unlike any other counterpart in Poland, and unlike the O/S Province, Polish Silesia had its own treasury department and the power to levy

¹¹⁵ For the statues commemorating the violence of 1919-21 erected during the interwar era see: “Pomniki Powstańcze,” in: Franciszek Hawranek, et al., eds., *Encyklopedia Powstań Śląskich* (Opole 1982) 430-1. See chapter 1 of this study for Mościcki’s visit.

taxes, in addition to a cohort of other autonomous institutions. This and the fact that it was Poland's wealthiest province gave authorities in the Voivodeship the ability to carry out their own provincial building projects. Spurred by the need to give this age-old Prussian area a "Polish" identity, authorities planned for the building of a symbolic heartland for the region, located in the southern side of Katowice. Starting in 1923, based on the design of Cracowian architects, the regional government endorsed the building of the central icon of regional "Polishness," the Voivodeship Government Building (*Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego*, and hereafter, VGB), a project finally completed by 1929. Festively opened by President Mościcki, this structure was a massive one, with a size of about 206,656 cubic yards (158,000 cubic meters) in area. With four bold quasi-square corners standing out from the main body of the structure, the latter took on the appearance of an early modern period military bastion. **(See images 3.1 & 3.2.)** In and of itself this building was to serve a mark of "Polish national architecture" at the border, as well as to function as a showcase of regional and national symbols.¹¹⁶ Surrounded by open plazas for the staging of official ceremonies, the VGB played an important role in what would be the last, and greatest, showcases in the competition of border rallies thus far, those of the spring of 1931. I now turn to address this topic.

The Last Great Showdown:

March and May of 1931 marked the tenth anniversary of both the plebiscite and the third insurgency. Officials on both sides of the border decided to use this occasion to

¹¹⁶ German officials took good notice of the revisionist meaning of this symbolism. See: Dr. Karl Szodrok, Leiter des Amtes für Oberschlesische Landeskunde, „Bericht an der Publikationsstelle in Berlin-Dahlem betreffend die Abstimmungsausstellung von der polnischen Seite in Kattowitz,“ 6 May 1936, Bundesarchiv (hereafter, BArch) Berlin-Lichterfelde, 153/1302, n.p. See the next chapter for a more in-depth discussion of this monument.

stage massive propaganda spectacles that would utilize all of the various technological, organizational, and logistical means that they had learned to use thus far. Thus, the Plebiscite Festivity and Third of May rally of that year served both as a microcosm and high-water mark of this trans-border culture of revanchist rallies. For both sides, the pressures of this year were even greater than in years past: the World Economic Crisis precipitated an already rising tide of unemployment and social discontent, which radicalized politics. In the Province the Centrist party was in the midst of losing the strong grip that it had on regional politics to the anti-Republican nationalist parties. In the Voivodeship, social discontent gave growing influence to the Silesian autonomous movement, led by Jan Kustos, to the German parties, and to the ChD opposition. And on both sides of the border the radical left also grew stronger and more influential. Both governments (KVP and Sanacja) thus made use of the tenth anniversary occasion in an effort to at least temporarily distract the public from internal problems and to rally unity around themselves on the basis of fueling conflict against the neighbor.¹¹⁷

The German Plebiscite Festivities were staged first. With a newly built stadium in Beuthen, regional officials now held an event that like the one five years ago, took on an all-national character, right at the border. Over 90,000 people turned out to see these spectacles, which were held in the tri-city area. The central feature of these was the rally in the Beuthen Stadium with the attendance of German Chancellor Brüning, whose populous reception was likely inconvenienced by the fact that he represented the German Catholic Center Party. Otherwise, the government invested a wealth of work into

¹¹⁷ Both sides accused one another of using the festivities to try to distract public attention from the economic crisis and of using the unemployed as political instruments. See: i. „Das ‘Schlesische’ Volksfest,” KZ 102 (4 May 1931), n.p. Also: Hitze, *Carl*, 1038-54; and: Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Województwo Śląskie: Zarys Monograficzny* (Katowice 1996) 158-165.

preparing locals ideologically for this event. Already weeks in advance, the media mobilized to make this “threatened border region” a center of national and regional attention. Taking advantage of the radio strengthening signal tower in Gleiwitz, the Germans aired programs representing Oberschlesien as an inherently “German” province unjustly partitioned.¹¹⁸ Otherwise a plethora of press, almanac, and other periodical articles, books and pamphlets represented the “tragedy” and injustice of the partition, not least by blaming the world-wide depression-driven economic crisis on the drawing of the border.¹¹⁹ Artists and writers of the Union of Heimat-Studies mobilized to write songs and poetry in an effort to give this official protest an emphatic popular appeal. One notable example of this was the collection of tragic and heroic poetry entitled *A Peoples under the Hammer* (*Volk unter dem Hammer*), by one of the most notable local Heimatkundler, the poet and lyricist, Alfons Hayduk.¹²⁰

Carefully monitoring this propaganda, the Polish minority press in the Province was no longer stirred by this now common propaganda as much as it was outraged about how much effort was made to feed it to school children and youth. The *Zeitgeist* of politicizing youth in Germany had influenced the KVP by the early 1930s, as evident by the party’s establishment of its own regional political youth group to compete with those of its political rivals, particularly the nationalists.¹²¹ For this organization and the general

¹¹⁸ Kons. Gen. RP. Wrocław (Breslau), To: Polska Ambasada RP Berlin, Raport Polityczny Nr. 5, dot.: “radjo na usługach polityki,” 17 Mar. 1931, AAN 474 (Polska Ambasada RP, Berlin)/2468, doc. 136. Oberschlesien is the German of Upper Silesia. I use the German when the actors of the revanchist contest meant to use this term to promote their revisionist argument.

¹¹⁹ On government instrumentalization of economic downturns for revanchist purposes throughout the interwar era: i. Kons. RP Byt. To: MSZ, raport pol. Nr 118, 26 Mar 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 39-40; ii. „In treue Verbunden: O/S Kundgebungen der Bayern,” OSV, from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 890, doc. 125. See also: Michałczyk, „Celebrating,” 51. More on this in chapter 3.

¹²⁰ Kon. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, dot. dziesięć lecie rocznicy plebiscytowej na Śląsku Opolskim, 9 Mar. 1931, AAN 482/182, doc. 10.

¹²¹ This organization was not intended to be a militant youth group. See: Hitze, *Carl*, 1046.

school youth of the Province, the KVP's press, the O/S Volksstimme Verlag, published a special periodical, *The Upper Silesian Friend of Youth (O/S Jugendfreund)*. Around the tenth anniversary this venue was full of articles, illustrations, and maps that buttressed the official revisionist cause. This included those depicting the Voivodeship in German guise by way of articles such as those entitled, "The Symbol of the Torn Away German Territories," "The Lost Homeland" (*Heimatland*) as well as illustrations of German relics, such as the Bismarck Tower in the South Park of Katowice. According to the Polish minority press, the latter was featured as "proof" that Poland has no rights to eastern Upper Silesia. Much more effort than this went into trying to capture the minds of children. Officials promoted the publication of a whole array of brochures, pamphlets, and small regional atlases, geared towards a grammar and secondary school audience. Moreover, according to Polish minority observers, in the months preceding the tenth anniversary of the plebiscite, teachers taught this propaganda to their pupils in the classroom.¹²² One song that school youth were taught was the so-called "Upper Silesian Oath" (*Oberschlesische Schwur*), one of the array of revisionist artistic publications, which the government turned into a new regional anthem of sorts. Without making any anti-Polish remarks this song did nevertheless underline that "whether on this side [of the border] or the other one" "Oberschlesien" remains one "homeland (*Heimatland*)" and that no "border post [*Grenzpfa*hl] would divide us"¹²³

Regional officials gave youth a special function in the actual events of March 21st. Schools from all over the region mobilized over 15,000 school pupils to attend the festivity in the Beuthen Stadium along with their teachers. These children performed the

¹²² Gesamtüberblick über die polnische Presse nr 26 (14 Apr. 1931), from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 99.

¹²³ „Der Zehnjahrestag der Abstimmung in O/S,“ GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 1.

“Oberschlesische Schwur” they had rehearsed during school lessons to the rest of the crowd. Although the song subtly disguised its regionalist propaganda in regionalist overtures to the Heimat, officials meant for the song to underline that “Oberschlesien must be German and will forever remain German.”¹²⁴ These youth were present neither only to entertain nor to be bystanders to an all-adult show. The early feature of the event was marked by a “history lesson”—as official documents called it—on the events of 1919-22, taught to them by a leading pro-German plebiscite activist and regional government official. One of the main points of this lesson was that the German nation transcends the actual borders of this nation-state and extends as far geographically as “the German tongue clings”—meaning also encompassing all of the territory of the Voivodeship.¹²⁵

Strong instrumental use of Catholicism for political purposes in this devoutly religious region was another blatant feature of the 1931 rally in the Province. The visit of a Catholic German Chancellor certainly facilitated this. As part of the festivities, Brüning and the regional government head and former German plebiscite hero, Hans Lukaschek, travelled to the most important regional place of pilgrimage, the Mount of St. Anne, to celebrate Catholic mass to fallen Selbstschutz fighters.¹²⁶ Not only was this area an age-old religious shrine, but as a famous battlefield during the third insurgency, it was a controversy-ridden political symbol, particularly in Polish-German relations.¹²⁷ This all

¹²⁴ Quoted from: Rz.f.H, O/S Grenzbericht f. Jan., Feb. Mar. 1931, GStA HA I, PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 3, doc. 2.

¹²⁵ Ibid., doc. 2. The person “teaching” this “lesson” was a Dr. Wiegel. I have been unsuccessful in finding out his full name. See also: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 130-2.

¹²⁶ “Der O/S Gedenktag,” *Germania*, 23 Mar 1931, from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 49.

¹²⁷ For political symbolism of Annaberg see chapter 2. Also see: James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, „The Annaberg as a German-Polish ‘Lieu de Memoire’,” *German History* 25:3 (2007): 379-386; Juliane Haubold-Stolle, “Der heilige Berg Oberschlesiens—der Sankt Annaberg als Erinnerungsort,” in: Marek Czapliński, Hans Joachim Hahn, Tobias Weger, eds., *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und*

the more made the Chancellor's visit to this site a potentially provocative move, even though he did not hold a political rally here. To start off Plebiscite Day, the German government coordinated a simultaneous ringing of church-bells across over five hundred cities and towns in Germany as a symbol of nation-wide protest against the partition. One of Germany's Cardinals, Adolf Cardinal Bertram of Breslau/Wrocław, gave permission for all church bells to sound off at 12:30 PM, to make the public conscious of this tenth anniversary of the plebiscite. Moreover, in various cities across Germany, common prayer services and masses "for a re-united Upper Silesia" initiated political rallies protesting the partition.¹²⁸ In the stadium in Beuthen, the spectacle with Germany's Chancellor got off to a start with the holding of a Catholic mass.¹²⁹ A large part of the audience were made up of regional Catholic organizations of all sorts, including youth, seniors' and women's political activist and cultural groups. Otherwise, officials speaking at this event did not hesitate to use religious slogans to denote revisionist claims, such as that of "Oh God, make us united and free" ("*O Herr, Mach uns Einig und Frei*") as another subtle and seemingly neutral way of saying "give Germany back eastern Upper Silesia."¹³⁰ In reaction, the Polish press poured outrage over how "the Germans" had mobilized "the Catholic Church" to promote "hatred against everything Polish."¹³¹

To a magnitude greater than any previous border rally in the Province, the tenth anniversary spectacle was a military and state-centered event on the one hand, and a

Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region, (Görlitz, 2005), 202-20; same author, "Góra Świętej Anny w niemieckiej i polskiej tradycji politycznej," in: Juliane Haubold-Stolle and Bernard Linek, eds., *Górny Śląsk Wyobrażony: wokół mitów, symboli i bohaterów narodowych*, (Opole and Marburg, 2005) 191-207.

¹²⁸ Kammer dir. Hoffmeister, „Der Zehn Jahrestag der Abstimmung....,” GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 4.

¹²⁹ "Die deutsche Geistlichkeit und die Abstimmungsfeier," *Gesamtüberblick über die polnische Presse*, 15 Apr. 1931, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 103.

¹³⁰ Kammer dir. Hoffmeister, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 4; ii. „Herr, mach uns einig und frei,” O/S Wanderer (OSW) 69 (24 Mar. 1931), n.p..

¹³¹ "Die deutsche Geistlichkeit....," doc. 103.

popular attraction on the other. The official aspects included the Chancellor and high-ranking members of the VVHO speaking in the Beuthen Stadium to a crowd of about 40,000. Otherwise, the Social Democratic (SPD) head of the Prussian State, Gustav Severing, spoke at the events in Hindenburg to an audience of about 20,000. At the festivities in Gleiwitz, the “heroic commander” of the Selbstschutz, Karl Hoefer, addressed a crowd of about 30,000. These officials emphasized the “heroic German unity” that led to “victory” at the plebiscite urns and on battlefield in the spring and summer of 1921. Indeed, the underlying message was that for future national success, this “patriotic unity” needed to be preserved.¹³² Brüning depicted the partition as an international breach of democratic principles, since despite the majority vote for Upper Silesia to remain with Germany, the Allies nevertheless divided the region. In his words, “with great pain we remember how those that opted for the region’s self-determination in the treaties of 1919 later reversed their position and revoked Upper Silesia’s right to this.”¹³³ Hoefer represented the revision of the border not only as a basis of prosperity in the region, but also a condition for peace for Europe as a whole.¹³⁴ Far from being fundamentally a demonstration of injustice done to Germany, this event represented a radical departure from the KVP’s original intentions for the Plebiscite Festivities to take a spontaneous popular, non-government, and non-military character. Displays of military prowess were more blatant here than ever before. Even as military commanders, such as Hoefer, called for a “peaceful” “recovery” of “Ostoberschlesien,” they also openly praised the heroism of the Selbstschutz. Moreover, for the first time on Plebiscite Day,

¹³² Rzf.H, O/S Grenzbericht f. Jan., Feb. Mar. 1931..., doc. 2A-3; ii. “Wie O/S der Abstimmung gedenkt: Fahnen mit Trauerflor,” OSW 68 (22 Mar. 1931), n.p.

¹³³ Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 2A-3.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 2A-3.

companies of the Reichswehr (the German army) marched inside the Beuthen Stadium and through the streets of the tri-city area.¹³⁵

Otherwise, the ordinary population participated in activities that were less blatantly political. These included the performance of marching bands, signing societies, and gymnastic societies, which were all made up of local residents. Various societies from the area, including school classes, civil servants, women's groups, worker associations, and various cultural and political organizations marched in a festive parade. The entertainment also included parade marchers in folk costumes from the industrial district's surrounding countrysides. Like the workers in ceremonial uniform, who also marched here, costume-wearing cohorts aimed to symbolize that locally-rooted Upper Silesians support the German cause. Various gymnastic and sport societies also performed for the public. Echoed all over the tri-city area, these festivities served to give the event an entertaining and uplifting spirit rather than just one of high-handed politics.¹³⁶

The German festivity again had its nation-wide echoes. These included the transmission of the tri-city area events via radio and also in the form of a film newsreel. Otherwise, officials staged smaller-scale rallies in other parts of the nation, the most notable of which was one in the town hall (Rathaus) of Munich. Held a few days after Plebiscite Day, it was presided over by the new Oberpräsident of the Province, Hans Lukaschek, as well as Bavarian officials. Not only was this a rally commemorating "Oberschlesien's tragedy" but one that officially represented the latter as "part and

¹³⁵ From: Kon. RP. Byt. To: MSZ, dot. manifestacja plebiscytowa, AAN 482/198, doc. 63. On the Beuthen event, see also Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 129-33.

¹³⁶ "Wie O/S der Abstimmung...", n.p.; ii. „Grüsse aus dem Reich: ganz Deutschland gedenkt des Abstimmungstages“ OSW 68 (22 Mar. 1931), n.p.; iii. „Herr, mach uns einig und frei...“, n.p.; iv. „Innenminister Severing bei der Hindenburger Kundgebung“, OSW 70 (25 Mar 1931), n.p.

parcel” of “Germany’s (entire) Bleeding Border” (*die blutende Grenze*). This popular catch-phrase, often associated with the German right-wing, referred to all the provinces “lost” to Poland and Czechoslovakia and the border areas “suffering” as a result. Here the officials called for the “closing” of these “wounds of the eastern organism” imposed by the Versailles Treaty, which they blamed for Germany’s current economic problems, lest the east were to become “desolate,” “de-Germanized” and “Slavicized.”¹³⁷ This “closing” referred to territorial revision. All of this, and the Plebiscite Festivity, in general demonstrated how even though it was hosted by politicians supporting the Weimar Republic, the event served as a catalyst to undermine the post-WWI settlement, and endorsed aggression against Germany’s neighbors.

Staged two weeks later, the Third of May festivity in the Voivodeship also sported this image of high-handed officialdom, on the one hand, and of a popular festival on the other. Here locals were mobilized for the rally in amateur orchestras, marching bands, choirs, and local organizations of various sorts. As usual, the regional regime had worker unions, mines and plants mobilize the attendance of their employees.¹³⁸ Just as on the German side of the border during Plebiscite Day, the marchers included groups wearing traditional folk costumes, and coal miners in their ceremonial uniforms. Indeed, the *Sanacja* press was quick to use these features as “proof” for its claim that the event was a manifestation of “spontaneous popular will.” Organizers went to much effort to stage this “popular character,” which included holding an official “folk festival” as part of the day’s

¹³⁷ Quoted from: “in Treue Verbunden: OS-Kundgebungen der Bayern,” OSV, in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 124.

¹³⁸ Śląski Maj 1921 – 2 Maj 1931, PZ 111 (2 May 1931): 1 And on this in years prior: „Abstimmungsdemonstrationen in Kattowitz,” KZ 66 (22 March 1927), GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 731, doc. 94.

events. The events of this included: performances of local amateur theater societies, popular contests such as sack and also egg and spoon races for children and adults, as well as other games and prizes, and in the evening, music and dancing for the ordinary populace. All of this entertainment also included the basics: cheap food and drink, including alcoholic beverages. Otherwise, the event continued the tradition of offering reduced price or even free train tickets, which apart from making travels for “patriots” easy, gave at least some ordinary individuals throughout Poland a chance to go for a Sunday excursion. These popular activities were geared to orchestrate an enthusiastic, and local-based, crowd, and to obscure the event’s character of government orchestration.¹³⁹

This popular fun was accompanied by performances that had an official character, but nevertheless, also carried entertaining features. These included demonstrations of prowess and masculinity as part of the athletic performances staged by the Polish “Sokol” (Falcon) Gymnastic Society, and also the Insurgent Union. Otherwise, officials also organized a demonstration of personal sacrifice and exertion for “Poland’s western territories” by sending five of Poland’s champion cyclists on a bicycle marathon days before the this festivity. These cyclists started their tour at the northern tip of “the Corridor” (Poland’s geographic passage to the Baltic Sea), where they collected bottles of sea water, and then bicycled southeastward, collecting soil from notable “Polish territories,” such as Poznań, along the way, until they arrived in Katowice. According to official reports, they covered this distance, which amounted to 825 km. (513 miles), in only 36 hours and 11 minutes. As part of the Festivities, they ceremoniously delivered

¹³⁹ All drawn from: i. *Śląski Maj...*, 1; ii. “Echa wielkiego dnia,” *PZ* 112 (4 May 1931): 3; iii. “Polonia gegen rauschende 3. Mai Feier,” *KZ* 90 (20 Apr. 1931), n.p., iv. “Schlesien und die polnische Aufstandsfeiern,” *O/S Zeitung* 224 (4 May 1931), n.p.

their sea water and soil to Poland's President as a symbolic demonstration of the western borderlands' ties with the rest of Poland and its leaders. Officials made a similar gesture of the Voivodeship's "Polish character" by letting out thousands of doves into the air carrying a printed message of "Greeting from the Silesian Land" that they were to take to other regions of Poland. Indeed, the organizers of this stunt had to make sure that these birds flew in the right direction, and not across the border to Germany instead.¹⁴⁰

Orchestrated by the nationalist Sanacja government, the 1931 Third of May rally shared many features of the first rally of this kind, staged in May of 1923 by the more centrist Korfanty and the ChD. These included the "traditional" midnight bivouac of gun firings and war cries in the city square. Continuing to awaken and startle residents on the other side of the border, in 1931 this spectacle enjoyed national endorsement for the first time by the presence of president Mościcki. The event continued to carry the fundamental expression of a "non-partisan" vow to defend the Voivodeship "to the last" in case of German attack—which state leaders voiced in the name of the "Polish" and "Silesian" people. Like previous events of this sort, this one also marked a subtle protest against the border, manifested by an official statement of "never forgetting 600,000 Polish brothers still suffering under German persecution in Śląsk Opolski." Although the forum at which state leaders made these statements was closed off from the public, these were made accessible to the latter on this and the German side of the border by Polish Radio Katowice.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ All drawn from: i. Śląski Maj 1921 – 2 Maj 1931, PZ 111 (2 May 1931): 1; ii. "Echa wielkiego dnia," PZ 112 (4 May 1931): 3; iii. ZOKZ, Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne za Maj 1931, APK 27/I (UWŚl. – Wyd. Społ-Pol)/54, doc. 84-85.

¹⁴¹ Drawn from: i. „Das 'Schlesische' Volksfest," KZ 102 (4 May 1931), n.p.; ii. „Echa...," 3; iii. From: Polizeipräsident Landespolizeistelle, To: OP, Betr. die durch die Kattowitzer Radiostation übermittelten Ansprache die von den polnischen Staatsmännern bei der Aufständefeier in Kattowitzer gehalten wurde, 4 May 1931, APO 1/181, doc. 35.

Clerical, military, and organizational presence was as much a blatant of a factor at the Polish as it had been at the German rally. Between 60,000 and 80,000 spectators were present at the central event of the festivity: a public Catholic mass held by the leading clerics of the Katowice Diocese at the front entrance of the VGB. Here the wide and broad portico formed a stage of sorts where an altar and giant cross were set up. During this religious service, most of this crowd stood in the parade grounds surrounding the buildings in rank and file order according to organization. The latter included paramilitary groups, worker unions, cultural and social organizations, civil servants, school children, Polish scouts, and other groups. In answer to the Germans' use of the *Verdrängen*, or refugees from Upper Silesia's partition, at their event, Polish officials mobilized the participation of their own refugee organizations for this. Indeed, German observers noted that this group was more noticeable and better organized at this rally than they had been at any other.¹⁴² Once the clerics held their mass and state officials made their public speeches on the VGB portico, the rally ended with the usual singing of the Germanophobic "Rota" song, and a giant parade of all these organizations before Poland's President.¹⁴³

The events of the spring of 1931 evoked a great deal of criticism, both within each, and between the two, parts of Upper Silesia. Minority presses of each side launched a common charge against the events of their respective "other," labeling these as "orchestrated," "fake," and riddled with high-national "hurrah patriots" or "overt

¹⁴² Polizeipräsident To: OP, „Bericht über die Feier des dritten Mai in polnische O/S," 6 Mai 1931, APO 1/181, doc. 62

¹⁴³ According to Polska Zachodnia, 60,000 participants came from without the province and 40,000 from within. Polonia on the other hand claimed that 50,000 came from without and 15,000 from within the Voivodeship. This from: "Die grösste Massenveranstaltung seit der Abstimmung: Amtliche Feier des 3. Schlesische Auffstandes," KZ Beiblatt (4 May 1931): 1. ii. „Wspaniały Przebieg Manifestacji 3. Majowej," and „Echa...," PZ 112 (4 May 1931): 2-3; iii. Polizeipräsident, To: OP, „Bericht über die Feier des dritten Mai in polnische O/S," 6 Mai 1931, APO 1/181, doc. 62.

nationalists.” The main organ of the ZPwN (the Polish minority in the O/S Province), *Katolik Codzienny*, published an extensive critical article on the German rally. Here it referred to its main guests of honor in the appropriate terms that denoted “foreigner” or “other” to both nationally minded Polish ears, and also regionally-oriented (“nationally indifferent”) Upper Silesians, or in other words, “Teutonic Knights” and “Protestants” respectively. The article also claimed that this was “the usual parade of various German organizations and military units,” where ordinary locals “showed neither temperament nor enthusiasm,” and only participated because “they were forced to” or because as “unemployed they had nothing better to do with themselves.”¹⁴⁴ Observing the Polish Third of May Festivities in Katowice, the Volksbund’s *Kattowitzer Zeitung* (or in local slang, *Katowicerka*) called the event “the Polish state’s greatest national demonstration on its western border.” Placing the word “Silesian” in quotation marks in the title of their article reviewing the event, “The ‘Silesian’ Folk Festival,” the authors argued that this event could not be described as regional in any way, since it was dominated by eastern Poles who had been “transported in” for the occasion.¹⁴⁵

Both in the German tri-city area and in Polish Katowice, authorities strove to make the events of the Spring of 1931 a massive demonstration of “national unity” and “popular will” behind government policy. And so during the events, officials on both sides spoke in the name of “the Upper Silesian peoples.” Moreover, in Katowice and in the tri-city, they also declared that it was the “unity of (Polish/German) Upper Silesians”

¹⁴⁴ Quoted from: i. „Górny Śląsk jest Polski i chce Polski pozostać,” *Katolik Codzienny*, 68 (24 Mar. 1931): 1. For German response to this article see: ii. Kon. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, dot. manifestacja plebiscytowa..., doc. 63-6; iii. Same, doc. 91 and 94.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted from: „Das ‘Schlesische’ Volksfest...,” n.p. Emphasis mine.

to have been “the spirit” that retained at least one part of the region for their nations.¹⁴⁶ In addition, the two regional governments made a pragmatic effort to forge this unity. While in the Voivodeship any reconciliation between Grażyński and Korfanty after the former’s propaganda war against the latter was futile, in the Province, the centrist government offered a “citizen’s peace” (*Bürgerfrieden*) to the anti-Republican right, but to no avail.¹⁴⁷ On both sides of the border the anti-government coalitions organized their own festivities commemorating the respective anniversaries.

As in years past, each rivaling side exploited these fractures in the service of their goal of discrediting the other’s claim to representing the will of native Upper Silesians. To German officials, the once scorned will of their former mortal enemy of 1919-22 (and also 1922-6), Wojciech Korfanty, who still carried the stigma of being “Dictator of Upper Silesia” for his leading role in the third insurgency, now suddenly became an indicator of the locals’ volition. Thus, according to the Volksbund press, the ““(Upper) Silesian” Festival” was not really “(Upper) Silesian” because Korfanty’s had boycotted the event, and because Grażyński had used the rally in part to degrade the ChD leader’s image. For the most part, German newspapers based these assertions on the attacks that the ChD press had launched against Grażyński as a result of the Voivode’s use of the rally for the purposes of his own political self-gratification. The Korfanty camp characterized the grandiose character of this May Third festivity as not only an “orchestration” but an expensive one, claiming that it demonstrated Grażyński’s tendency to put the needs of his

¹⁴⁶ Grażyński’s speech inside the Katowice Municipal theater, which was aired on the radio, emphasized unity between Silesians and high Poles during the third insurgency. See: i. “przemówienie p. Wojewody Śląskiego,” from: APK, 2 May 1931, APK, 27/I/18, doc. 165-6; ii. Polizeipräsident, To: OP, Betr. die durch die Kattowitzer..., doc. 35; iii. The speeches of officials, including the chancellor echoed this message in the Tri-city area: Rzf.H, O/S Grenzbericht für Jan., Feb. Mar. 1931..., doc. 2-3.

¹⁴⁷ See: Kon. RP Byt., 24 Mar 1931, To: MSZ, re: “dziesięciolecie plebiscytu na Śląsku niemieckim,” 24 Mar 1931, AAN 482/198, doc. 78. Also: Hitze, *Karl*, 1054-57.

own government before those of the largely impoverished regional populace that he governed.¹⁴⁸ As one anti-Grażyński (and pro-Korfanty) press stated, over thirty trains transported 40,000 foreign guests to the Voivodeship, and now these get to leave while the same number of unemployed residents of this district have to stay here and suffer. Moreover, this venue went on to declare that these high-Polish guests were “wined and dined” at the expense of locals. Added to these criticisms was also another Polish press attack against the Voivode for slurring Poland’s international name through his politics of terror, and caprice, and particularly his abuse of the Geneva Convention’s minority protection stipulations.¹⁴⁹ The German officials who were following this political conflict in Poland thus had a field day using it to their own advantage. Both in the Voivodeship and the Province, the German press represented these attacks on the Sanacja government as “evidence” that the “Ostoberschlesier (eastern Upper Silesians)” “remained German” and that “in the last ten years the Polish state had brought the Silesian Volk a whole series of bitter disappointments.”¹⁵⁰ Indeed, these arguments were thus used to justify the Germans’ official call to border revision.

Normally, the Polish camp did not bother to attack the Germans’ claim to representing national and regional “united will” at their rallies, and instead used this to feed their myth of “all Germans/Prussians” being eternal “enemies” and “aggressors.” However, this time in reaction to the strong German propaganda against their own claims to representing a “united front,” the Polish camp was also hesitant to let that of their western neighbor to the same end go without criticism. And so, *Polska Zachodnia*’s

¹⁴⁸ See: i. „Das ‘Schlesische...’”, n.p.; ii. „Polonia gegen rauschende...”, n.p.

¹⁴⁹ See: review of an article published by the anti-Sanacja *Gazeta Warszawska*, in: „Polnisch Kritik an Grażyński,” OSV 124 (6 May 1931), from: APO 1/181, doc. 39.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted from: „In Ostoberschlesien...”, n.p. ii. „Das ‘Schlesische’ Volksfest...”, n.p.

review of the tenth “Plebiscite Festivity” emphasized “that the political differences among the population of Śląsk Opolski were so great that the right-wing organizations held their own parades.”¹⁵¹ In this sense, both sides exploited factional strife within the other’s camp to their own political advantage.

Accusations of “war mongering” were also a common slur that officials on each side of the border launched against one another. In its critical review of the German rallies, *Katolik Codzienny* argued that any calls for border revision amounted to those to a new war, since, as the German government understands, Poland would never agree to just surrendering its token industrial center.¹⁵² The centrist press in the Province and also that of the Volksbund in turn called the Third of May rally in the Voivodeship, on account of this event’s usual glorification of the third insurgency, “the official honoring of acts of violence.”¹⁵³ Indeed, while launching these labels of “villain” at its neighbors, each side in turn emphasized how its own events were only commemorative and defensive in nature. Thus, despite the singing of a fundamentally revanchist song by the region’s youth, the marching of a company of Reichswehr soldiers, and the praising of the Selbstschutz by the German Chancellor, the German press called the Plebiscite Day events in Beuthen “in no way aggressive.” And it in turn denounced those of May in Katowice as conflict-provoking, including on account of Grażyński’s radio address that called for the commemoration of “600,000 Poles” on the German side.¹⁵⁴ This argument was just an echo of those that Poles had been making against the German Plebiscite

¹⁵¹ Quoted from: „Plebiscitfeier in Oppelner Schlesien,” (German trans.) Polska Zachodnia 72 (23 Mar 1931), in: PA-AA Warschau, 47/P17, n.p.

¹⁵² „Górny Śląsk jest Polski...”;

¹⁵³ Quoted from: „Das ‘Schlesische’...,” n.p.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted from: „Das ‘Schlesische’...,” n.p. ii. „Zum 3. Mai“ KZ 101 (3 May 1931): 1.

Festivities since the beginning, namely calling them manifestations of the spirit of “Drang nach Osten,” and their own rallies as mere “defensive reactions” to this.¹⁵⁵

If at least until 1931 the Plebiscite Festivities in the Province carried less of an officially-endorsed militant character, then this certainly changed not only in March but in May of 1931. Indeed, almost three weeks after the staging of the Polish May Third rally that was in large part a counter-event to the German Plebiscite Day festivity, three weeks later the German camp in turn staged a counter-spectacle to this one. This was a rally of several tens of thousands atop the Mount of St. Anne commemorating the tenth anniversary of the “defense” of Upper Silesia by the Freikorps and Selbstschutz in 1921. Indeed, only in part did this event mark a reaction to the Polish May Third festivity that had glorified the “attack” (according to the German view) of this region by the insurgents. Otherwise, the Mount of St. Anne event also constituted the KVP’s effort to maintain its grip on the official memory of the 1919-22, which was quickly slipping away to the authority of German nationalist radicals. Most of the participants to this rally came in rank-and-file formation, including Reichswehr soldiers, troops of the Republic’s paramilitary formation, the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, and various ranks of the German “border fighters” of 1919-22. Otherwise, anti-Republican militants, along with local chapters of the National Socialists, were also present and ended up turning the event into a brawl not only of words but fists as they booed and slurred centrist officials off their podium during their speeches and got into fights with some of the non-nationalist participants. The press in Poland nevertheless ignored these significant factional divisions

¹⁵⁵ Jan Pyrlik, “My i Oni...,” 1.

and expressed outrage at the openly militant event, and the fact that it was staged at the most internationally controversial site in the region.¹⁵⁶

This rally only strengthened fortress mentalities—or perceptions of imminent militant danger from the neighbor, and the need for society to unite under a common defensive cause—in the Voivodeship, espoused by both the ruling Sanacja and the opposing ChD factions. Even as they denounced one another, both national Polish (ChD and Sanacja) camps maintained a common stance of opposition to the showcases of “German revisionism” on the other side. Thus, Korfanty’s main newspaper, *Polonia*, referred to the 1931 Plebiscite Day rally in the Province as a “hunt on Poles and the Polish state on the part of Germans.” Moreover, it denounced locals who were Polish citizens for writing letters to the editor in German newspapers on the other side of the border swearing their loyalty to the Reich and to the cause of “returning” the eastern Upper Silesia to Germany. In denouncing “the Germans” and giving evidence for the existence of a “German fifth column” in the Voivodeship, this discourse of the Korfanty faction only fuelled the Germanophobic political atmosphere that legitimated the Sanacja regime.¹⁵⁷ The pro-ChD Polish minority press in Beuthen, *Katolik Codzienny*, reinforced this spirit with the following statement based on its observations of the German rally in the tri-city area: “one has to point out with strong emphasis that the Catholic Zentrum and even the SPD hardly distinguish themselves from the *clearly nationalist* parties.”¹⁵⁸ In this sense, just as the “duel of the presidents” covered in the previous chapter had done,

¹⁵⁶ “O/S darf nicht verloren sein! Gelöbnis der Selbstschutzkämpfer bei der zehnjahrfeier des Annabergsieges,” *Der Tag* 26 May 1931, in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390; and other articles and reports in this file. Also: Hitze, *Carl*, 1060-1; Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 123-4.

¹⁵⁷ *Polonia* 2320 (22 Mar 1931), in: Gesamtüberblick über die polnische Presse, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 98.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted from: Gesamtüberblick über die polnische Presse, in GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 99. Emphasis mine.

this feud of border rallies only worked to the advantage of the Germanophobic Sanacja regime. Even though Korfanty had boycotted the rally and criticized Grażyński's propensity to give it a pro-Sanacja character, his endorsement of this one-colored enemy portrait of "Germans" only weakened his opposing stance.

It is important to note that the picture of the border rallies was not always so black-and-white, divided between two rivaling national camps as well as competing national-minded factions within each of these. From the beginning, there were political groups in the region that opposed this war mongering Polish-German transnational political culture as a whole. The far left was one of these. Workers took advantage of the border rallies to demonstrate their discontent particularly during times of economic crisis. In 1925, banners calling for "work" and "bread" were held by the demonstrators of the Third of May Festivities in Katowice, for example.¹⁵⁹ Taking advantage of the important Plebiscite Day of 1931, German communists (German Communist Party or KPD) decided to stage an alternative to what their press organ, the *Rote Fahne*, described as the "Polish-German nationalist hype over Upper Silesia." The KPD thus made arrangements for workers from both sides of the region to meet each other at the border of the tri-city area and to jointly demonstrate in "proletarian brotherhood" against the "German and Polish capitalists." Local German authorities were quick to prohibit this rally. But the communists held it anyway, leading to—according to the *Rote Fahne*—street clashes between workers and the police.¹⁶⁰ The communist party was not the only leftist faction

¹⁵⁹ See: Leitendes Grenzkommissariat der Regierungsbezirk Oppeln, To: OP, Betr. Nationalfeiertag am 3. Mai..., doc. 47. Also: Michałczyk, „Deutsche,” 75.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted from: „Faschistische Oberschlesier feiern zu 10. Jahrestage der O/S Abstimmung,” *Die Rote Fahne*, 22 Mar. 1931, in: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 390, doc. 45; ii. „SPD und Polizei verbietet Deutsch-Polnische Grenztreffen,” same press organ, 22 Mar. 1931, in: same source, doc. 48; iii. „Das rote Oberschlesien marschiert: wuchtige proletarische Kampfkundgebung gegen faschistischen

that offered a critical perspective of this culture in the Province. The German-wide SPD organ also denounced some of the rallies, particularly those of blatant militant and provocative character, like the demonstration atop the Mount of St. Anne in mid-May of 1931.¹⁶¹

In the Voivodeship, the regional autonomy movement led by Jan Kustos, the Union for the Defense of Upper Silesia (Związek Obrony Górnego Śląska, ZOG) was another party that denounced not just the role of one national side or the other, but the whole transnational revanchist politics altogether. It was committed foremost to protecting the rights and welfare of local Upper Silesian natives against discrimination as well as social and economic marginalization by newcomers—or those who after the partition had migrated into the Voivodeship from other parts of Poland. Otherwise, the ZOG was also a strong fighter for eastern Upper Silesia's greater autonomy of within the Polish state, a privileged standing of its “peculiar” bilingual and strongly regionally-oriented local culture, and from time to time also made overtures to the establishment of an independent regional state altogether. Never formally attaining strong support at the voting polls, the ZOG nevertheless promoted locally-oriented views that were widely shared by Upper Silesians and other political parties (Polish and German) that catered to them. Due to their intolerant, lawless, and violent politics, and also because they represented high Polish, or pro-newcomer, views, Grażyński, the Sanacja, ZOKZ and the ZPŚl, marked the ZOG's epitomal opponents.¹⁶²

Oberschlesienrummel: Deutsche und Polnische Arbeiter verbrüdernd sich zum gemeinsamen Kampf für Sowjet Oberschlesien,” same organ, in: same source, doc. 81.

¹⁶¹ See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 150; Hitze, *Carl*, 1057.

¹⁶² According to *Głos Górnego Śląska*, the ZOG had 160,000 followers at the beginning of 1926. This statistic is highly exaggerated. However, the ZOG did attract followers once the Sanacja regime was in power. During the communal elections of 1926, it earned 2.3% of the vote, or 9,083. On the ZOG see:

The ZOG denounced the rallies in the Voivodeship as a self-legitimizing tool of Grażyński and what it referred to as “his own” (“swoje”), the newcomers. Indeed, his position was not so far from that of Korfanty, who from 1927 on, also claimed to be representing the concerns of locals against regional outsiders and the Sanacja. However, Kustos held the ChD leader responsible for having first developed the tradition of the Third of May rallies, which in the ZOG leader’s view, served to glorify the insurgencies at the cost of distracting attention from the importance of the memory of the plebiscite.¹⁶³ In the eyes of the proponents of the autonomic movement, the plebiscite marked a moment when Upper Silesians were allowed the kind of internationally-sanctioned rights to determine the fate of their home region that they should have, but are being denied by both the (Polish and German) national governments. Thus, the ZOG called for a revival of Plebiscite Festivities in the Voivodeship, a view also voiced by the Korfanty faction. Moreover, in 1931 proponents of this movement denounced the high-handed Third of May festivities in the same manner as the ChD did, by arguing that Grażyński and the high-Poles were “celebrating” while the ordinary population starved, and “was forced to commute across the border to work for the ‘Germanians’ [as Polish nationalists often referred to Germans] only to have bread.”¹⁶⁴ The ZOG’s press, the bilingual (German and Polish), *Upper Silesian Voice*, put out its own propaganda on the legacy of 1919-22. Here the main argument was that all the sacrifice that locals had made for Poland’s cause was

Piotr Dobrowolski, „Ugrupowania i Kierunki Separystyczne na Górnym Śląsku i w Czeszyńskim w latach 1918-1939,” (Warsawa, 1972), 136, 154-5 and the rest of this work.

¹⁶³ See: “Po 10. letniej uroczystości plebiscytowej w r. 1921 na Górnym Śląsku,” *Głos Górnego Śląska* (hereafter GGŚl), 12 (25 Mar. 1931): 1-2.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted from: *ibid.*, 1-2.

“a waste” since now the “Upper Silesian peoples” find themselves oppressed, marginalized, and exploited by Grażyński and “his own.”¹⁶⁵

As much as the feud of revanchist rallies that I have examined in this chapter served as ideological bread and butter for nationalists, it was formally ended by the most radically nationalist regime ever to govern Upper Silesia, the Nazis. Shortly after Hitler came to power, the right-wing of the VVHO finally wrestled control over these spectacles from the KVP and their pro-Republican allies.¹⁶⁶ But just as these nationalists had planned a spectacle of unprecedented militant, bombastic, and chauvinist character for Plebiscite Day of 1934, the Nazi regime ended this tradition of border rallies on the German side, largely due to having signed the pact of the non-aggression with Poland.¹⁶⁷ This is not to say that commemorating the memory of 1921 ended altogether: it was continued in the form of internal and small scale assemblies organized by the Nazi party’s Union of the German East (*Bund des deutschen Osten*, BDO), which subsumed the VVHO and all other organizations like it. Much discontent arose from among the veteran fighters and activists of 1919-22 in reaction to this standardization and particularly, the shut-down of the border festivities. Many of these individuals had hoped that the regime would allow the staging of a rally to counter the bombastic Third of May spectacle Grażyński had organized in Katowice in 1936 to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the outbreak of the third insurgency. But just as these former border fighters had made

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 1-2; ii. „Zum 10. Jahrestage der Abstimmung in Oberschlesien, ” *Der Pränger* (German language section of GGŚl.) 11 (18 Mar. 1931): 1; iii. „Co każdy Polak o Górnym Śląsku powinien wiedzieć,” GGŚl. 125 (15 Apr. 1931): 1.

¹⁶⁶ Kon. RP. Byt., 26 Mar. 1933, To: MSZ, dot. manifestacja rewizji w Gliwicach, 26 Mar. 1933, AAN 482/30, doc. 11-14.

¹⁶⁷ Kon. RP. Byt., To: MSZ, dot. obchody rocznicy plebiscytowej, 20 Mar. 1934, AAN 482/30, doc. 52. Nazi party officials, particularly members of the BDO, were hoping to get finally resume staging these festivals to mark the 15th anniversary of 1921, and thus form a rivaling event to a bombastic Third of May spectacle that Grażyński was about to stage. However, the NSDAP prevented this from taking place on a large-scale basis.

preparations to hold this counter-rally atop the Mount of St. Anne, Hitler himself ordered the shut-down of their effort.¹⁶⁸ And so, from 1934 on, the border rallies were a one-sided Grażyński-dominated show. Although these events continued to glorify the insurgencies, even here the ZOKZ, the Insurgent Union, and the Silesian Sanacja government were pressured by the central government in Warsaw to tone down their Germanophobic gestures and propaganda. This was reflected in the renaming of the “Defense Union of the Western Territories” (ZOKZ) to the more neutral “Polish Western Union” (PZZ) in 1934, and the movement of its headquarters from Poznań (Posen) to Warsaw at the urgings of the Polish central government.¹⁶⁹

So Who's the Wolf? An Evaluation

The successes that the border rallies attained through the employment of intensive organizing, technology, and various incentives for participants underline their failure to mobilize locals otherwise. Whether out of protest against their governments, out of political or national indifference, or out of a weariness of conflict in this violent contested borderland, local residents on both sides of the border hardly turned out to these events with great enthusiasm and in great numbers. And those that did attend these events, as Andrzej Michałczyk points out, did not necessarily do so out of patriotic conviction, nor

¹⁶⁸ See: From: Reichsministerium des Innerns, Berlin, To: OP, Abschrift, 19 May 1936, PA-AA, Warschau, 81, O/S, n.p. On Hitler's reversal of the Weimar Republic's anti-Polish policies, John Connelly, „Nazis and Slavs: From Racial theory to Racist Practice,” *Central European History* 32:1 (1999): 10.

¹⁶⁹ On this “de-politicization” of the ZOKZ, as KZ referred to it: “Überraschende Erklärung in Warschau: Westmarkenverein entpolitisiert! Die Organisation passt sich dem neuen deutsch-polnischen Verhältnis an,” KZ 266 (19 Nov. 1934), in: PA-AA Konsulat Kattowitz, 45, Bd. 2, n.p.; ii. On the attempt of the Warsaw central government to „tame“ the ZOKZ, including by moving its headquarters and giving it a more neutral name, see: Deutsche Botschaft Warsaw, To: AA, 8 Nov. 1934, PA-AA, same, n.p. iii. The PZZ protested the non-Aggression Pact, arguing that it marked a sign of „German weakness,” and vowed that it would not cease its activities as a result. Gestapo, To: Deutsche Konsulat in Kattowitz, Betr. Werbearbeit des PZZ in Ost O/S, PA-AA, same, doc. n.p.; ii. D. Gen. Kons. Katt., To: AA, Betr. Generalversammlung des polnischen Westvereins bez. Schlesien, 3 Feb. 1936, same, n.p..

out of consent to the statements these events made.¹⁷⁰ Rather, individuals also showed up as a result of pressures exerted from trade unions, employers, cultural and social organizations, as well as school teachers. Otherwise, there were a number of incentives that lured people—including tourists from outside the region—to attend: such as price reductions for rail travel, games and entertainment, food and drink, and occasionally, also pay. In the end, what mattered for government authorities and border activist societies organizing these rallies on both sides of the divided Upper Silesia was having a large turnout. In this sense, they succeeded in their efforts, particularly during the important fifth and tenth anniversaries of the events of 1921.

By way of large-scale rallies held on the anniversaries of 1921, the governments aimed to represent “vast popular will” for their official national cause in the region. For Germany this was the demand for the “return” of eastern Upper Silesia, while for Poland it was, foremost, to demonstrate popular support for the Voivodeship’s remaining with Poland, but also, that Poland’s territorial demands had also not been satisfied by the Versailles Treaty. Authorities on both sides expressed the will to make their events a sort of *reenactment* of the kind of grass roots mobilization for the Polish and German cause that agitators, and military fighters of each national camp carried out in March and May of 1921. They sought to recapture the “spirit” of that year for the sake of not only demonstrating a weighty “united national front” to the competing neighbor, but also as a tool of “awakening” national identity in this strongly regional-conscious, and (from a national point of view) “nationally ambiguous,” borderland. There was also a self-serving political function for these rallies. Regional politicians were able to capitalize politically on “defending” the Heimat and nation against the “revanchist threat” of the neighbor.

¹⁷⁰ Michałczyk, „Deutsche,” 74-6.

Thus, Grażyński was quick to appropriate the Third of May and Plebiscite rallies and turn them into tools of forging his personality cult of “Polish Silesia’s savior” and of defaming his adversary, Korfanty. On the other side of the border, the KVP sought to maintain its control over the rallies to keep these from being dominated by the nationalists and thus becoming a tool for blatant war-mongering and the undermining of the Republic and entire postwar settlement. Otherwise, these rallies were tools not only of fermenting regional but also nation-wide national spirit. They did this by bringing patriotic pilgrims, from ordinary travelers to students, community leaders, as well as state chancellors and presidents, to demonstrate common defiance of the “aggressive neighbor.” Moreover, these events drew the media to the scene, which conveyed the news of these rallies to the rest of the respective nations by way of the printing press, radio, and film. Nation-wide border activist societies such as the VVHO and ZOKZ also strengthened their cause by way of helping to organize these rallies, mobilizing nation-wide audiences, and holding echoes of these events in other important parts of their respective nations.

The most blatant success that the festive anniversaries of 1921 had was in promoting a psychological state of “cold war” between Poland and Germany. The drawing of the border and the Geneva Convention “threatened” to bring *normalcy* to this borderland, and thus popular reconciliation with the partition. To officials and various patriotic groups on both sides of the border, this peace threatened both their revanchist ambitions, as well as their political *raison d’être*, which was entwined with them. Thus, soon after the drawing of the border, the border activist societies, including the VVHO and ZPŚl., moved to rally the masses to observing the kind of memory of the conflict of 1919-22 that would to extenuate the “border fighting” careers of their leading members

after 1922. By 1923, the German and Polish regional governments in Upper Silesia followed with their own largely self-serving efforts of preventing public conciliation with the territorial settlement. In the Province, the official revanchism served as a magnet for aid, not least, finances to a truncated industrial region facing competition for this publicity from other industrial heartlands in Germany.¹⁷¹ In the Voivodeship, the official glorification of the “victorious” border war served as a tool to forge Polish consciousness in this age-old Prussian province.

Warmongering marked an important feature of the border rallies. Only in the Voivodeship was this an inherent part of the Third of May rallies from the beginning. Indeed, the government-endorsed midnight firings of live rounds, and “reenactments” of the “storming of Katowice,” and chargings of the border, created a real psychological state of impending *hot war* both in the Province and the Voivodeship. This atmosphere was forged not only in gestures but, on occasion in direct words. For example during the Polish Plebiscite Festivity of 1927 at which Piłsudski’s representative at the event, General Romer made the following statement to foreign journalists: “one should not fool oneself, because this war [between Germany and Poland] will come.” This remark was buttressed by another similar one made by the national leader of the Polish federation of paramilitary organizations, Major Schranowski, who gleefully shouted: “three cheers for the war and for our future march to the Oder (River).”¹⁷² In the Voivodeship, the rallies very directly endorsed the development of a paramilitary culture, of which the Insurgent Union was a prime example. Not only did doing so give way to the excesses noted, but also to the various episodes of violence against “Germans.” Raised to nation-wide

¹⁷¹ Hitze, *Carl*, 864-5; and Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 108-9.

¹⁷² Both quotations from: RZf.H., O/S Grenzbericht für Monat März 1927, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 592, doc. 321. Also: ii. “Abstimmungsdemonstration...,” doc. 94.

prestige by the Third of May festivities, and similar rallies, the Insurgent Union ultimately became Grażyński's weapon of violence and terror in the region. Its existence, along with that of the ZOKZ, in turn legitimated the development of nationalist and militant groups on the German side of the border.

Although initially the KVP tried to be tactful in the voicing of its revanchism, even moderate calls for the "return" of "Ostoberschlesien" served to delegitimize the entire post-WWI settlement, which in turn strengthened the anti-Republican coalition's position. Moreover, as Juliane Haubold-Stolle pointed out, the open glorification of the military "defense" of Upper Silesia created an ethos that aided the development of nationalist paramilitary cultures in Germany.¹⁷³ All of this gave way to various excesses on the German side, not only capricious episodes of violence against "Poles" but also war-mongering gestures.¹⁷⁴ The right-wing stronghold of Gleiwitz was a favorite place for the voicing of these. For example, standing surrounded by various units of the Landeschützenverband and Stahlhelm, the right wing Oberbürgermeister (mayor) of the city, Clodnitz, claimed to be awaiting "the day of (eastern) Upper Silesia's liberation," thus presupposing phrase by which the Nazis called their deed of annexing this region in Sept. of 1939.¹⁷⁵

All of these gestures did not just fuel international conflict in the media. They also spurred various legal conflicts between officials of both countries within the councils of the Allied Commission in Geneva. For example, the Polish Consulate in Beuthen launched a formal protest on behalf of the Polish government against the 1925 Plebiscite Festivities in Gleiwitz and Ratibor (Raciborz) to Geneva. Here the head of the Consulate,

¹⁷³ See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 146-9.

¹⁷⁴ Wanatowicz, *Polityka*, 156.

¹⁷⁵ Kon. Gen. RP. Op., To: MSZ, raport polityczny nr 175,..., doc. 107.

Edward Szczepański, complained about the Germans' officially-endorsed resolutions that openly demanded the German annexation of Ostoberschlesien, and that the organizers of these events had invited Polish citizens from the Voivodeship to participate in their revanchist rallies. Irritated by another year of Polish complaints against the German Plebiscite Festivity, Felix Calonder, the head of the Allied Mixed Commission in charge of making sure that officials on both sides of the border abided by the Geneva Convention, nevertheless backed the Polish government's grievances and complained directly to Berlin.¹⁷⁶ This placed pressure on various levels of the German government and caused the Province's governor, Alfons Proske, to make apologist statements about what he himself thought had been remarks and gestures that violated his own guidelines of tactfulness. In doing so, the governor underlined that although officials did make radical revanchist statements in Ratibor and Gleiwitz, they still repudiated war as a means of "taking back Ostoberschlesien." Moreover, he argued that the statements municipal officials had made welcoming "Germans" from Ostoberschlesien were mere empty words. Backed by the social-democratic Minister of the Interior of the Prussian State, Gustav Severing, Proske delivered a counter-attack to Szczepański, arguing that the rallies held in Katowice in the week of the Plebiscite Festivities had delivered a "severe injury to German spirit."¹⁷⁷ The Polish consul in turn reported to his national government that Proske's statement marked a "tactless mockery delivered right in the face."¹⁷⁸ And this national strife waged before the Allied Commission escalated weeks later when in response to Polish complaints, the German government launched its own formal protests

¹⁷⁶ From: Kons. RP. Byt. To: MSZ, 26 Mar. 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 33.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted from: OP, To: Kons. RP. Byt., 12 May 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 14; also: ii. OP to: Preussische Minister des Innerns, 25 Mar 1925, APO 1/32, doc. 113.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted from: Kons. RP Byt., To: MSZ, 23 May 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 15.

against the Polish government for the nature of the Third of May rallies in Katowice and other areas along the border.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, these events had given the Germans plenty of ammunition for this cause. Excesses at these Polish rallies included former insurgents carrying out burnings and mishandlings of puppets representing the German President, Hindenburg, and the former Kaiser, Wilhelm II, as well as scattered acts of violence against local German minority members and vandalism of their property.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, according to the German police, in the border areas of Rybnik and Pschow (on the Polish side), militant groups carried out “wild shootings that were meant to unnerve the German residents at the border.”¹⁸¹

This chapter has thus been a broad overview of the basic forum of the Polish-German “cold war” over Upper Silesia, the border rallies. I have argued, foremost, that the development of the “tradition” of revanchist representational spectacles was an inherently transnational process, in which while in interactive conflict, both sides influenced one another’s means and strategies. Indeed, the various features that the festivities took on each side of the border was often a reflection of their will to outmatch the events staged by the neighbor in their grandeur, resonance, and as well as their character of “unity” and—often military—“strength.” Both sides mobilized a vast amount of resources, from media and transportation technology, to organizational work, and infrastructural building efforts, in an effort to win the contest. In the end, no one side could claim a clear-cut victory, nor could any one side cogently represent itself as “the

¹⁷⁹ Kons. RP Byt., To: MSZ, 4 May 1925, AAN 482/196, doc. 19.

¹⁸⁰ See: i. Leitendes Grenzkommissariat der Regierungsbezirk Oppeln, To: OP,..., doc. 47; ii. Polizeipräsident Gleiwitz, To: OP, Betr. polnische Nationalfeier am 3. Mai in Ostoberschlesien, 15 Mar. 1925, APO 1/180, doc. 50.

¹⁸¹ Quoted from: Leitendes, ..., doc. 47.

victim” of this revanchist politics and the other side as “the aggressor.” What developed was a common transnational culture of representing revanchism that served various political functions. The border rallies served as the fundamental forum for the transnational discourse of the region that with time became the backbone of various projects of social engineering, including ethnic cleansing. I begin the next chapter by addressing how the ideological values that they promoted touched off a Polish-German contest in other areas of cultural politics—an attempt to invent national-regional “high cultures” as part and parcel of fortifying the borderland for each respective contesting nation.

CHAPTER 3:

Keeping up with the Joneses: The Contest to Acculturate the Industrial District, 1926-1939

“The competence of the German technician, the entrepreneurialism of the German businessman (Kaufman), the quality performance of the German worker and craftsman, and the tenacity of the German farmer have ... brought to the world new proof of the German’s potential for achievement.” – President Paul von Hindenburg, Oppeln, September 1928.¹

“None of Poland’s regions presents such a great cult of diligent and sacrificial work like ... Silesia. Here the production promoted by the hands of the Polish worker and the mind of the Polish technician and engineer are constantly strengthening the nation’s power status.”

– President Ignacy Mościcki, Katowice, May 1929.²

The present chapter analyzes the notion of “cultural work”

(*Kulturarbeit/działalność kulturowa*) in the cultural politics of the Polish-German official conflict over Upper Silesia. The border that the Allied Forces drew in 1922 cut through lines of communication, urban and rural communal districts, waterways, production centers and power lines. It led to the exchange of tens of thousands of refugees from sides of the border. All of this prompted Polish and German projects to build new roads, waterways and rail lines, new housing for refugees, to redraw administrative districts, and to create new output markets for the Upper Silesian industry. Becoming a contested borderland also spurred the proliferation of the cultural institutions in this traditionally stereotyped strict “land of work,” including museums, research institutes, schools of

¹ Quoted from: Reichzentrale für Heimatdienst (Rz.f.HD), O/S Grenzbericht für Jul., Aug., Sept. 1928, Geheimpresussische Staatsarchiv, Preussische Kulturbesitz (hereafter, GStA PK), HA I, Rep. 77 (hereafter omitted), Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, doc. 108ff.

² Quoted from: “Wielki Dzień Śląska,” PZ (6 May 1929):1-2

higher education, theaters, libraries, etc. All of these affairs became the objects over which, and tools with which, the revanchist contest was waged.

In the following chapter I will examine acculturation politics in broad array in the context of the transnational contest for the borderland. I focus on the effort of the Sanacja regime to give the Voivodeship a „Polish face,” the ideological premises behind it, as well as the cross-border reception, and answer to this effort. Urban planning, the building of symbolic spaces, and the manipulation of folklore mark the “constructive” projects and points of contention I examine. In the last part of the chapter I also demonstrate how the “de-constructive” aspect of nationalization politics were inherently tied to the “constructive” ones. My argument here is that the discursive conflict over the region catalyzed the transnational development of the principle of “work” as a nation’s essential qualifier to rights to the region. I first turn to how this value developed in the midst of the symbolic border rivalry.

Throwing Down the Gauntlet

Two often inherently interwoven and interchangeably used terms, “Kultur” and “Arbeit” marked a fundamental basis for German claims to the border region. According to Ulrich Kayser’s propaganda film on Upper Silesia, “The Land Under the Cross,” everything valuable in this province, from its architecture, to its folk culture, to its industry, was a product of “700 years of German Kultur.”³ Speaking in the city of Hindenburg (Zabrze) on the eighth Plebiscite Day in 1930, the most influential politician in the Province, Father Carl Ulitzka, who was also the KVP’s representative in the Reichstag, echoed the ethos of this message in the following statement:

³ *Land unterm Kreuz: ein Film von oberschlesiens schwierigsten Zeit*, dir. Ulrich Kayser, 1927, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv.

let us never forget that the land that lays on both sides is German land! All that this land brought to bloom and prosperity is owed to German work, German diligence, German productivity, German determination, and German Kultur. The mines, metallurgy plants, and production centers that greet us today on the other [or Polish] side [of the border] make us aware that Upper Silesia is one. They tell us that the land on which they stand is German, and must also become German politically again.⁴

Neither the film nor Ulitzka made any reference to at least the partial contribution of Polish, Slavic, or even a distinctly non-nationally-oriented Upper Silesian, culture to the heritage of this borderland region. In both messages the underlying connotation was that only Germans could take the credit for all historical progress in this territory and thus are entitled to all of it. Ulitzka's statement makes the underlining qualifying premise for this assertion quite blatant: namely, that the nation or peoples that was able to demonstrate that it was promoting growth, advancement, and prosperity in the region—measured both in cultural and economic terms—both during the course of history and in the present ipso facto “proved” that this territory was “theirs.”

This assertion of Upper Silesia as an “ancient land of German work” was a mere regional variation of a larger national myth of Germans as the historical colonizers and engineers of civilization in the eastern borderlands and beyond. Endorsed and developed particularly during the interwar period by academic researchers of these areas, the so-called “Heimatsforscher/Heimatkundler” and, during the Nazi era, the “Ostforscher,” this myth was the basis of their argument that the territories stretching at least as far east as the boundaries of Imperial Germany constituted the “culturally German ground” (*Deutsche Kulturboden*), or the “German East” (*Der deutsche Osten*).⁵ It was based on

⁴ Quoted from: Rz.f.H., O/S Grenzbericht für Jan., Feb., Mar. 1930, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, doc. 174ff.

⁵ On the concept, the “German East” and its dynamic political use, see: Gregor Thum, „Mythische Landschaften: Das Bild vom ‚deutschen Osten‘ und die Zäsuren des 20. Jahrhunderts,“ in Gregor Thum,

the presumption that since the Middle Ages, “Germans” had built up civilization in these eastern provinces from scratch. They came to these territories as “carriers of culture” (*Kulturträger*), i.e. as builders of urban centers, and cultivators of arts and sciences.⁶ Unlike other provinces which were mostly “green” and not intensively industrial, the discourse on Upper Silesia also underlined the role of “Germans” as modernizers and builders of industry. This narrative of the “German East” was not just a discourse for academics, but one that the mass media also popularized. For example, as part of the process of preparing the public on both sides of the border spiritually for the German Plebiscite Festivity of 1931, the Breslau and Gleiwitz radio stations broadcasted a series entitled, “East German Heimat Week” (*Ostdeutsche Heimatwoche*), composed of ten lectures promoted by the “East German Cultural Community” (*Ostdeutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft*). The essential thesis of these lectures was that since the Middle Ages “Germans” had raised the cultural, technological, and civilizational standard in the Polish-German and Czech-German borderlands. Moreover, this assertion also underscored the superiority of “Arbeit” and “Kultur” vis-à-vis the counterparts of the eastern neighbor. The program’s hosts made this very blatant by noting that today the “highness of German culture” over that of the “Slavs” became quite apparent when one compared the “stolen German provinces” with the eastern territories of Poland.⁷

ed., *Traumland Osten: Deutsche Bilder vom östlichen Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2006) 181-211; and, Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East, 1800 to the Present* (New York 2009).

⁶ Recent work on Ostforschung and the construction of the “German East,” includes: Gregor Thum, „Mythische,” 187-90; Jörg Hackmann, Rudolf Jaworski, & Jan M. Piskorski, eds. *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik* (Osnabrück & Poznań, 2002).

⁷ Konsul Generalny Rzeczypospolita Polska we Wrocławiu (hereafter Kon. RP. Breslau), To: Poselstwo Polskie w Berlinie, Raport Polityczny nr 5: radio na usługach polityki, Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter AAN), 474 (Polska Ambasada w Berlinie)/2468, doc. 136. Dedicated particularly to “our German brothers and sisters on the other side of the border,” such radio programs were meant to raise

Polish government officials were very clear about what the underlying premise of this propaganda was, and the revanchist ends towards which the former was used.

Surveying this program carefully, the Polish Consulate in Breslau reported the following to the central government of Poland:

these ‘undisputable’ historical facts of centuries of German cultural work give Germans the right to regard these provinces as part of Germany, to demand their recovery, and to propagate the notion they will soon return to their [German] motherland.⁸

The statement makes clear that the Polish government knew very well of the German camp’s symbolic erasure of any significant Polish or Slavic heritage in the region.

There was also another side to the German revanchist discourse of promoting progress: not merely denying the neighbor credit for any achievement but outright denigrating the former’s work and heritage. During the course of the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, elites that supported the Weimar Republic—in contrast to their more radical nationalist opponents—did this in a subtle and cautious manner that *avoided* making explicit references to “polnische Wirtschaft” (Polish management), the age-old German myth depicting the Poles as incompetent managers of industry, infrastructure, and also cultural cultivation.⁹ Focusing not so much on the “incompetence” of the neighbor, German moderate leftists, centrists, and liberals concentrated on accenting the “needs” of “Ostoberschlesien” (the German revanchist term for the part of the province ceded to Poland). The regional newspapers of this pro-republican faction took occasion of the annual Plebiscite Festivities to propagate that as an “inherently German land,” Upper

consciousness and fuel a public outcry for “reunion with Germany” in the Voivodeship and other disputed territories in Poland.

⁸ Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 136ff.

⁹ On this see: Hubert Orłowski, *“Polnische Wirtschaft” : zum deutschen Polendiskurs der Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1996).

Silesia could not properly function under Poland, with which it shared no historical cultural or economic ties. In this regard, centrists and liberals argued that the partition sentenced the eastern—and on account of having lost its counterpart, also the western—part of the region to ruin.

The pro-republican camp exploited any economic crisis that hit the Industrial District, even if it was a product of extra-regional factors, to buttress their revanchist claims. Thus, the crises that downed productivity, spurred unemployment, and caused the shut-down of plants in the Polish part of this area, including the German fiscal crisis, the Polish-German tariff war (1925), and the Great Depression, were food for Germany's revanchist propaganda.¹⁰ Hardly taking the impact of these broader economic problems into account, the pro-republicans blamed downturns on the Polish—and also their own—side of the border primarily on the partition and the “Versailles Dictate” that imposed it. They argued that the “metallurgy plants and coal mines had been torn away from the body of Upper Silesia and forcefully tied to a nation with which the region shares no bonds.”¹¹ Moreover, as the leading KVP politician, Kurt Urbanek, stated during his speech at the Plebiscite Festivity of 1926 in Oppeln: “on both sides of Upper Silesia the severance made by the Geneva border has brought economic life to shambles [Unordnung]. We know that over there the situation is still much worse than here with us.”¹² German elites accented that, as one of the prime causes of this “ruin,” the Poles

¹⁰ From: Kon. RP Op., To: MSZ, 26 Mar. 1925, AAN 482 (Kons. Gen. RP. Op. /196, doc. 39-40.

¹¹ Quoted from: Oberschlesische Volksstimme (OSV), from: AAN 482/196, doc. 2.

¹² Kurt Urbanek was Landrat of Kreis Beuthen-Tarnowitz, and had been one of the major activists for the German camp during the plebiscite campaign. Quoted from: „Die Abstimmungs-Gedenkfeier in Oppeln. Reichsinnenminister Dr Külz u. Minister Severing über O/S Belange - deren mühtige Wille zur Tat,“ O/S Zeitung, 88 (29 Mar. 1926), n.p.

treated the Industrial District as their “object of exploitation” rather than a true Heimat where social welfare, culture, and prosperity should be cultivated.¹³

German elites depicted this notion of “ruin” imposed on the borderland by the partition not just in economic, but also in social and cultural terms. Moreover, with regard to the latter, they made particular reference to hardships that Voivodeship leaders imposed on locals during the months from the plebiscite to just after the partition (March 1921 to end of 1922). On both sides of the would-be border, violence, as well as episodic haphazard expropriation and forced migration, accompanied Upper Silesia’s national division. After the fact, German and Polish revanchists instrumentally used photographs and sources of these occurrences to paint the national “other” as the unilateral aggressor and persecutor. In the Province, Kayser’s propaganda film once again marks a prime example of this. Apart from the loss of industries and resources, the work propagates that as a result of the partition, “Oberschlesien” “loses” “one million people” as well as “ancient German folk customs and moors” to “over there,” meaning the Polish-Silesian Voivodeship. And—according to the film’s narrative—“over there” there was “hatred against everything that was once German.” The motion picture promotes this assertion of Polish persecution of Germans with moving images of Polish law enforcement officials pulling “Germans” out of their homes, and “unscrupulously expelling [*vertreiben*] women and children from their Heimat.” A picture of a freight (cattle) car is also shown, implying that these people were expelled out of the region in systematic and organized fashion the way that locals actually were after WWII. Behind this “stream of fleeing individuals” the film shows how the Poles “close the door to the Heimatland” as if the region were inhabited by “a population from two separate worlds.” In the next scene

¹³ All quoted and drawn from: “Nach fünf Jahren,” OSV 52 (20 Mar. 1926).

locals are shown being harassed by nasty Polish border guards “where just a few years ago German farmers peacefully harvested.”¹⁴

The motion picture’s exaggerations were not only marked by its unilateral promotion of Polish violence and persecution, but also its ascription of a sealed character to the border running through the Industrial District. In actuality, the opposite was the case: the border did not permanently divide locals from one another, since all residents here were free to cross it back and fourth at will.¹⁵ Kayser’s ultimate aim here was to have the film visually underscore an assertion that the propaganda surrounding the fifth “Plebiscite Festivity” made clear: “there is no doubt that if Polish Oberschlesien [sic!] wants to again see economic and cultural prosperity, this can only happen, when it is reunited with Germany.”¹⁶

The call to “renovation work” (Aufbauarbeit) was one of the main messages echoed by officials during the fifth “Plebiscite Festivity” of 1926. In other words, the regional government called on its superiors to support and finance local efforts to recover from what in their eyes were the various socio-economic and infrastructural perils of the partition. At the festivities, officials depicted the function of this rebuilding project also partly as a show of national pride, and of the superiority of “Kultur” and “Arbeit” to the ways of the eastern neighbor.¹⁷ In this regard the address made by Gustav Severing, the Social Democratic Minister of the Interior of the Prussian State, in his speech in Oppeln

¹⁴ *Land unterm Kreuz: ein Film von oberschlesiens schwierigsten Zeit*, dir. Ulrich Kayser, 1927, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv.

¹⁵ Quoted from: *Land unterm....*

¹⁶ Quoted from: “Nach fünf,” n.p.

¹⁷ Terms such as “Kultur”, “Deutsche Arbeit” and “Kulturarbeit” stemmed from the German occupation of Eastern Europe during WWI. See: Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, “The Languages of Occupation Vocabularies of German rule in Eastern Europe during the World Wars,” in: Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland and Colonial Expansion to the East* (New York 2009) 127-30.

was key. Severing declared that “the struggle for Oberschlesien must go on” in the form of “renovation work.” In his words,

I am not speaking about an arms race; I’m speaking of a struggle, which we have to wage today as good Germans and as good citizens of the world. I am speaking of the struggle, which should be fought out with the weapons of the spirit... It is already been said that our struggle for Upper Silesia is not just for the retainment of German territory. We want to strive to a higher culture . We want to be a part of a more sincere humanity. *And in this struggle for Germanism, and for a German Kultur, we will be victorious just as long as every individual... strives to be better than the eastern neighbor.* In a contest waged in all areas of public life we want to show the whole world that we are serious about struggling for the welfare of the whole German Volk here at the border. We want to make sure that not a single foot-long of soil will be lost. That the German Volk and German customs will be maintained undisturbed for Germanism.¹⁸

Severing’s statement marks a symbolic throwing down of the gauntlet to the Poles: a challenge to a contest of “work” in all walks of economic, social, and cultural life as part of the larger “cold war” over the borderland.

Two and a half years later, during his visit to the border, Paul von Hindenburg reinforced the existence of this contest of “work.” With a visit to a newly-opened kindergarten in the border city of Ratibor (Raciborz), one of several pillars of “Kultur” and “Arbeit” at the border, the former general showed support to his side’s progress in this transnational duel. The statements he made on this occasion underscored that “forceful new renovation work [*gewaltige Aufarbeit*] has been taking place” as “proof to the world of German’s potential for productivity and achievement.”¹⁹ To both Hindenburg and Severing, “renovation work” at the border was to serve to demonstrate that Germany has a right to the entire borderland on the basis of promoting progress, cultural growth, and development. Contemporary acculturation and development efforts

¹⁸ Quoted from: “Abstimmungsfeier in Oppeln,” OSV 88 (29 Mar. 1926). Emphasis in original.

¹⁹ Quoted from: „O/S Grenzbericht für Juli-August-Sept. 1928,” GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, docs. 111-117.

were also to serve as evidence that throughout history “Germans” have “built up” this region, and thus have claim to the fruits of their “Arbeit.”

Polish officials grasped the full meaning of the challenge delivered by Severing. According to the press of the Union of Poles in Germany (ZPwN) of Beuthen, *Katolik Codzienny* (*The Daily Catholic*), the Germans intended to wage “a battle of the spirit” intended to demonstrate to the world that “the German is a better person than his eastern neighbor,” which all the more demonstrates that “up to now the Germans have not been able to show this.” The venue also noted that Severing had referred to the Province as “a fortress of the East, where German culture will converge.”²⁰

The Polish Consul in Beuthen, Edward Szczepański, was another important party to react to Severing’s challenge. He expressed appall at how “all of Germany was murderously [sic!] working on upholding the faith of the Upper Silesian masses in Polish Silesia’s speedy return to Germany.” Among the means of doing so that he emphasized included making cases for how economic crises in the Province reflect that Poland was “unable to maintain its own part of the province,” and how the “region’s natural unity belongs under Germany.” His fear was all the more accentuated because this “Kulturarbeit” (cultural work) on the part of the Germans also impressed him. According to Szczepański’s report to the Polish central government:

The German government’s call for a really soon-to-come reunion [of both parts of Upper Silesia] is supported by a broad array of German administrative and social institutions, which aim to capture the soul, and to master the mind, of the Upper Silesian...²¹

²⁰ Quoted from: “Uroczystość rządowa w Opolu,” *Katolik Codzienny* 72 (30 Mar. 1926): 1.

²¹ All quoted from: Kon. RP. Op., To: MSZ, raport polityczny 147, re: “nie uznajemy tego kraju za stracony”, 30 Mar. 1926, AAN 482/196, doc. 65ff.

This in turn drove him to criticize his own government not so much for not actually promoting (cultural and economic) growth and progress in the Voivodeship, but for not instrumentalizing this to Poland's political benefit as skillfully as German officials were doing. In his words: "while not at all doing little to try to maintain a standard of living in Upper Silesia, the Polish government always does it in such a way that its measures don't reach mass consciousness, particularly among locals, who feel themselves neglected and rejected by Poland." Calling for more skillful "cultural work" in representing the Voivodeship's "achievements," the Consul warned the Polish government: "if the policies of both governments (the Polish and the German) are going to stay on the course I described, it is very easy to imagine a sad outcome of this evolution [for the Poles]." In other words, the Consul ordered an intensification in "work," or acculturation and consciousness raising in this age-old Prussian region, lest Poland were to "lose" it.²² In doing so, he was ipso facto urging conformity to the underlying premise behind all this: that the promotion of "cultural work" is a fundamental grounds for rights to territory.

Coming to power two months after the Prussian Minister had made his fateful speech, Grażyński eventually picked up the gauntlet Severing had symbolically tossed. Apart from launching violent terror on the "German fifth column" in the Voivodeship, the militant governor also opened up a program of "constructive" nationalization, or "Polonization." His strategy was not to merely impose high-Polish culture onto the region, but to "invent" regional traditions that symbolically tied Upper Silesia—indeed both parts—to the Polish nation. In all of this he was not original: the effort to construct national-based regional traditions started during the era dominated by his rival, Wojciech Korfanty (1922-1926), and was most blatantly marked by the invention of the "tradition"

²² All quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 65ff.

of border rallies and nationalist symbolism that circulated in their orbit. Grażyński nevertheless sought to represent himself as the original founder of national-regionalism, or “Polish-Silesianism.” To accent this purpose, his acculturation program took the arrogant name of “regionalism” (*regionalizm*). Indeed, the latter was meant to portray Sanacja’s notion of regional identity, and all “cultural” means of promoting it as *the one and only Upper Silesian regionalism*.²³ Urban development and the symbolic decoration of the Voivodeship capital marked one of the most blatant and enduring features of this “Polonization” (or the effort to cultivate “Polish-Silesian” regionalism). In now turn first to address this effort on the Polish side of the border before turning to examine competing efforts on the German one.

A Contest to Build National-Regional Landscapes

Giving the Voivodeship a “Polish” Face

One of the arguments that officials in the Province used to buttress their revisionist claims was that the landscape of the Voivodeship continued to be inherently “German.” As I discussed in chapter two, the tenth Plebiscite Day (1931) marked an occasion for the proliferation of almanacs, school books, and other propaganda works, that used photography of the various Prussian-period landscape relics in Polish Silesia as a basis of undermining the legitimacy of the border. These publications pointed out how Polish patriots recycled pedestals of the various German monuments that the insurgents destroyed as foundations for their own counterparts, and how they merely renamed

²³ On regionalism: i. “Doniosłe programowe zadania aktywnego polskiego obozu na Śląsku,” PZ (20-21 May 1934): 3; ii. “Uroczyste posiedzenie Sejmu Śląskiego dla uczczenia 10-tej rocznicy Niepodległości Polski,” PZ (11 Nov. 1928): 3; iii. “Regionalizm,” PZ (25 Aug. 1928): 2. See also: Edward Długajczyk, *Sanacja Śląska, 1926-1939: zarys dziejów politycznych* (Katowice, 1983) 235-38; Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, „Między regionalizmem a separatyzmem Śląskim,” in: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm: historia i społeczność Śląska na tle innych obszarów* (1996) 18-24; Barbara Szczyńska-Gwiazda, *Nieznane Oblicze Sztuki Polskiej: w kręgu sztuki województwa śląskiego w dobie II Rzeczypospolitej* (Katowice 1996) 29.

“Bismarck Towers” to “Freedom Towers” or “Sight-Seeing Towers.” The printed works used these exposés to feed German claims that the Poles were merely giving the Voivodeship a cosmetic “Polish face.” This argument echoed a larger national myth, which German academics specializing in the eastern borderlands endorsed even before, but most explicitly, during, the Nazi era. A staple creed of the Nazi-endorsed Ostforschung tradition, it depicted the “Germanic/German” as the deeply-rooted “culture” in this borderland—and the “German East in general—and that “Slavic/Polish” as a superficial import that regionally foreign elites imposed on the area. This myth went hand-in-hand with the notion of “Ostoberschlesien” as Poland’s colony. Even as Poland and Germany were officially in a state of peaceful and diplomatic cooperation via the “Non-Aggression Pact” of 1934, Ostforschers and the regime in the Third Reich regarded Poland as a “Seasonal State” (*Saisonstaat*), or an illegitimate child of the “Versailles Dictate.”

All of these overtures of nationalist bigotry put pressure on Voivodeship authorities to forge a clearly-visible and lasting “Polish rootedness” in the region. The renaming of streets, plazas, parks, and districts, immediately after the establishment of Polish Silesia marked the first step in this direction. This policy already contained the demon within: a propensity to erase the memory and identity of the Prussian era. It was coupled by the building of Polish monuments and plaques, places of memory, i.e. the Kościuszko Park in Katowice, and at the same time, the popular scholarly defamation of the “Prussian era” in tour guides and other popular scholarly works on the Voivodeship even before the Sanacja era.

The year 1923 marked the point of departure for the turning of Kattowitz into Polish Katowice. Authorities chose Katowice to serve not only as the administrative but also the symbolic capital of Polish Silesia. As the former Prussian administrative center of the Industrial District, this municipal area was all the more fit to serve this purpose. The delegates of the Silesian Sejm almost unanimously voted to redraw the Prussian municipal borders, which had given Kattowitz a size limited to 70,000 residents by 1914. With the addition of ten surrounding districts, the regional government turned this former municipality into a metropolis called “Greater Katowice” (Wielkie Katowice). According to German minority leader, Otto Ulitz, this marked a move on the part of Polish nationals aimed to “forever eradicate the German character of the city by way of an all-encompassing redrawing of its districts.”²⁴ By establishing a metropolis, Sejm delegates boasted that now the residential population had increased to 125,000, thus marking a sign of quick “progress” only a few months after the cession of the eastern part of the borderland to Poland. Polish travel guides also represented this increase of Katowice’s population as a symbol of the city’s greater prosperity with Poland than Germany.²⁵

Apart from the erection of various statues, the real reconstruction of the city’s landscape started during the Grażyński era. This effort marked one of the hallmark’s of the Voivode’s program of “regionalism,” or in other words, propensity to create a new identity for the region that was inherently “Polish” on the one hand, and tied to Sanacja-legitimizing symbolism on the other.²⁶ Throughout the 1930s the “Union of Silesian

²⁴ Otto Ulitz, „Großstadt Kattowitz,” *Kattowitzer Zeitung* (KZ), 193 (23 July 1924), in: GStA PK, Tit. 856 Nr 153, doc. 159. Emphasis in original.

²⁵ By 1935 the metropolis had 127,000 residents. See: A. Mikulski, ed., *Przewodnik Po Ziemi Śląskiej* (Warszawa, 1935) 24. See also: Waldemar Odorowski, *Architektura Katowic w latach międzywojennych, 1922-1939* (Katowice 1994) 31-33.

²⁶ Barbara Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Nieznane*, 27-9.

Architects,” and the Voivodeship government’s “Bureau for Architecture and Construction” constructed a “Polish Silesian” landscape that was both pragmatic and politically symbolic. In accordance with their main aim of giving the city a “Polish face,” Grażyński’s cohort of planners and builders chose the less developed southern side of the city to serve as the new center of social and political life in Polish Silesia. This was driven by their desire to cast a shadow on the northern side of the city that had served this function during the German Imperial period with its town square (*Stadtring*), municipal theater and city hall (*Rathaus*). Grażyński’s government chose the southern side to serve as the bedrock of a politically functional and symbolic plaza that Polish art historians have referred to as the “Forum Katowice.”²⁷

The realization of “regionalism” in architecture and building began with the construction of the premier structure of the “Forum” and the milestone architectural symbol of the Grażyński era: the Voivodeship Government Building (*Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego*, hereafter VGB). (See **Image 3.1**) It is worth devoting some space to examine the function and symbolism of this building, since this will also be of relevance to the next chapter. Built between 1923 and 1929, this was a monumental structure that covered about 158,000 cubic meters (206,656 cubic yards) of ground and rose up four stories high.²⁸ Its main function was to serve as the seat of both the legislative (Silesian Sejm) and executive (Voivode) branches of the regional government. The imposing size and shape of the building, and the numerous politically symbolic décor surrounding it, also made it a prime monument of Polish nation-state presence in this contested

²⁷ Szczypka-Gwiazda, „Reprezentacyjne założenie placu forum Katowic jako próba stworzenia ‘przestrzeni symbolicznej,’” in: Ewa Chojecka, ed., *Przestrzeń, Architektura, Malarstwo: Wybrane Zagadnienia Sztuki Górnośląska*, (Katowice, 1995) 105ff. Also: Ordorowski, *Architektura*, 31-43.

²⁸ Helena Surowiak, “Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego i Sejmu Śląskiego w Katowicach oraz jego program ideowy,” *Roczniki Katowic* (1983): 162.

borderland. In the words of the chief architect of the structure, Adolf Szyszko-Bochus: “[we need to] create in the capital of our western borderlands a monumental building, which would be a development trait of our culture.”²⁹

The VGB’s shape and size reflected militancy and fortress mentality—two core values of the Grażyński government. With four bold square corners standing out from the main body of the structure, the latter took on the appearance of an early modern period military bastion, or a “*palazzo in fortezza*.”³⁰ Its military character was also accented by its undecorated and strictly functional thick stone walls, which gave the structure the resemblance of Nazi-endorsed modern architecture. On the other hand, wedged into the building’s walls, and serving only a decorative function, the columns, along with the symbolism running around the freeze underneath the roof, gave the VGB a neo-classical accent. According to art historians, monumental classical styles, stemming from the Cracovian pre-WWI school of architecture, marked the essential identity of Polish nationality in architecture during the interwar period.³¹

This structure was not just a high-Polish transplant. Rather, it combined universal, high Polish and regional forms, thus serving as a pivotal example of Grażyński’s national-regionalism. This was most visible in the motifs running around its freeze. Apart from the classical symbols of state power (here the fasci and laurel leaves), Poland’s sovereignty was accented with carvings of the letters “RP” (*Rzeczypospolita Polska*/Republic of Poland), and a large golden-crowned white eagle at the center of the building’s frontal façade. Next to these symbols, the eagle of Piłsudski’s legionnaires

²⁹ Quoted from Szczypka-Gwiazda, „Reprezentacyjne,” 106.

³⁰ Ordorowski, *Architektura*, 56.

³¹ Helena Surowiak, “Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego i Sejmu Śląskiego w Katowicach oraz jego program ideowy,” *Roczniki Katowic* (1980): 162; Ordorowski, *Architektura*, 56-7; Szczypka-Gwiazda, „Reprezentacyjne,” 106-7.

were on display, demonstrating how as the author of the city's rebuilding, Grażyński took advantage of this role to infuse "Polonization" with his own political symbolism.

Regional symbolism was manifested in coats of arms of cities decorating the outer freeze of the building. On the marble-walled and highly elegant inside of the building, those of the German side of the region decorated the stained glass windows of the large cupola at the center of the building.³² This was a way of officially emphasizing that not just the eastern side of the region's border but also its western side "belonged" to Poland.³³ Apart from the building's shape and décor, its function as the center of the "Forum Katowice" also defined the structure's meaning and significance. The building stood adjacent to a broad street used as a parade ground, and had large empty squares that served as grounds for political mass rallies in front of its main façade and on its northern flank. The steep staircase and broad portico functioned as the center stage for political mass ceremonies that brought the symbolism of the structure alive and into the eyes of the public.

Once the structure was opened, officials of cultural politics sought to make this central icon of "Polish-Silesianism" into a nation-wide tourist center. Its promotion as a central attraction in travel guides, and the annual Third of May rallies, in part served this purpose. Otherwise, what drew visitors to Katowice from all over Poland was that by 1930, the VGB became the headquarters for the "Silesian Museum" (Muzeum Śląskie). The latter was one of the great hallmarks of Grażyński's "regionalism" (Polish-Silesianism). Demonstrating that even his political rivals supported this nationalization

³² See: Szczypka-Gwiazda, „Reprezentacyjne,” 106-7; and: Bogdan Cimiało, „Obchody Rocznic Plebiscytu na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1924-1927,” *Kronika Katowic* (Katowice 1996): 119-31.

³³ German officials took good notice of the revisionist meaning of this symbolism. See: Dr. Karl Szodrok, Leiter des Amtes für Oberschlesische Landeskunde, Bericht, To: Nord und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (NOFG), Betr. die Abstimmungsausstellung von der polnischen Seite in Kattowitz, 6 May 1936, Bundesarchiv (hereafter, BArch), 153 (Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem), 1302, n.p.

program, the eminent Korfantiite, Konstanty Wolny, announced its establishment in the Silesian Senate as one of the national trophies commemorating the tenth anniversary of Poland's existence on 11 November 1928.³⁴ A Polish answer to the existence of a German regional museum in Beuthen (Bytom) just across the border, the ultimate mission of this institution was to promote Polish national-regional culture. Headed by the art historian, and regional conservationist, Dr. Tadeusz Dobrowolski, the "Silesian Museum" was both a public museum and a research center working to represent the history and folk culture of the region along the Sanacja ideology-serving notion of "Polishness."³⁵

One section of the museum's permanent exhibit was devoted to the Grażyński cult-supporting memory of the events of 1919-22. Its development reached its height in May of 1936, when Grażyński's government celebrated the 15th anniversary of the third insurgency in Katowice. As usual for such significant dates, the event carried nation-wide significance, and attracted over a hundred thousand visitors from all over the country. It was presided over by (Marshall) Edward Rydz-Śmigły, who as the commander-in-chief of Poland's military forces, and de facto successor of the now late Józef Piłsudski (d. 12 May 1935), was the most powerful man in Poland at the time. Dr. Adam Benisz and other scholars of the Silesian Institute and its collaborating academic centers curated a special exhibit at the museum for the occasion. Ceremoniously opened by Rydz-Śmigły during the festivities, this display thus enjoyed nation-wide endorsement and was widely

³⁴ See: Jadwiga Lipońska-Sajdak, *Konstanty Wolny: marszałek Sejmu Śląskiego* (Katowice, 1998) chapter 5.

³⁵ On the Silesian Museum, see: "Uroczyste posiedzenie Sejmu Śląskiego dla uczczenia 10-tej rocznicy Niepodległości Polski," PZ (11 Nov. 1928): 3. Also: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956* (Osnabrück, 2008), 228-9; same author, „Imaginative Nationalisierung der Grenzregion Oberschlesien,“ in Dietrich Beyrau Mathias Beer, Cornelia Rauh, ed., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950* (Essen 2009) 219-223.

promoted by way of the press and the radio. In the months following, it became a site of national patriotic pilgrimage for over 40,000 visitors from all over Poland, school youth and scouts in particular.³⁶ Since the records of this exhibit mark one of the best examples of how the VGB and “Silesian Museum” were used to promote the official “Polish identity” for the region, it is worth examining more closely.

Agents of the former Heimatkunde Union in the O/S Province (now the “Bureau for the Regional Studies of Oberschlesien,” or “Amt für Oberschlesische Landeskunde”) sent one of their trustees from the Kulturbund³⁷, the eminent Heimatkundler, Walter Krause, to view the exhibit and to send a report back to the Third Reich’s Ostforschung headquarters, the North East Ethnic German Research Society (*Nord und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, hereafter NOFG) in Berlin-Dahlem.³⁸ Regretting that for fear of “German spies,” Polish officials did not allow viewers to take photographs of the display, Krause nevertheless recorded a detailed account of the latter. The exhibit was an extensive one: fourteen sections, and ten thousand pieces of display, which included archival documents, posters, photographs, military uniforms, weapons, and other combat instruments. Krause characterized the exposition as anti-German and anti-Korfontiite in ethos. In one respect, it served to glorify Grażyński’s heroic role in the insurgency in a special extended section devoted just to this theme, while portraying Korfonty’s work as

³⁶ On event and exhibition: i. Karl Sczodrok Amt f. O/S Landeskunde, Oppeln (hereafter only Sczodrok), To: NOFG, 12 Aug. 1936, BArch 153/1302, doc. 1; Sczodrok, To: NOFG, Betr. „Abstimmungsausstellung von der polnischen Seite in Kattowitz, 6 May 36, BArch 153/1307, n.p.; iii. Sczodrok, (Tgb. Nr. 95), To: NOFG, Betr. “Kattowitz, Aufstände im polnischen Rundfunk,” 2 May 36, same file set and file, n.p.

³⁷ Headed by Viktor Kauder, the Kulturbund was the cultural section of the Deutsche Volksbund für Polnischen Schlesien, the main German minority organization. See: Piotr Greiner & Ryszard Kaczmarek, ed., *Leksykon Mniejszości niemieckiej w województwie śląskim w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 2002) 58-60.

³⁸ On the NOFG and Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem, see: Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (New York 1988) 11-12 and 53; and: Ingo Haar, “German Ostforschung and Anti-Semitism,” in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, ed., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1920-45* (New York 2005) 7-20.

marginal. In another, the exhibit depicted the Germans during 1921 as a camp that could only gain support by manipulatively playing on “the material instincts of the masses,” while the Polish counterpart managed to rally crowds with pure patriotic idealism. Foremost, the exhibit served to promote the core historical narrative tying the region to Poland, that of the “Lud Śląski” (“Upper Silesian peoples”), an “ancient Polish peoples” who had been engaged in centuries of conflict against Germans, including the culmination of these in 1919-21.³⁹

The myth of the “Lud Śląski” was also echoed by showcases other than those directly connected to the “Silesian Insurgencies.” The exhibit also featured mannequins wearing regional folk costumes, decades-old Polish language prayer books, and other folkloric artifacts, that characterized Upper Silesians as “ethnically Polish.” As I will discuss further in the next section, this nationalized display of folk culture was by no means original only to this exhibit, but something that the museum and its director Dobrowolski, a specialist of regional folk art, promoted in the form of a permanent exposition and in multifarious publications. Although it was not noted in Krause’s report, the “Silesian Museum” also depicted this myth by way of an exhibit on archeological excavations, which served this political purpose.⁴⁰ All of this demonstrates how this institution served to reinforce the VGB’s function as an icon of the rootedness of “age-old Polishness” in the region. This icon’s imposing size, militant shape, and variegated symbolism aimed to cast a shadow on efforts to promote German regional identity, as well as on Upper Silesian (“nationally indifferent”) regionalism/localism.

³⁹ Sczordrok, To: NOFG, Betr. „Abstimmungsausstellung von der polnischen Seite in Kattowitz, 6 May 36, BArch 153/1307, n.p.

⁴⁰ Sczordrok, To: NOFG, Betr. “Kattowitzer Museum,” BArch, 153/1302, n.p..

Apart from serving as a display of historical Polish-Silesianism, the VGB was also a central icon glorifying Poland's national civilizing mission (nationalization) in the border area. In and of itself, it marked a specimen of how Poland was delivering "culture" to the border—or in other words of what was officially referred to as "cultural work" (*działalność kulturowa*). According to the official myth—which found its echo in Grażyński's address at the VGB's opening ceremony—as a result of centuries of isolation from "their [Polish] motherland, only a primitive form of Polishness" remained among the native population. On the basis of this discourse, Polish officials legitimated their acculturation efforts as marking a sort of updating of the cultural standard—or in other words, working to eradicate "superficial" German, and "underdeveloped" regional/local identities. In this sense, the Voivode emphasized that as an icon of this "cultural advancement," the VGB served as "the material symbol of Polish culture and power," the "social, cultural, and economic work aimed at deepening the internal current of Polish consciousness among the popular masses" and also the "the confluence of regional and national achievements." Speaking after the Voivode, the Bishop Arkadiusz Lisiecki stamped this official meaning of the structure with the credibility of the Polish Catholic Church, and reinforced it with his own public statement, which he delivered in the name of the native locals: "in front of us stands a great, beautiful, and wonderful, building. ... The Silesian population wanted and yearned for such a building of this greatness and wonder so that it could represent the might of their bonds with the motherland."⁴¹ Power,

⁴¹ All quoted from: "Wielki Dzień Śląska," PZ (6 May 1929): 1-2. Also: *Polonia* 164 (6 May 1929). The last statement of the "Act of the Building's Consecration," a document representing the inauguration of the structure and its symbolic meaning, represented the VGB as a "symbol of our nation's world power status of which the territory of the Silesian Voivodeship constitutes most valuable pearl." This from: "Akt poświęcenia gmachu Urzędu Wojewódzkiego Śląskiego," Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (hereafter, APK), 27/1 (UWŚl. wyd. społ-pol.)/146, doc. 1.

cultural advancement, national consciousness raising, as well as greatness and beauty, thus all marked the façade of the civilizing mission of which this structure served as a monument.

As a symbol of how Poland was “raising” the cultural standard at the border, the VGB was thereby to serve as a mark of this nation’s *right* to this territory. The statements that officials made during the opening ceremony demonstrate their recognition of the premise that the Prussian Minister Gustav Severing had echoed, namely that the performance of “work” (the promotion of advancement, cultural achievement, and public welfare) entitles a nation and its core peoples to a territory. This was made clear during the building’s opening ceremony in the statement given by the head of the Voivodeship government’s Section for Public Works (Wydział Robot Publicznych), the engineer Henryk Zawadowski: “the no good landowner is one who neglects his land, who does not cultivate and develop it, build on it, and beautify it.” Zawadowski exemplified Grażyński as a model “frontier fighter” for the Polish cause on the basis of—in the engineer’s words—being “not just a fellow insurgent” (on account of having taken a leading part in the third insurgency) but also a “*builder* of this region.”⁴² In other words, according to official discourse, building, which was a form of “cultural work,” was a form of waging war for the borderland. In this sense, Poland’s president, Ignacy Mościcki, who was also present at its opening ceremony, flaunted the building as an indication that “here [in the industrial district] the production promoted by the hands of the Polish worker and the mind of the Polish technologist and engineer are constantly strengthening the nation’s power status.”⁴³ This phrase was very similar to the one that Paul von Hindenburg had

⁴² All quoted from “Wielki Dzień Śląska,” PZ (6 May 1929): 1-2.

⁴³ Quoted from: *ibid.*, 1-2.

made during his visit to the borderland in September of 1927. Here the German statesman referred to how in this contested territory the “skillful German” technocrat was demonstrating “Germany’s” industrial and cultural prowess to the world, and thus—implicitly—that Germany has greater rights to the territory than Poland.⁴⁴ For Polish officials, the VGB and the “Forum Katowice” were the prime marks of this assertion—but certainly not the only ones.

For Poland, the icons of “work” were marked even by the seemingly non-political achievements of a program of building and landscape development that the Voivode promoted since 1927. This included the construction of more than 1,200 suburban settlements for workers between 1929 and 1931, apart from urban center apartments. Roads were also built connecting the Industrial District with other regions of Poland; new modes of public transportation were established; and an airport was constructed on the outskirts of Katowice. Perhaps the most politically symbolic achievement of the late 1920s was the building of the “Magistrale,” a rail line from the Voivodeship’s industrial heartland to the ports of “the Corridor,” which allowed for the transportation of the former’s raw materials and their international export.⁴⁵

By no means was the development of a “Polish”—and likewise in the Province, a “German”—regional identity the main motive of all of this. Housing shortages haunted industrial Upper Silesia since the massive influx of workers from the countryside during the Industrial Revolution. Like many other social, economic, and infrastructural

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1-2

⁴⁵ “Wyniki Akcji Budowlanej Śląskiego Urzędu Wojewódzkiego,” PZ 105 (17 April 1936): 5; ii. Ludwik Regorowicz, “Dorobek rządów polskich w Województwie Śląskim, 1922-1930,” in: *Śląsk: Przeszłość i Teraźniejszość*, (Katowice: Nakładem Okręgu Śląskiego, ZOKZ, 1931) 21-29. See also: Dorota Głazek, “Kolonie Robotnicze w Autonomicznym Województwie Śląskim,” in: Ewa Chojecka, ed., *O sztuce Górnego Śląska i Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego XV-XX w. Sztuka Śląska odkrywana na nowo*, (Katowice, 1989) 109.

problems, this one was exacerbated by Upper Silesia's national partition.⁴⁶ The post-WWI conflict over the region created a refugee crisis, whereby 60,000 crossed the border from western Upper Silesia by 1923, and another 30,000-40,000 in succeeding years. 65,000 of these individuals were still in the Voivodeship in by 1926.⁴⁷ The influx was not only from the west, but also from the east: the government had to build housing for circa 40,000-50,000 newcomers from former Habsburg (Śląsk Cieszyński/Teschen Silesia) monarchical parts of the Voivodeship, as well as mainstream provinces of Poland, a part of which (circa 2-3% of the total population) formed the region's new elites, including bureaucrats, cultural cadres, and production center managers.⁴⁸ The drawing of the border also prompted the need to reorder communication lines, including road, water, and rail, ways, to adjust to the new national boundaries. Indeed, here the Poles were under particular pressure to rapidly establish communication lines between this age-old Prussian province and the rest of the country so as to create a logistical foundation for its connection with the new nation.⁴⁹ To meet the needs of expanding government institutions, including the new cultural and academic centers, as well as technical schools

⁴⁶ The point that border redrawings extend their effects into areas, including the economy, infrastructure, environmentalism, and demography, and last over a long period of time after the initial cause, was made by Eagle Glassheim based on the postwar former Sudetenland area case-study. See his: "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989," *Journal of Modern History*, 78 (March 2006): 65-92.

⁴⁷ See: Krystian Heffner & Wiesław Liesiuk, „Ekonomiczne i Społeczne Skutki Podziału Górnego Śląska w 1922 roku,” in Andrzej Brożka & Teresa Kulak, ed., *Podział Śląska w 1922 roku* (Wrocław, 1996): 148; Franciszek Serafin, “Stosunki demograficzne i społeczne,” in: Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Województwo Śląskie: Zarys Monograficzny* (Katowice 1996) 80.

⁴⁸ These statistics from: Lech Krzyżanowski, “Kościół Katowicki wobec regionalizmu Śląskiego w okresie międzywojennym,” in: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm: historia i współczesność. Śląsk na tle innych obszarów* (Katowice, 1996) 69. According to Wanatowicz, the newcomers (*ludność napływowa*) constituted no more than 5% of this society during the interwar era, 3-4% of which were professionally active. This from her essay, “Rola ludności napływowej w procesie integracji Górnego Śląska z resztą ziemi Polskiej,” in: Franciszek Serafin, ed., *Ziemie Śląskie w granicach II Rzeczypospolitej: procesy integracyjne* (Katowice 1985) 79.

⁴⁹ See: Heffner & Lesiuk, “Ekonomiczne,” 141-55.

from the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, Polish authorities also built an array of structures in and around the “Silesian Forum” and the new southern center of Katowice.⁵⁰

Cultural activists of the Voivodeship turned these projects that arose out of essentially logistical, economic, and inner-national political circumstances, into revanchist symbols of international politics. The regional government’s mandate to develop the inner part of Katowice gave these elites an occasion to introduce a “Polish Silesian” architectural style, and thus turn urban development into an important part of Grażyński’s politics of “Polonization”—more specifically, of “regionalism.” Whereas at first neo-classicism marked the national-regional style, manifested by the VGB, by 1928 the Polish Architect Union of Silesia emphasized imitating the forms of Western European and North American modernism. Between the late twenties and the mid-thirties a number of avant-garde structures of strictly functional and rational, rather than decorative, forms went up around the new southern part of the city. This made the Industrial District the first site where such forms were built in Poland. Indeed, one of the reasons for this was to turn this contested border area into a façade of Poland’s progressive and modernizing potential. Some of these new buildings—i.e. that housing the “Silesian Technical Scientific Works,” a prime technical college established during the Grażyński era—had thick walls, resonating the kind of appearance of power and fortitude that German architecture of the Third Reich era often sported. Others exhibited avant-garde shapes and carried glass extensively on their surface. These included the “House of Enlightenment,” the center of many of Grażyński’s new humanities academies, and the “Administration Offices Building” (*Gmach Urzędów Niezespólonych*)

⁵⁰ Ordorowski, “Architektura,” 10, 35.

built across the street from the main façade of the VGB (see **image 3.3, 3.4 & 3.5**).⁵¹ One essential common feature of many of these modern buildings was the utilization of steel skeleton constructs. Grażyński personally embraced the use of steel for building as part of the forging of a Polish “native style” in this region that produced this raw material. The use of steel skeletal constructs, which liberated walls and corners from their traditional support functions, allowed for avant-garde and boastful architectural design.⁵²

The most symbolic artistic products of the new steel building technology were high-rise buildings. In 1931 Poland’s tallest structure was built in Katowice, a 14-story and 40 meter (131.2 feet) high structure that was designated mainly for residential but also government office use. Popularly called the “skyscraper,” it quickly became a legend in a Poland where this new style and form of building aroused popular wonder (see **image 3.6 & 3.7**). As a symbol of technology and national progress, it was popularized in the 1931 newsreel, “Steel-Skeletal Building,” which was screened as a feature-show preview in cinemas throughout the country. The structure also quickly became an important tourist landmark in the city. For a token price visitors could enjoy the view from the building’s terrace.⁵³ The building’s popularity placed it at the time head of the Silesian Bureau for Building and Planning, Witold Kłębowski, in the spotlight of the modernist building trend in Poland. In his 1932 article on the “skyscraper” published in Poland’s leading popular periodical, *Architektura i Budownictwo* (*Architecture and*

⁵¹ Odorowski, *Architektura*, 103-117; and, Barbara Sczypka-Gwiazda, *Nieznane*, 7-31.

⁵² A contemporary statement on the new technology was: „Budownictwo stalowo-szkieletowe na Śląsku i w reszcie Polski,” *PZ* 118 (10 May 1931): 4. According to the Polish architectural historian, Waldemar Odorowski, 1928 marks the turn away from building in the neo-classical style and towards the embracement of modernism by the regional authorities. See: Odorowski, *Architektura*, 103-5. See also Ewa Chojecka, *Sztuka Górnego Śląska od średniowiecza do końca XX w.*, (Katowice: Muzeum Śląskie, 2004), 325-6, 329-336.

⁵³ See Waldemar Odorowski, “Wieżowce Katowic i ich treści ideowo-propagandowe,” in: Ewa Chojecka and Lech Szaraniec, eds., *O sztuce Górnego Śląska i przyległych ziem Małopolskich*, (Katowice, 1993), 268-71.

Building), Kłębowski emphasized that this structure represented the importation of the “American style” to Katowice. In his words, “Silesia, this most American region of Poland...It is no wonder that Silesia, the fatherland of Polish steel, is the first area to build skyscrapers.”⁵⁴ In actuality no widespread “sky-scraper” building movement unfolded in the region. This premier 14-story building remained the tallest structure in the region, although similar high rise buildings of lower elevation were built both in Katowice and the neighboring border city of Chorzow (Königshütte). Moreover, only two years after it was built, it had lost its status of being the country’s tallest building to a 17-story high-rise constructed in Warsaw.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this structure, along with various other avant-garde buildings that utilized steel for their building, served to give Katowice the reputation of an “American city” recognized on both sides of the border.

The propensity to “Polonize” the urban landscape of the Voivodeship’s capital also included the building of various avant-garde sacred structures. On 28 October 1928, the regional Church formed its own Archdiocese of Katowice. In that it removed the regional Church from under the authority of the Archdiocese of Breslau in Germany, this move marked a “Polonization” measure. Not long after this redrawing of ecclesiastical districts, authorities began to plan for the building of a Cathedral in Katowice, by far the most important of the various sacred structures that were being built simultaneously, to serve as a seat the new regional office of the Bishop. Designed by Zygmunt Gawlik and Franciszek Mączyński, and supervised by the ChD notary and academic, Prelate Emil Szramek, the building of this structure started in the early thirties and was not completed

⁵⁴ Quoted from: Witold Klebowski, “Pierwsze Drapacze Śląskie,” *Architektura i Budownictwo*, 6 (1932): 169. This quotation, which was an official statement of the Polish Silesian regional government, also appears in: Odorowski, “Wieżowce,” 268.

⁵⁵ “Budownictwo stalowo-szkieletowe...,” 4.

until the mid-fifties. This monumental structure exemplified classical forms, elongated gothic windows, and a cupola (**see image 3.8**). Gawlik explicitly intended the Cathedral to be among the main trophies of urban development that underscored Poland's "rights" to this "recovered territory."⁵⁶

Although many of these building efforts were not primarily planned to serve as political symbols, regional elites represented them as high-handed "Polish achievements" of the "era of Silesia's liberation (from Prussian yoke)."⁵⁷ In chapter two I have pointed out how the Third of May and Plebiscite Festivities in part served as occasions for governments to boast their nation's technological and organization prowess. Just as the Poles flaunted their ability to set up amplifiers around the ceremonial grounds of Katowice, and to make a film that demonstrated the inherent "Polishness" of the borderland, they likewise showed off their prowess in redressing the Voivodeship capital architecturally. During the bombastic Third of May spectacles of 1931, officials used high-powered lights to make all the building "achievements" impressively visible after dusk.⁵⁸ Moreover, the VGB and its surrounding open squares became the center of the event, while the parade staged through the southern side of the city also served as a means of demonstrating how Poland, and more specifically, Grażyński, were building "greatness" at the border.

Four months later that year, in November of 1931, the Defense Union of the Western Territories (ZOKZ) held its "Silesian Propaganda Month," geared to teaching all

⁵⁶ See: Szczypka-Gwiazda, "Historia budowy katedry w Katowicach," in Chojecka, ed., *O sztuce*, 87. And: Ewa Chojecka, *Sztuka Górnego Śląska od Średniowiecza do końca XX w.* (Katowice, 2004) 390-1.

⁵⁷ For example: i. Regional tour guide: Stanisław Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy Przewodnik po województwie Śląskim*, (Katowice 1937) 156ff; iii. Popular scholarly regional monographs: Ludwik Łakomy, *Ilustrowana Monografia Województwa Śląskiego*, (Katowice, 1936) 18-19, 39-47, 71-8.

⁵⁸ „Śląski Maj 1921 – 2 Maj 1931,” PZ 111 (2 May 1931): 1.

of Poland, including Upper Silesians, about Upper Silesia. The propaganda disseminated at this event included that about how “in a short amount of time,” rapid investment and work “restored” to the cities and towns of the Voivodeship “more of their own natural, or Polish, character.” As a way of underscoring Poland’s rights to this contested borderland (eastern Upper Silesia), ZOKZ represented all the building projects as evidence for how under Poland, Upper Silesia was better off, and more closely attended to, than it had been under Germany. All these aspects of Polish “cultural work” were boasted by the author, the head of the Silesian Education Department, Dr. Ludwik Reġorowicz. Foremost, he flaunted the avant-garde architecture as one of the examples of how under the Poles, “Katowice was transformed from a provincial city of German times into a large regional metropolis ... striving for one of the first places in the national culture of independent Poland.” The author also underscored the inherent interwovenness of the region with the rest of the country by pointing to the “127.8 km.” of new roads, and new rail lines built from Katowice to Warsaw, to connect the Voivodeship to other parts of Poland. In turn he also noted that this new infrastructure carried a nationalist political significance: namely, that thanks for the new rails, Poles will not longer have to rely on the (“German”) railway junction in Beuthen. This “cultural work” also had a “public welfare” element to it. Reġorowicz underscored how well Poland was taking care of local workers through the building of swimming pools around near the Industrial District’s urban areas, tourist resorts in the Beskidy (Beskiden) Mountains, a favorite area of rest and hiking in the southern part of the Voivodeship, and also 3,717 homes, mostly in suburban settlements. The author boasted the enormous price figure of this “work,” or

84.8 Million Zloty, all the more to underline how much more effort the Poles have put into this territory than its previous Prussian managers.⁵⁹

Just as it was on the opposing side of the border, the denial and denigration of the accomplishments of the neighbor was also an inherent part of flaunting “our achievements” in the Voivodeship. The underlying message of official propaganda was that unlike Polish governments, German ones neglected Upper Silesia.⁶⁰ For example, Silesia’s Bureau for Building and Planning made the following statement in *Polska Zachodnia*, the official Silesian Sanacja daily, on occasion of the tenth anniversary of Poland’s independence:

the public buildings that the partitioners [Germans/Prussians] had built, especially those designated for [state] institutional use, were very thin, and often had to be placed in old rental buildings. A small provincial city before the war, and not even one with its own surrounding county, Katowice suddenly became the capital of a powerfully and autonomous [Polish] Silesian Voivodeship.⁶¹

In a similar respect, in 1935 the head of the Silesian Union of Polish Architects of the mid-1930s, Lion Dietz D’Arma, who was also the designer of the avant-garde structure of the Military Church in Katowice, published a statement on how “the Poles” had “improved” the appearance of this city. In his words:

I remember my impressions from a stay in Katowice in the year 1923. I remember very well that not large and crowded trade center, some of the store exhibits and their inscriptions... And those housing buildings, hopeless in their architecture, grey and soot-covered... This was one example—not needing further commentary—of the shortcomings and [inferior] standards of pre-war German building culture in the borderlands.⁶²

⁵⁹ All quoted from: Ręgorowicz, “Dorobek,” 21-5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁶¹ “Akcja budowlana Śląskiego Urzędu Wojewódzkiego,” in: *Polska Zachodnia Ekstra*, “Jak się Śląsk buduje?” (3 June 1928): 2. Similar discourse also in: Wł. Nałęcz-Gostomski, *Dzieje i rozwój Wielkich Katowic: jak ośrodka Gornośląskiego przysłu I stolicy autonomicznego Woj. Śląskiego*, (Katowice 1926) 105-8.

⁶² Quoted from: Lein Dietz d’Arma, “Nowe Gmachy Muzealne: Muzeum Śląskie w Katowicach,” in: *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2 (1936): 66.

The inherent German neglect of the region was common undercurrent between this statement and the ones noted in preceding paragraphs. According to D'Arma, ugliness and inferiority characterized landscape during the Prussian period. Polish elites certainly did not mean to develop a stereotype of “all-German inferiority” that matched their eastern neighbor’s myth of “*polnische Wirtschaft*.” However, they did mean to say that their counterparts across the border failed to promote any meaningful “cultural work” in eastern Upper Silesia, and thus have no right to the territory.

What did the western neighbors think of all these building projects? For one thing, German officials understood the political symbolic undertone even of the most seemingly mundane and non-political Polish projects. A good example of this is found in an official report written by Karl Sczodrok (“Germanized” to Schodrok during the Nazi era), the head the Union of O/S Heimatkunde and the NOFG’s main informer on cultural politics in the Voivodeship. This longstanding folklorist and German patriot of Upper Silesia noted that by the summer of 1936 the Poles were almost finished with building a market hall in Katowice. Although this structure did not carry any immediately-noticeable political statement, Sczodrok made it clear that one had to treat it in the context of “a row of other representative buildings” the Poles had recently built or were building. Here he listed not just the Cathedral, the “Skyscraper” (*Hochhaus*), the avant-garde buildings of the Technical Academy and “House of Enlightenment,” but also—again a seemingly apolitical—Ice Skating Hall, and Athletics Hall. Reporting to the Third Reich’s Ostforschung headquarters in Berlin-Dahlem, the folklorist informed his supervisors that there was a fundamental political message the united all these projects: “they will

constitute ‘proof’ that the economic and cultural development [*Ausbau*] of Oberschlesien was first successfully carried out under Poland.”⁶³

It was not just in internal government documents that German officials noted such respect for the Pole’s building efforts. In the summer of 1938, *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*, which was already an anti-republican right-wing venue during the Weimar era, published a curiously laudatory review of the urban development that had been taking place in Kattowitz. This is all the more surprising since by that time this Beuthen daily newspaper, along with its longstanding nationalist editor, Hans Schadowaldt, was a mouthpiece for the Nazi party’s section for affairs concerning the eastern borderlands, “Union of the German East” (*Bund des Deutschen Osten*, hereafter BDO). At the end of June, the venue published an anonymous full-page illustrated article that opened with the following phrase: “Whoever has not seen the city of Kattowitz since a number of years could not help it but to be quite astounded.” This piece expressed wonder at the technologically advanced, and grandiose character of some of the buildings, including the “entirely American high-story building of the Financial Department,” or in other words, the “skyscraper.” Statements like the following were just about antithetical to official Nazi overtures to “polnische Wirtschaft” and notions of “polnische Unkultur:” “after WWI Kattowitz has undergone a mercurial and forwards-storming development and in the realm of municipal building it has leaped over decades.”⁶⁴ In this sense, the article underscores Grażyński’s success in his building endeavors: namely, to make Katowice

⁶³ “Sie werden ‘beweisen’, dass der wirtschaftlich und kulturelle Ausbau Oberschlesiens erst durch Polen erfolgte.” Quoted from: Sczodrok, to: NOFG, „Polnische Nachrichten“ Nr. 1460/36, 21 July 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

⁶⁴ All quoted from: “Monumentalbauten geben Kattowitz ein neues Gesicht: sprunghafte Entwicklung in der Nachkriegszeit. Grösse Pläne und ebenso grosse Finanzsorgen,” KZ (26 June 1938), n.n.

into a façade of Poland's capability of "raising" the standard of "civilization" on the eastern side of the border. Even if Polish officials had a greater burden of "proving" their competence and demonstrating the enduring character of their "cultural work" than their neighbors, they still did not do so in a vacuum. I now turn to address some selected issues of cross-border mutual influence in the area of landscape development.

Building the "Bulwark of Kultur" and Reactions to these Efforts

It was much easier for Polish government officials and borderland activist groups to point to how they were progressively overcoming Prussian period standards than to boast of how they were outdoing "work" on the other side of the border. This was, again, because before it became a contested borderland, not as much effort was made by governments to promote politicized "cultural work" in the Industrial District. The drawing of the border spurred a number of building efforts in the O/S Province, which likewise made avant-garde modernism the basic national-regional style on this side of the border. Just as in the Voivodeship, they were reactions to the needs spurred by the partition and not just driven by cross-border politics. The most urgent problem that the tri-city area faced was overcrowding and an exacerbated housing shortage created by the influx of circa 117,000 refugees by 1925.⁶⁵ The tens of thousands of migrants from the eastern part of the region were initially housed in barracks, in recently-built suburban and rural settlements, in barn houses, in already inhabited urban homes, basements, and school buildings. Still in the spring of 1926, close to 6,000 families were still without adequate shelter in the city of Hindenburg alone.⁶⁶ In reaction, the regional government initiated a massive building campaign by the mid-1920s, which included the construction

⁶⁵ Heffner & Lesiuk, "Ekonomiczne," 148.

⁶⁶ RZ.f.H, O/S Grenzbericht für Apr. 1926, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 593, Bd. 2, doc. 165ff.

of 3-4 stories high apartment buildings near cities. According to one government report, 4,800 new apartments were built between 1923 and 1925.⁶⁷ This pragmatic effort also became a cultural statement with the introduction of avant-garde forms based on the influence of “Neue Bauen.” A good example were housing settlements in Hindenburg made up of buildings of 3-4 stories high with flat roofs. These broke with the tradition of building small family houses that dominated before the 1919, and also with traditional architectural forms.⁶⁸

Just as in the Voivodeship, in the Province communication lines and infrastructure had to be adjusted to the national border of 1922. Plans were drafted to shift rail traffic from the once dominant Berlin-Katowice line for express trains, which now lost its meaning after the partition, to an S-Curve that connected Gleiwitz, Beuthen, and Hindenburg with Oppeln, Breslau and Berlin.⁶⁹ New Bus lines (*Omnibusse*) were also installed to facilitate transportation between the highly crowded tri-city area, and also Ratibor to its south, or in other words, parts of the region that became unprecedentedly interwoven as a result of the drawing of the border. Being suddenly turned into an eastern gate into Germany, the tri-city area experienced an unprecedentedly large volume of cross-border train travel after the partition. For example, based on records of ticket sales, over 4.6 million individuals crossed this border by rail in 1923 alone, with 60% going into Poland and 58% in the other direction.⁷⁰ To accommodate this traffic, and also to

⁶⁷ RZf.H O/S Grenzbericht für July 1926, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr 593, Bd. 2, doc. 207ff.

⁶⁸ Joachim Masurczyk, “Wohnungsbau in Oberschlesien,” in: Nikolaus Gussone, ed., *Die Architektur der Weimarer Republik: Ein Blick auf unbeachtete Bauwerke* (Ratingen-Hösel 1992), 28, 77.

⁶⁹ Lesniak, “Verkehrswesen und Bauten des Verkehrs,” in: Gussone, ed., *Die Architektur*, 38. Another example of railway building to this end was the construction of the Mikultschuetz-Brynnek (Mikulczyce-Brynek) junction in 1928. See: Barbara Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Pomiędzy praktyką a utopią: Trójmiasto Bytom-Zabrze-Gliwice jako przykład koncepcji miasta przemysłowego czasów Republiki Weimarskiej* (Katowice, 2003) 49.

⁷⁰ Roland Lesniak, “Verkehrswesen,” 31-32.

facilitate the carrying out of customs inspection, the building planner of Gleiwitz, Karl Schabik, and of Beuthen, Albert Stütz, built new central train stations in their cities, which were finished in 1925 and 1928 respectively.⁷¹ Both of these sizeable structures radiated the Weimar era's latest developments in building technology, particularly the structure in Beuthen, whose flat roof gave this train station building an avant-garde appearance.

All of these projects became subsumed in the pivotal scheme meant to transform the tri-state area into a façade of “*Kultur*,” the so-called “Tri-City Project” (*Dreistadtprojekt*). The latter marked a master plan that the government drafted for urban development in the tri-city area. Introduced to the Landtag by the Building Planner (*Baurat*) of Berlin, Prof. Dr. Henry Gerlach in 1926, this project aimed to combine the municipalities of the tri-city area, namely Hindenburg, Gleiwitz, and Beuthen, into one metropolis, or “city,” as officials referred to it (by the English term). By way of central planning and building, the “Tri-City” was to form one legal, administrative, as well as communicational and municipal whole. Moreover, each of the three municipal areas was to specialize in one aspect of this wholesome unit, such as serving as centers of high culture or government. Like the landscape development efforts on the Polish side, this project was driven foremost by logistical factors, and was then turned into a symbolic weapon in the cross-border “cold war.” One of its main purposes was to promote a centrally-planned, collaborative, and concerted effort for solving all the social and logistical problems created by the drawing of the border. One of the most urgent of these was that the new national frontier had blocked the natural path of urban expansion in the tri-city area, which was eastwards before 1922. Now, cities like Beuthen, which was cut

⁷¹ Ibid., 31-2, 37, 39-41.

off by the new frontier with Poland on three of its eastern flanks, lost their surrounding provinces and thus their ability to expand. Yet, population growth and the influx of migrants and refugees created an urgent need for this urban expansion. The “Tri-City Project” offered a unified and collaborative effort to solve the problems wrought by the national partition in an area that was among the worst affected by them.⁷²

There was also a politically symbolic motive for this project. The idea of creating a megalopolis on the German side of the border was in part a reaction to the building of a large cultural, administrative, and communicative center of “Polish Silesia” on the part of their eastern neighbors. Indeed, the “Tri-City” was to serve as an answer to “Greater Katowice” on the German side of the border, with Gleiwitz serving as a center of government and administration, and Beuthen as that of culture and learning. According to the expert scholar of the “Tri-City Project,” Barbara Szczypka-Gwiazda,

the project to create a general plan to develop the tri-city was not just to be a pragmatic endeavor, but also a prestigious one. A general belief dominated that as border cities Bytom, Zabrze, and Gliwice, have to demonstrate a greater economic and cultural status so as to radiate the strength of Germandom vis-à-vis the territories that passed to Poland.⁷³

Apart from Gerlach, other drafters of this project, including the architects Max Berg and Martin Machler, made this idea explicit.⁷⁴ Just as their Polish counterparts in Katowice, German cultural activists saw in the building necessity an opportunity to turn the border area into a politically symbolic façade for the nation.

⁷² Studies of the “Tri-City Project” include: the most extensive, Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Pomiędzy*; same author, „Trojmiasto Bytom-Zabrze-Gliwice jako przykład nowej koncepcji urbanistycznej,” in: Ewa Chojecka, ed., *Sztuka Gornego Slaska na przecieciu drog europejskich i regionalnych*, (Katowice: Muzeum Slaskie, 1999) 267-79; Stephanie Hoffmann, “Stadtplanung in O/S am Beispiel der Städte Beuthen, Gleiwitz, und Hindenburg,” in: Gussone, ed. *Die Architektur*, 10-28.

⁷³ Quoted from: Barbara Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Pomiędzy*, 43.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

Ultimately, most of the aspects of the “Tri-City Project” remained on paper. Opposition to the project by some administrators, economic crises, and funding shortages all limited its realization. Once the Nazis were in power in 1932, they rejected the project due to the avant-garde architectural forms, including the perturbing influence of the “Neue Bauen” school, that were to be the basis of symbolic architecture in this megalopolis.⁷⁵ There were nevertheless some aspects of the project that were realized, which were relevant to the trans-border cultural “cold war.” The most significant of the various symbolic structures that were built included the “Haus Oberschlesien” (House Upper Silesia) building in Gleiwitz, built by the Breslau architectural firm Gaze and Böttcher between 1923 and 1928 near the center of the city. This fancy hotel, assembly and shopping center, café and restaurant, was part of Schabik’s project of urban redevelopment that also included the building of the train station, an airport, and some unrealized projects, such as skyscrapers and a new administrative center for the planned for metropolis. “Haus Oberschlesien” became one of the most epitomic symbols of interwar period building in the Province due to its monumental size, which also made it comparable with the VGB. However, unlike the latter, its forms remained very simple and non-decorative, a token of its avant-garde character.⁷⁶

Apart from such monumental structures, the construction of fancy school buildings at the border was a favored means to show off one’s “advanced civilization.” On the German side these started to be built during mid and late twenties, including the Gewerbliche Berufsschule in Hindenburg, designed by Dominikus Böhm, the Staatlich Katholisches Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium in Gleiwitz, by Ing Kluge, and the

⁷⁵ Szczypka-Gwiazda, „Trojmiasto,” 279.

⁷⁶ Leśniak, „Verkehrswesen,” 32, 39-41; Masurczyk, „Wohnungsbau,” 77.

Eichendorffschule in Gleiwitz, by Schabik, among several others. Here the dominant styles and elements tended to be expressionist brick building, Jugendstil décor, as well as elements of art deco.⁷⁷ Observing the proliferation of these “palaces of Kultur” at the border, the Poles took to issue an answer to them with the building of their own fancy elementary schools and gymnasia. According to Karl Sczodrok, during the mid-1930s, Polish officials promoted the “systematic construction of true ‘school palaces’” inside their own border cities. He found this disproportionately intensive effort to construct school buildings in the Voivodeship to be interesting, considering that other provinces of Poland, which still did not even have full literacy rates, remained short-changed in this regard.⁷⁸ But then again, unlike in other parts of Poland the erection of schools at the border was an effort fundamentally driven by revanchist politics. According to one report, in August of 1936, seven elementary school buildings were being built, another twelve were to be completed by the end of the year, and the construction of an additional eleven in the near future had already been planned for.⁷⁹ In the words of a local school curator, Kupczyński, who presided over the festidious opening of the elementary school at the border village of Kończyce (Kunzendorf, east of Hindenburg) as Grażyński’s representative: “the border schools in the Voivodeship Silesia have to serve as guardians of Polish *kultura* [culture] and national ideals.”⁸⁰

Just as the 1931 “Third of May” spectacle did so in the Voivodeship, the Plebiscite Festivity of that year in West O/S served as an occasion to show off the latest “accomplishments” in building that had taken place in the O/S Province. The staging of a

⁷⁷ Ilka Minneker, “Schulbauten in Oberschlesien,” in: Gussone, ed. *Die Architektur*, 86-88, 92, 99.

⁷⁸ Sczodrok, To: NOFG, Tgb. Nr. 2325/36, page 2., 15 Dec. 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

⁷⁹ Sczodrok, To: NOFG, Tgb. Nr. 1549/36, p. 2, 18 August 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

⁸⁰ Quoted from: same as note 77.

nation-wide event with the German Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, at the border was to serve also as an occasion to flaunt some of the aspects of the “Tri-City Project” that had been realized to the international community. One of the most important in this regard was the recently-developed new central plaza of Beuthen, called Moltkeplatz. Here the most symbolically-important work of construction was a modern structure designed by the architects, Albert Stürz and H. Hatler, and completed by 1930 (see image 3.9). The strictly functional forms, intensive use of glass on the building’s surface, and its blunt and the tall columns elevating part of its façade, gave the structure a truly innovative appearance. It was not just the avant-garde character of this building that attracted the interest of elites on the eastern side of the border. In addition to headquartering the Savings Bank (*Sparkasse*) on its ground floor, local authorities also gave the building’s remaining three stories over to the German Upper Silesian regional museum, the “O/S Landesmuseum,” so that the latter could expand its size and also sport a symbolic appearance.⁸¹ This made Polish cultural officials eager to also give their competing regional museum, the “Silesian Museum,” an attractive building of its own.

Their envy in this respect was further enticed on 24 October 1932, the day that German officials celebrated the public opening of their Heimat-museum in its new building on Moltkeplatz. Due to the importance of this institution in the cross-border revanchist contest of cultural politics, the regional governor at the time, the Oberpräsident Hans Lukasek, presided over the event, while the current German Chancellor, Franz

⁸¹ On this structure’s representation in the Plebiscitefeier of 1931: i. “Herr, mach uns einig und frei,” O/S Wanderer (OSW) 69 (24 Mar 1931), n.n.; ii. “Wie O/S die Abstimmung gedenkt: Fahnen mit Trauerflor,” OSW 68 (22 Mar. 1931); iii. “Grüsse aus dem Reich: ganz Deutschland gedenkt des Abstimmungstages,” OSW 68 (22 Mar. 1931); v. “Innenminister Severing bei der Hindenburger Kundgebung,” OSW 70 (25 Mar. 1931). On this structure see: Chojecka, *Sztuka*, 359; Sczypka-Gwiazda, “Trójmiasto,” 265; Jan Drabina, *Historia Bytomia 1254-2000* (Bytom, 2000) 202.

von Papen, had sent his words of support via telegram. One of the speakers at this ceremony, the archeology professor from the University of Hamburg, the Freiherr von Richthofen, a specialist of excavations in Upper Silesia, declared that the Landesmuseum must serve as “weapons of serious research [Wissenschaft] to defend against claims to the ancient Slavic or ancient Polish character of the Silesian region [made by Polish academics]”.⁸²

The academic community in the O/S Province had been under pressure particularly from German nationalists (German National Party, DNVP) to step up the effort to counter their eastern neighbors’ research and public promotion of it. Hans Schadewaldt’s right-wing Beuthen daily, *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost*, criticized the local academic community and the regional government for investing too little finances and energy into this “frontier-political (*Grenzpolitisch*) struggle.” Using a language that became a staple of Nazi era discourse, the nationalists argued that the “Silesian Museum” was realizing its “cultural-political” (*kulturpolitisch*) mission of promoting “cultural propaganda” (*Kulturpropaganda*) better than was the Landesmuseum. And this, they argued, was because Grażyński was investing more into this effort.⁸³

This positive review of their “cultural work” by their German rivals only served to further encourage Grażyński’s cultural-political officials in their endeavors. Even though they were not meant to compliment Polish efforts directly, officials interpreted the statements of the German nationalists as “a commending hymn of our wonderfully organized propaganda work at the Museum in Katowice, which all these guardians of the

⁸² Quoted from: “Oberschlesien ist urdeutsches Land,” ODM 25 Oct. 1932, in: AAN 482 (Konsulat RP w Opolu)/183, doc. 482.

⁸³ This in: “Hilfe für das Beuthener Museum,” ODM (30 IV 1932), in: Kon. RP. Op., to: MSZ (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych), May 1932, AAN 482/183, doc. 17ff. Also: source of note 79.

‘endangered’ German Kultur are well aware of.”⁸⁴ Moreover, they in turn expressed admiration for their neighbor’s work, and demanded greater efforts to counter it. Some two years after opening of the extended Heimat-museum, Dietz D’Arma, the head of the Silesian Union of Polish Architects announced the building of a separate building for an expanded “Silesian Museum” in the important national periodical, *Architecture and Building*. He made no secret of what the motivation for this project was: in his words, “I have to admit, in the last years in Śląsk Opolski, the Germans succeeded in building a grandiose regional museum in Beuthen.”⁸⁵ To outdo their competitor, the building’s architect, Karol Schayer, designed the structure to have, above all, enormous size (80,000 cubic meters, or 104,636 cubic yards, in area), but also likewise a futuristic avant-garde form that raised wonders throughout Poland. This building of cubic shapes, glass walls, and very limited décor, was erected across the street from the northern flank of the VGB. Nearly completed in 1939, it awaited its own grandiose opening as a trophy to the twenty-first anniversary of interwar Poland’s founding (11 Nov. 1939)—indeed, an occasion that never materialized (see **image 3.10 & 3.11**).⁸⁶

The building of the “Polish Silesian Museum” marked the last politically significant and monumental structure of Grażyński’s architectural program of “regionalism.” On the other side of the border, the Nazi regime took up the mission of “Kulturarbeit” from the mid-1930s on. Their projects included the continued building of housing complexes, an Autobahn that reached the Industrial District, the so-called

⁸⁴ Quoted from: Kon. RP. Op., to: MSZ..., doc. 17ff

⁸⁵ Quoted from: Leon Dietz d’Arma, “Nowe Gmachy Muzealne: Muzeum Śląskie w Katowicach,” in: *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2 (1936): 68, and 66-7.

⁸⁶ On the structure of the “Muzeum Śląski,” see: *ibid.*, 66-8; Dorota Glazek, “Budynek Muzeum Śląskiego na tle architektury europejskiej lat trzydziestych XX wieku,” in: *Roczniki Katowic*, (1980): 113-12; Barbara Szczypka Gwiazda, *Nieznane...*, 30-1; Chojecka, *Sztuka*, 332-334.

“Adolf-Hitler Canal” (after 1945, Gliwice Canal), a waterway connecting Gleiwitz with and the Oder River, the so-called “Eichenkamp,” an ideologically based rural settlement for the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) on the outskirts of Gleiwitz, and a new and stronger, radio frequency tower in this city, which became the site of the infamous staging of a “Polish invasion” on 31 August 1939. Nevertheless, propaganda officials did not direct this building effort as much against Poland as they used it to demonstrate the “superiority” of National Socialism to the preceding governments of the O/S Province.⁸⁷ In fact, Polish officials only accused two Nazi projects of projecting “anti-Polish” symbolism, both opened to public use in May of 1938. The first was the famous Reich Memorial (*Reichsehrenmal*) atop the Mount of St. Anne, consisting of a fortress-like “Mausoleum to the Fallen Selbstschutz” built atop a rock of high elevation and an Amphitheater, the largest in the Third Reich, capable of seating circa 120,000 at the former’s base (see **image 3.13 & 3.14**).⁸⁸ The second was a 40 meter (131 feet) high Water-Tower erected right near the border at Ratibor (Ratiborz) that radiated the slogan “Deutschland über Alles” just below its roof to the people living on the Polish side (**image 3.12**). These politically-symbolic structures marked the regime’s answer to an array of plaques, statues, and even a 100 meter-high hill at the border, that Grażyński had been erecting in honor of the Polish insurgents all the way to the last months before the war.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Source for these projects and their representation: Provinzialverwaltung von O/S, Hrsg., *Kulturarbeit in Oberschlesien: Ein Jahrbuch* (1935): 19, 115, 136, 143. And same, (1937), 125. On the Eichenkamp, see: Chojecka, *Sztuka*, 380.

⁸⁸ See: Gunnar Brands, “From World War I Cementaries to the Nazi ‘Fortresses of the Dead:’ Architecture, Heroic Landscape, and the Quest for National Identity in Germany,” in: Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, ed. *Places of Commemoration: Search Identity and Landscape Design*, (Washington D.C., 2001), 240-2.

⁸⁹ Gesamtüberblick über die poln. Presse 41 (22 Nov. 1935); ii. D. Gen. Kons. Katt., To: die Deutsche Botschaft Warschau, 30 Dez. 1935; iii. “Ausland: Enthüllung eines Denkmals für den Lehrer Vincent Janas in Ruda,” Ill. Kuryer Codz. nr 315 vom 13.11.35; all from: Politische Archiv des Auswärtiger Amtes (hereafter, PA-AA) Warschau 81, n.p. On the water tower: *Ratibor: die Stadt an zwei*

The manifestation of the cross-border revanchist contest in urban and symbolic landscape development marked a quest by each side to demonstrate the marvel and advancement of their “culture” in this contested border area. Although the building efforts on each side were often not initiated out of strictly political purposes, each side represented them as part and parcel of promoting *contemporary* cultural cultivation and progress in this borderland. But this was only one side of the revanchist culture of representing one’s peoples and their “work” as historically rooted in the region. I now turn to address the second one in this respect: the politicization of local folk-culture.

Folklore and the Search for Roots in an Uprooted Society

The search on the part of cultural-political authorities from both parts of the region for symbolic local roots to buttress their revanchist trinity gave political value to folk-culture and historical heritage. In a propensity to demonstrate that the Industrial District “*was, is, and remained* a German/Polish territory,” governments and political activists not only strove to modernize local cultures and landscapes, but also to traditionalize them along the paths of historical folklore. Proliferating avant-garde and futuristic forms on the one hand, and the traditional and historic ones on the other, were two sides of the same coin of this revanchist political culture—and indeed, the larger projects of nation-building of which it was a part. Scholarship on the nationalization of folklore has thus mostly focused on the political nature of academic work in History,

Grenzen: Der Grenzlandturm (May 1938), 11. The tower’s height was also extenuated by its standing on a hill 250 m. above sea level.

Archeology, Art History, and Ethnography (“*Volkskunde*”).⁹⁰ In this section, I examine not so much what was written for the scholarly community, but what was promoted as “official folklore” to the masses in multimedia forms: including popular publications, museum exhibitions, films and radio programs, tourist sites, and on-stage performances.

Archeology

Before this territory became a contested borderland, hardly anyone took as much of an interest in digging for anything else in the Industrial District other than coal and other industrial minerals. Joining mining workers, Polish and German archeologists also took to digging here after the partition, hoping to find ancient roots of “their national culture.” One of the functions of the Heimat-museums was to popularize the “fruits” of this academic effort.⁹¹ The enlarged German Landesmuseum in Beuthen displayed a well-developed and extensive section on ancient history. One entire room of the museum’s standing exhibit was devoted to the “Germanic epoch” of the era of Vandal settlement. The display featured the various digs carried out by archeologists in the Industrial District, as well as some of the discovered relics of materials such as weapons and jewelry, figures dressed as members of Germanic tribes, and models of their settlements. Though to the eye of the average spectator they may have appeared as just artifacts for personal amusement and intellectual enrichment, these were *also* symbols of revanchist propaganda. Museum curators crafted the exhibit in such a way that it

⁹⁰ For example, recent scholarship on the political work of Polish *Myśl Zachodnia* (Westgedanke), and German *Ostforschung* on history includes: Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf, 2005); Markus Kroska, *Für ein Polen an Oder und Ostsee: Zygmunt Wojciechowski als Historiker und Publizist* (Osnabrück, 2003). On the political work concerning other disciplines, including folk culture, see the essays on Sprachwissenschaft, Volkskunde, and Kunstgeschichte in: Jörg Hackmann & Rudolf Jaworski, Jan M. Piskorski, ed., *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik* (Osnabrück & Poznań, 2002).

⁹¹ On the political role of Heimatmuseums: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, “Imaginative,” in Beyrau, Beer, Rauh, eds., *Deutschsein*, 219-223.

promoted the following assertion: that “for a long period of time Oberschlesien was an ancient Germanic settlement ground and at the time possessed a high-standing culture.”⁹²

By the early 1930s, Tadeusz Dobrowolski was working on expanding the ancient historical section of the rivaling regional museum in Katowice. Unlike those of their German counterparts focusing on “Germanic settlements,” the work of Polish archeologists concentrated instead on the period of Lusatian culture (*kultura Łużycka/Lausitzer Kultur*, 1500 to 400 BC), representing the latter as inherently proto-Polish and fundamental in laying *the cultural base* for the region. According to one government-endorsed tour guide that boasted the “discoveries” of these digs,

Germanic traits (*szczyepy*) were only limited to the period from the first century to the middle of the fourth A.D. And even then, they did not represent [the ways and traditions] of the Upper Silesian peoples, but rather only of the dominating classes, which, thanks to their skillful organization and more advanced weapons, dominated a more populous Slavic local population which had been settled here for decades.⁹³

This assertion was one manifestation of a larger political myth depicting German ways as superficial impositions on a region whose rooted culture was inherently Slavic and proto-Polish.

German scholars in turn disputed these myths of a fundamentally “Slavic” and thus “Polish” Upper Silesia by questioning their eastern neighbors’ posited connections between the ancient Slavs of the region and Poland. Already during the Landesmuseum’s ceremonial opening, the archeologist von Richthofen took the opportunity to attack Polish scholarship: “our archeological digs clearly demonstrate that old-Germanic Kultur [dominated] in Upper Silesian history,” a “fact” that Polish museums and scholars

⁹² Quoted from: “Eine neue Oberschlesische Kulturstätte,” *O/S Volksstimme*, 22 Oct 193, in: AAN 482/183, doc. 32.

⁹³ Quoted from: Mieczysław Orłowicz, *Ilustrowany Przewodnik po Województwie Śląskiem*, (Warszawa-Lwów, 1924), 7, 8-12. See also: Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy*, 54.

“refuse to come to face with.” Moreover, he also used the occasion to underscore the “German thesis” on the pre-history of this borderland: that “the oldest Slavic settlers, and Upper Silesia in its millennia-long cultural development, were only tied with Poland politically for a very short and transitory time span.”⁹⁴ In line with this principle, particularly during the Nazi era, German academics disputed the Polish thesis that “Lusatian culture” was an early ancestor to Polish nationality, arguing that it actually belonged to the “Illyrians” and thus an “indo-Germanic” peoples.⁹⁵ Working in the revanchist tradition of Ostforschung, the local Heimatkundler in the Province received instructions from the regime’s cultural leaders to aim towards undermining all ties that Polish scholars established with the cultural heritage of Upper Silesia, and in turn, to demonstrate that this region was inherently interwoven with German/Germanic “Kultur.”⁹⁶

Folk Architecture and the Redressing of Places of National Identity

Apart from the field of archeology, a heated intellectual debate raged over the “national character” of historical folk art. Dobrowolski and the academic consortium of “western Research” (*myśl zachodnia*/*Westforschung*), the Polish counterpart to “Ostforschung,” geared their scholarship towards demonstrating the affinity of one of the most important tokens of Upper Silesian rural heritage: wooden architectural structures, churches in particular. There were about 200 of these structures in the whole region, including 85 in the Province and 50 in the Voivodeship. Most of these structures

⁹⁴ Quoted from: “Oberschlesien ist urdeutsches Land,” ODM 25 Oct. 1932, in: AAN 482/183, doc. 482.

⁹⁵ Gerhard Sappok, Joh. Patritz, und Hermann Weidhaas, et al., eds. *Oberschlesiens Großstädte: ein Führer und Handbuch für Fremde und Einheimische*, (Leipzig, 1943) 5-6.

⁹⁶ Regierungsassessor Dr. Gerber, To: Herrn Reichs- u. Preuss Min. d. Inn., Betr. Beihilfe für die durch Führung der kunstwissenschaftlichen Arbeiten in O/S, n.d. (circa 1935), APK 117 (Oberpräsidium Kattowitz)/113, doc. 1.

stemmed from the era between the sixteenth- and eighteenth-centuries, while some were older.⁹⁷ The vast majority had a tower and a triangular, downward-sloping roof.

Recognizing these wooden structures to be a token of Upper Silesian “autochthonous (*autochtońskie/bodenständige*) art,” both Polish and German scholars claimed them as an inherent part of their own nation’s heritage. As such, both sides treated these treasures as part of the *material proof* that the region was historically “Polish/German,” thus turning them into pawns of revanchist politics.⁹⁸

The debate on these relics did not remain within the ivory tower, but was popularized to the masses in various forms. During the “Silesian Propaganda Week” of 1931, ZOKZ agents propagated the following:

Wooden buildings became the highest expression of Polish folk art in Silesia, which came to fruition in the architecture of the old wooden churches... Their stylistic structures wholesomely demonstrate Polish heritage. In addition to their building style, as well as the most variant details, especially the fragile little towers, so distinct in their local character, all differ entirely from German wooden building, and rather are analogous to the wooden architecture of Poland and especially the wooden type of churches of Podhale [in southern Galicia].⁹⁹

In accordance with their assertion that all of Upper Silesia was “Polish to the Oder River,” this statement referred to all the wooden churches of the region. This manner of representing these treasures did not change on the part of Polish cultural elites throughout the 1930s. For example, a government sponsored tour guide published in 1937 stated the following: “erected by forefathers of Polish descent, these [wooden] churches are the

⁹⁷ O/S Grenzbericht for Dec. 1927 & Jan 1928, GStA PK Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 2, doc. 64ff.

⁹⁸ Scholarly/pop-scholarly works on these included: i. the most important Polish one, Tadeusz Dobrolowski, Konserwator Śląski, *Sztuka Województwa Śląskiego: L’art en Silesie Polonaise*, (Katowice: Muzeum Śląski, 1933) 84-110; ii. Herbert Dienwiebel, *Oberschlesische Schrotholzkirchen*, (Breslau: Heydebrand Verlag, 1938).

⁹⁹ Olga Ręgorowicz, “Polskość kultury śląskiej,” in: *Śląsk: Przeszłość*, 49.

same as those in Małopolska [the Cracow region], constituting typical examples of ancient Polish [staropolskie] woodcraft.”¹⁰⁰

The discourse of German cultural societies on these icons of “autochthonic art” varied during the Weimar and Nazi eras. In his essay on folk culture published in the Kulturbund’s 1932 collection of Heimatkunde of “Ostoberschlesien,” Edgar Boidol argued that the Poles were wrong in their assertion that these churches were of “purely Slavic character.” Here he noted that similar structures could be found in the Scandinavia region and also in Hungary, that a number of disparate academic theories on their ethnic origins had been developed, and also that “a thousand years ago, their area of expansion [Verbreitungsgebiet] reached all the way to west Germany.”¹⁰¹ In other words, even as these scholars challenged Polish assertions, they still did not insist that these structures were of “pure German origin.”

This changed once these Heimatkunde institutes were subsumed into the NOFG. In the late 1930s, the BDO began to stage annual “All-Silesian Cultural Weeks” (*Kulturwoche des Gesamtschlesischen Raumes*)—a counterpart to the “Silesian Propaganda Months” promoted by the ZOKZ (PZZ) throughout the thirties.¹⁰² The last of these, for which the best records remained, was held in the Ostforschung academic center of Lower Silesia, the city of Breslau (Wrocław). According to the propaganda that was

¹⁰⁰ Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy*, 78.

¹⁰¹ Here I am referring to the Kulturbund belonging to the German minority of the Voivodeship, headed by Viktor Kauder. Quoted from: Viktor Kauder, ed., *Das Deutschtum in Polnisch-Schlesien: Ein Handbuch über Land und Leute*, (Leipzig, Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1932) 153-4.

¹⁰² Each year these were held in a different location. For example, in 1937, they were held in the tri-city area: Fritz Bracht, “Schlesische Gau-Kulturwoche: Oberschlesiens Kulturbekenntnis zum Deutschtum,” ODM 88 (1 Apr. 1937), n.n. The following year, they were held in Opava (Troppau) in the “Sudetenland” area of the (Greater) Silesian region, and in 1939 in Breslau. The main purpose of these events was to forge a “Greater Silesian” (Großschlesien/Gesamtschlesische Raum) identity as a basis of promoting the all-German character of all parts of this region, including those belonging to Poland and Czechoslovakia. For BDO coordination of these events: Kons. Op., To: Polska Ambasada w Berlinie, 23 Kw. 1937, dot. BDO., AAN, 474/376, doc. 96

disseminated in the press and in the form of public lectures on this occasion these “last wooden churches in Silesia,” most of them remaining in “Ostoberschlesien,” “constitute the single remaining trait of Germanic architecture [Baukunst].” Furthermore, the Ostforscher asserted that whereas the Vikings knew how to build these churches, “they mastered this technology from the Eastern Germans,” since “no other Volk had as great of a mastery of the art of wooden architecture as our Germanic ancestors.”¹⁰³

As part of these propaganda circuses (the *Kulturwoche*), the academic discourse on these churches served the Nazi regime’s propensity of forging a “Greater Silesian (Pan-Silesian)” —as opposed to just an “Upper Silesian”—national-regionalism, and to represent “Greater Silesia” as part of the “German East.” The symbols and discourse of this “Pan-Silesian” identity meant to underline the eternal “German” character of this larger region, in particular its Czechoslovak (“Sudetenland”), and Polish areas, and to accentuate the call for their “return” to the Reich.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, this new pan-regional identity was also meant to put an end to Upper Silesian particularism, associated with the Catholic centrist government, with “pro-Polish” tendencies, and with “separatism.”¹⁰⁵

The conflict over wooden churches was not just carried out in the print media. In the Voivodeship, these icons were particularly important as symbols of the “Polish” roots of an age-old Prussian region. In this sense, their public promotion was part and parcel of the larger program of giving the territory a “Polish face.” During the Grażyński era this “Polonization” involved the removal of official symbols of “Germandom” and replacing

¹⁰³ Quoted from: “Die letzten Holzkirchen in Schlesien: die einzigen noch erhaltenen Spuren germanischen Baukunst,” *Schlesische Tageszeitung* 13 Feb. 1939.

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, in 1939 the “Kulturwoche” revanchist event was geared specifically against Poland, as the Sudetenland had already been annexed. This evident from: Kon. Gen. RP Wrocław (Breslau), to: MSZ, dot. “Niemiecka akcja kulturowa na wschodzie,” AAN 482/31, doc. 237.

¹⁰⁵ OP, Abschrift betr. “Gegenwärtige Lage der Deutsche Kulturarbeit in West O/S,” 23 Apr. 1936, PA-AA Kattowitz, 63 A (Politik, Bd. 10), doc. 12.

them with those of national-regional and national culture. In accordance with this, by the mid-1930s, Polish authorities began to physically move some of the wooden churches from their rural locations into symbolically-important industrial urban areas that lacked these historical landmarks. They transported one sixteenth-century wooden building of this type from the village of Syrin in the suburb of Rybnik to the South Park in Katowice, where it stood near the place of a once standing Bismarck Tower that municipal authorities had torn down (see **image 3.15**). Doing so was part and parcel of making this small green area in an otherwise highly-developed and industrialized city into a site of “Polish-Silesian” autochthonic rootedness. While Katowice’s tall, monumental, and glass-covered, buildings gave the city a cosmopolitan and futuristic flavor, the imported medieval church gave it the function of a primordial contrast in this regard. Embedded in one of Katowice’s few wide green lawns, the wooden church was a symbol of the metropolis’ medieval “Polish” roots, thus echoing the city’s (and also entire region’s) timeless national character in this regard.¹⁰⁶

Lying right at the border, and of an urban size that was second only to its neighboring Katowice, Królewska Huta (Königshütte) was another place to where cultural officials moved transplanted a wooden church. In 1936, they transported that of St. Lawrence from the village of Knurów (Knurow) on the outskirts of Katowice to the municipal park of Królewska Huta.¹⁰⁷ This move was part and parcel of a more long-ranging effort to “Polonize” this city’s symbolic landscape, which in turn, was not least

¹⁰⁶ On this: i. Sappok, Patritz, Weidhaas, et al., eds. *Oberschlesiens*, 126; ii. “Die letzten.” See also: Szczypka-Gwiazda, *Pomiędzy...*, 140-1.

¹⁰⁷ Szodrok, To: NOFG, Bericht 1, March 1936, BArch, 153/1302, n.p.

aimed at breaking the strong influence of the German minority there.¹⁰⁸ Giving the municipality the more “Polish-sounding” name of Chorzow in 1934, as opposed to its previous mere Polish translation of the name of Königshütte (Królewska Huta – or Royal Iron Works) that it carried since Prussian times, marked one milestones of this symbolic politics of nationalization. Another was the work done during the mid-1930s on the municipal park, “Reden Hill,” named after the German noble and industrial entrepreneur from Hanover, (Graf) Friedrich Wilhelm von Reden (1752-1815), one of the earliest founders of Upper Silesian industry. The placement of the wooden church of St. Lawrence there was only one aspect of how cultural workers turned this site of local and national identity from the Prussian period into that of “Polish-Silesianism.”¹⁰⁹

Due to his historical legacy and importance as father of this city, for most of the interwar period Graf Reden remained a supranational figure even in the official historical memory. Thanks to this, his statue atop this hill had also escaped destruction, while a counterpart of it in the neighboring city of Tarnowskie Góry (Tarnowitz) was detonated in mid-November 1930 by Polish nationalists.¹¹⁰ Keeping a close eye on this strong city of German minority influence, German Heimatkunde officials grew fearful that the transportation of the wooden church from Knurów and placement on “Reden Hill” would mean that soon this important work of the famous nineteenth-century Upper Silesian

¹⁰⁸ On the Germans in this city see: Bernard Linek, “Die Marginalisierung der deutschen Minderheit im polnischen Oberschlesien während der Zwischenkriegszeit: das Beispiel Königshütte/Królewska Huta (Chorzów),” in: Dietrich Beyrau Mathias Beer, Cornelia Rauh, ed., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950* (Essen 2009), 193-5; Jan Drabina, *Historia Chorzowa, 1257-2000*, (Chorzów, 2007) 153-174.

¹⁰⁹ On placement of church in the park: Szodrok, to: NOFG, Bericht 1/p.2, Apr. 1936, BArch, 153/302, n.p.

¹¹⁰ RZ.f.HD., O/S Grenzbericht, Oct-Dec. 1930, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, doc. 208-9.

sculptor, Theodor Kalide, would be destroyed or removed.¹¹¹ Their fears were not immediately realized. First, in late 1936, the transplanting of the church of St. Lawrence from its original location to “Reden Hill” was accompanied with the “Polonization” of the park’s name to “Liberation Hill”—an overture to the city’s “overcoming” of “Prussian captivity” after 1922.¹¹² Next, as was the case of the wooden church in Katowice’s South Park, cultural officials strove to promote this work of “autochthonic art” and its green surroundings as a tourist site. Initially official tour guides publicized the Church of St. Lawrence as one of the sightseeing-worthy icons of this area, along with the “monument to Reden” standing near it.¹¹³ However, with time local nationalists started to demand that authorities remove this “German” competitor to the symbol of city’s “ancient Polish character,” the wooden church. Finally, by July of 1939, municipal authorities gave in: whereas in years prior they recognized the industrial entrepreneur’s achievements as supra-national in character, now they asserted that although he had “paid a great service to creating industry in the area, Reden was also a Germanizer.” They thus ordered his statue to be removed and destroyed, thereby completing the park’s interwar-period long “Polonization” process.¹¹⁴ Like that of “South Park,” the case of “Reden Hill” demonstrates how the importation of folk architecture manifested the constructive aspect of an inherently two-step (addition and removal) process of the nationalization of

¹¹¹ On Graf Reden Hotel: i. Deutsche Konsulat Katt, to Auswärtigen Amt (AA) Berlin, Betr. Hotel Graf Reden in KH, 11 May 1937, PA-AA, Kattowitz (64 A, Bd. 13), n.p.; ii. Policja Województwa Śląskiego, Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne, Nr. 1, na Styczeń 1930, 8 Feb. 1930, APK. 27/I/569, doc. 21; iii. Szczodrok, to: NOFG, Bericht 1/p.2..., n.p.

¹¹² See: Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy*, 151.

¹¹³ See tour and popular scholarly guides from 1936 and 1937: i. *ibid.*, 151; ii. Łakomy, *Ilustrowana*, 81.

¹¹⁴ Quoted and drawn from: Zespół Stowarzyszeń Polskich w Chorzowie, To: Marszałek Sejmu Śląskiego i prezydent Miasta Karol Grzesik, 30 June 1939, APK 646 (Akta Miasta Królewskiej Huty)/2712, doc. 3-4. On destruction of statue: “Königshütte: Wahrzeichen von Polen zerstört: das letzte Denkmal ein Opfer polnischen Hassausbrüche,” ODM (19 July 1939): n.n.

the landscape. This sort of manipulation of the folklore was even more of an issue of cross-border contention with regard to songs, dialects, and costumes, issues that I discuss next in respective order.

Folk Songs and Dialects:

The development of an “Archive for Upper Silesian Folk Songs” (*O/S Volksliederarchiv*) in Beuthen was one of the long-standing pet projects of the ethnographer and folklorist, Alfons Perlick. Initiated in 1928 by the “Union of O/S Heimatkunde,” this project marked the collaboration of Beuthen’s Landesmuseum with its Pedagogical academy, the two institutions for which this Heimatkundler (Perlick) worked. To start the project off, Perlick sent out a circular to the public asking for voluntary contributions of rare songs that only locals would have known of to the archive. The results of this effort of “folksong preservation” (*Volksliedpflege*), as it was officially called, was the collection of 1,500 German and 300 Polish songs from urban areas as well as the remote countryside during the first year.¹¹⁵ Not only was this project geared towards putting this locally rooted oral culture into writing for the first time, but was also about building a repository of primarily *linguistically German* Heimat songs, which could then be used to represent “Upper Silesian folksongs” as “German national heritage.”¹¹⁶

Like that of many Heimatkundler, Perlick’s *modus operandi* during the Weimar era differed to some extent from that of the Nazi era. A year after he opened his folk song

¹¹⁵ From: i. Kon. Op., to: MSZ, dot. “Momenty germanizacyjne w niemieckich instytucjach kulturalno-naukowych, archiwum pieśni ludowych na Górnym Śląsku niemieckim,” 13 Mar 1929, AAN 482/183, doc. 6; ii. Kon. Op., to: Województwo Śląskie, same, doc. 1.

¹¹⁶ See: Felicita Drobek, “Alfons Perlick jako badacz folkloru niemieckiego w regionie Bytomskim,” in: Teresa Smolińska & Jerzy Pośpiech, eds., *Z Dziejów i Dorobku Folklorystyki Śląskiej (do 1939 r.)*, (Opole 2002) 91-107.

archive, the Polish Consulate in Beuthen accused him of *outright* “translating old Polish folksongs into German.”¹¹⁷ Perlick himself admitted to have been doing so. In 1932, he published a statement pointing out that he was working on editing not only German but also Slavic- and Polish-language-based folksongs and “promoting them in proper form and beauty in our language [German].”¹¹⁸ Even as he stated that German folksongs were much more plentiful and richer than Polish/Slavic ones, he still admitted to the existence of the latter, emphasizing that Upper Silesia was a bilingual region. Once the Nazis took power and subjected the “Union of O/S Heimatkunde” to their totalitarian-minded standardization measures (“*Gleichschaltung*”), this renowned regional folklorist was forced to conform to the new policies of linguistic and cultural German-based standardization. Whereas while the KVP governed the region, bilingualism marked the official conception of its cultural character, once the Nazis took over, the Ostforschung consortium posited a rigid linguistic border between high Polish and what it called the regional “Mundart” (dialect, or literally “way of speaking”) in addition to “Oberschlesisch” and “Wasserpolnisch.”¹¹⁹ In an effort to representatively “Germanize” the local dialects, the Ostforscher argued that whereas incomprehensible to the ear of the high Polish speaker, the “Mundart” could be understood by high Germans.¹²⁰ Alfons Perlick’s work during the Nazi era included putting together an illustrated volume of collected German language local folk music. Published in 1938 under the title of *O/S*

¹¹⁷ Same as note 114.

¹¹⁸ Quoted from: Alfons Perlick, “Oberschlesische Volkskunde,” in: Kauder, ed., *Das Deutschtum*, 107.

¹¹⁹ On the political use of „Wasserpolnisch” and its counterpart, „Gwara Śląska,” see: Tomasz Kamusella, *Schlonska mowa: Język, Górny Śląsk i nacjonalizm*, (Zabrze 2005) 22.

¹²⁰ F. Flott, ed., *Heimatland O/S: Ein Heimatbuch f. die ober Schlesische Jugend*, (Breslau: BDO, Landesgruppe Schlesien, 1937) 51.

Folksongs, this volume conformed to the official spirit of “Germanizing” the local language and erasing the memory of Slavic/high Polish influence in the region.¹²¹

From the time the “Folksong Archive” was first established, Polish officials called it “a threat to Polishness.” According to the Polish consular officials, the project of recording local oral culture “raises fear that these [songs] will see the light of day in German [published] collections in the appropriate German translation.”¹²² And indeed, they were right. Without the ability to stop this campaign to linguistically standardize folklore, Polish cultural workers could only counter it with a similar effort of their own. This initiative was taken up by the leading folklorist and collector of folksongs in the Voivodeship, as well as one of the heads of the official academic consortium there, Father Emil Szramek. Rushing to be faster than the Germans in this endeavor, already in 1927 the Polish Academy of Sciences published his edited collections of *Folksongs from Polish Silesia*.¹²³ In 1935, this academic consortium published a similar song book, *Silesian Echoes*.¹²⁴ Indeed, just as it was emphasized in the 1927 work’s title, the inherent “Polish” character of this oral culture was also echoed in the manner in which the songs were collected and edited. The volume’s editors drew largely from collectors of Polish

¹²¹ See: Deutschen Volksliedarchiv, ed., *Oberschlesische Volkslieder: Aus den Beständen des Oberschlesische Volksliedarchivs*, (Kassel, 1938). Also, promotion of the “Volksliedearchiv” to the public: “Joseph Schmidt und das O/S Volksliedearchiv,” ODM (19 Juni 1936): n.n.

¹²² Kon. Op., to: Województwo Śląskie, AAN 482/183, doc. 1.

¹²³ The Polish Consul in Beuthen, Eduard Szczepański urged Voivodeship cultural-political officials to initiate collecting and publishing their own edited volume, “so that the rich treasure chest of Polish folksongs in Upper Silesia does not just remain the property of Germanism (niemczyzna).” Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 1. In mid-May of 1928, the Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk na Śląsku (Polish Society of the Friends of the Sciences in Silesia) urged the Academy of Sciences in Cracow to publish the collected volume quickly, lest “the Germans will beat us.” Tow. Przyjaciół Nauk na Śląsku, To: Akademia [sic!] Umiejętności w Krakowie, 15 May 1928, APK 27/1/76, doc. 89.

Also, the actual collection: Emil Szramek et al., eds., *Pieśni Ludowe z Polskiego Śląska*, (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1927).

¹²⁴ This volume was meant particularly for locals of western Upper Silesia. See: *Echa Śląskie: Pieśni dla ludu polskiego na Śląsku Opolskim*, (Nakładem Związku Kół Śpiewackich na Śląsku Opolskim, 1935). Also: Szczodrok, to: NOFG, 3 Sept. 1935, BArch, 159/1302, n.p.

and Slavic Upper Silesian folksongs during the 19th century, including Józef Lompa, Juliusz Roger, and as a result were criticized as reductionist in their approach by Perlick in his review of their work.¹²⁵

Like that of Perlick, the (Polish) “West Researchers”¹²⁶ propensity to standardize local folklore along high-national linguistic lines was part and parcel of a larger political language policy. As a core aspect of his “regionalism,” Grażyński strove to remove German words and Germanisms from the local dialects, which in the Industrial District were often composites of Polish, some Czech and German, along with a wealth of locally-specific terms and expressions. According to the leading scholar on this topic, Eugeniusz Kopec, Grażyński’s [language policy]:

aimed not to teach high Polish in disregard of the of local traditions, but to eliminate the German language from public life, and to officially recognize a local linguistic form [narzecza] that was cleansed of German superficialities as equal to the high-national language and a symbol of [Silesia’s] belonging to the Polish national community.¹²⁷

Cleansed of the German terms and expression that Sanacja-supporters regarded as “superficial impositions” of pre-WWI-era “Germanization,” by the end of the twenties, Grażyński’s cultural agents promoted the “gwara Śląska” (literally “Silesian way of speaking” or “Silesian talk”) as the one and only true regional dialect. As a way of forging this Polonized local dialect, cultural authorities moved to make that of the

¹²⁵ Perlick, “Oberschlesische,” 107. Szodrok makes the same comment (that the works of Roger and Koschny are the basis of the songs of this collection) about the edited work *Echa Śląskie* : Szodrok, to: NOFG, 3 Sept. 1935, BArch, 159/1302, n.p.

¹²⁶ Here I am referring to the academic specialists of the Polish-German borderlands, including Upper Silesia. The term reflects an English translation of that used by German scholars: “Westforschung/Westforscher,” a counterpart to “Ostforschung.” Polish scholars characterize these academics as agents of *Myśl Zachodnia*, which translates to “western thought.” The latter, in my opinion, is more vulnerable to misrepresentation and misunderstanding than the term “western researcher.”

¹²⁷ Quoted from: Eugeniusz Kopec, „Z zagadnień integracji językowej śląskich kresów Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1939),” in Józef Chlebowczyk, ed., *Z problemów integracji i unifikacji II Rzeczypospolitej* (Katowice 1980) 26.

Cieszyn (Teschen) south-eastern area of the Voivodeship, which due to its closeness to Czechoslovakia and Galicia was much more influenced by Slavic rather than the strongly Germanic-influenced dialects of the Industrial District. Thus, in 1928 Grażyński awarded the novel writer and poet, Gustav Morcinek (1891-1963), a native of Karviná (after 1921 on the Czechoslovakian side of Tešín/Teschen/Cieszyn) the new “Silesian Prize in Literature,” thereby making him the “father of Polish-Silesian literary tradition.” Voivodeship cultural officials endorsed Morcinek’s works, including his masterpiece, the novel, *The Cut-Down Sidewalk* (*Wyrąbany Chodnik*) (1931) that glorified the “Silesian Insurgencies,” as the models of the proper “Silesian talk.”¹²⁸

Next to introducing the children’s textbook *Our Readers*, by the Cieszyn author Żebrok, the chief of education in the Voivodeship, Ręgorowicz, promoted Morcinek as part of assimilating the new generation into this Polonized folk language. Otherwise, cultural authorities made widespread use of the Polish Radio Katowice in an effort to popularize it. The main proponent of this effort was the Königshütte native, and devoted Polish patriot, Stanisław Ligoń. During the 1930s, his weekly comedy show “Fairytale and Stories” (*Bery i Bójki*) in the officially-endorsed dialect was not only popular on the Polish, but also the German side of the border—to the open irritation of Nazi and BDO officials.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Ibid., 22-6, 28, 38-41. On regionalism in literature, see: Zdzisław Hierowski, *Życie literackie na Śląsku w latach 1922-1939*, (Katowice, 1969). On Morcinek, also: Mirosław Fazan & Witold Nawrocki, *Katowickie środowisko literackie w latach 1945-67*, (Katowice 1969) 202ff.

¹²⁹ Polish and German officials (both in west O/S) attested to this: i. Kon. Op., to MSZ, circa 1938-9, AAN, 474/2470, doc. 25; ii. Polizei West O/S Industriegebiet, Gleiwitz, 17 Mar. 1939, Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (hereafter, APO) 1191 (Regierung Oppeln)/1937, doc. 139; iii. Since listening to Ligoń’s auditions was widespread, at local BDO assemblies the organization’s agitators explicitly instructed the public not to do so: BDO, Świętochłowice, 20 Mar. 1937, APK 38 (Policja Woj. Śl.)/390, doc. 7; iv. Landrat Ratibor, Betr. Lagebericht: Minderheitspolitik, APO 1191/1937, doc. 101ff.; v. Ambasada RP Berlin, to: MSZ, dot. “Propaganda Zagraniczna Radjostacji w Kat.,” AAN, 474/2470, n.p.

Folk Costumes

The attempts that national scholars and officials made to standardize the local languages marked one effort to forge national-regional roots in this society. These efforts went hand-in-hand with other important campaigns of making local customs tools of revanchist politics, including the manipulative representation of folk costumes. These relics of traditional rural culture had been worn less and less as industrialization took storm in the region at the end of the 19th century, and in turn catalyzed fast-paced urbanization and the decline of rural traditions. Just as it did in other forms of folklore, the post-WWI onset of nationalism and revanchist war in this borderland in turn prompted a reinvigorated, and politically-driven, interest in costume among cultural elites.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, in the rural parts of the Industrial District some locals still wore traditional costumes (*Volkstracht*) on special occasions such as weddings and folk holidays, including the famous annual Harvest Festivals (*Erntedankfest/Dożynki*), as well as religious holidays, such as Corpus Christi. The elements of these ceremonial costumes varied widely. The men's costumes were often more plain in colors, and included long jackets, vests, breeches, round hats, and boots, while in contrast, the women's were vast in their detail and variegated in color. They included long dresses, aprons, blouses, and a variety of accessories. Women also wore head pieces, including flower crowns, veils, and head scarves (see image 3.16 & 3.17). The clothing elements and their colors varied from area to area. The most frequently referred to "costume areas" (*Trachtgebiete*) in the propaganda on this subject on both sides of the border included the German villages of

¹³⁰ See: i. Seweryn Udziela, "Lud Polski na Górnym Śląsku," *Ziemia* XIII 15-16 (1928): 251; ii. E. Grabowski, *Die Volkstrachten in Oberschlesien*, (Breslau 1935).

Roszbark (Rozbark) outside of Beuthen, and Schönwald (Bojków) outside of Gleiwitz, and the Polish areas of Piekary Śląskie (Deutsche Piekary), and Pszczyna (Pless).¹³¹

Like other forms of politicized folklore, costumes were the subject not just of scholarly study, but also multimedia popular promotion. Just as with regard to the wooden churches, German and Polish scholars asserted that the various folk costumes on each side of the border shared affinity to, and had been historically influenced by, other regions of Germany/Poland. Referring largely to the traditional garb of Rossberg, on which he was an expert, Perlick underscored that it developed during the seventeenth-century under the strong influence of the German bodice and skirt costume (*Rock-Mieder-Tracht*).¹³² Like Perlick, Polish ethnographers thought that the “Rozbark (Rossberg) outfit” was the “the most beautiful” of its type in the region, but in contrast to his fundamental assertions, they referred to it as “the typical *Polish* folk costume.”¹³³ In addition to printed texts, museums, films and radio programs were all media through which these “theses” were promoted to the masses. Kayser’s propaganda film, “Land unterm Kreuz,” marked the most notable German representation of traditional rural culture as “(German) Kultur.” Focusing on the “village of Schönwald,” the film maker underscored that the rooted “Kultur” of this “ancient German (Urdeutsche) village” was able to withstand the “*ruinous*” influence of being “surrounded by the Polish border.”¹³⁴ Voivodeship officials thought otherwise in this regard, accusing Kayser of “representing Polish costumes and customs in Upper Silesia as purely German.”¹³⁵

¹³¹ Perlick, “O/S Volkskunde...,” 92;

¹³² Ibid., 92

¹³³ Quoted from: Regorowiczowa, “Polskość,” 48.

¹³⁴ Kayser, *Land unterm Kreuz*.

¹³⁵ Quoted from: Kon. RP. Bytom, To: MSZ, dot. “prace historyczno-etnograficzne na Górnym Śląsku niemieckim,” 17 June 1927, AAN 474/2429, n.p.

Reviewing the various media through which German cultural elites were promoting Upper Silesian folklore in “their” national character to the world, Szczepański, the Polish Consul in Beuthen, expressed envy in reaction. Citing Kayser’s film and also a travelling ethnography exhibit that had been curated by the academic circles in Beuthen and Oppeln and sent to tour all over Germany, he felt Poland was “behind” the Germans in this area of “cultural work.”¹³⁶ By the mid-1930s Polish cultural agents had made efforts to “catch up.” This included the making of a film that represented the religious pilgrimages to Piekary Śląskie—which like the Mount of St. Anne was another important center for this practice for locals across the whole region—in Polish national character. Premiering in January of 1936 in Katowice in front of high ranking Church clerics and Grażyński, this propaganda picture showed, among other things, pilgrims dressed in traditional costumes enthusiastically attending a ceremony in which a memorial plaque to Piłsudski was unveiled in the Pilgrims’ church. Like “Land unterm Kreuz” and “Śląsk, Poland’s Pupil,” this film was shown in cinemas throughout the country, and also at Polish minority centers in the O/S Province during the early 1930s.¹³⁷

Apart from the media, folk costumes were a highlight during all sorts of political festivals. During the important border rallies that I examined in chapter one, on both sides of the border regional governments and the patriotic societies working with them

¹³⁶ In the late spring of 1927, the director of the Ethnography Museum in Cracow toured the Beuthen Landesmuseum so as to compare their collections with those of his institutions. He claimed that in comparison to the one in Beuthen, the Cracow museum “has so few artifacts which would demonstrate to its visitors the Polish character and history of Upper Silesia in all of its multifarious qualities.” Moreover, he listed a range of efforts, from the film, to Heimatforschung (predecessors of Ostforschung) institutions, including the Heimatstelle (local cultural centers) in Beuthen and Hindenburg (Zabrze), libraries, and ancient history research centers. He also noted that the regional government was celebrating the 750 years of Beuthen’s history, another effort to promote its “German” identity to the public. This from Kon. RP. Bytom, To: MSZ, dot. „prace historyczno-etnograficzne...,” n.p.

¹³⁷ This from: Szodrok, To: NOFG, Bericht 1/50, “Nachrichten aus Ostoberschlesien und Polen,” Jan 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

mobilized groups of traditional garb wearers to march in parades and take part in ceremonies. For example, in the Province, costume wearers were a noted part of the bombastic spectacle commemorating the tenth anniversary of the plebiscite in 1931, of which the German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning was the guest of honor.¹³⁸ Reviewing this festivity in its Beuthen newspaper, the Polish minority on the German side of the border made the following comment:

We even saw various German men and women clothed in our folk costume. But they did not wear these costumes as they should have been worn. Everyone could notice that they did not understand how to move freely in the manner in which these costumes were meant for.¹³⁹

This statement was meant to underline that “Germans” felt *unnatural* in the local traditional clothing because the latter belonged not to them but to the “Polish-Silesian” natives of this territory. It is indicative of the function costume wearers at these rallies had in the first place: they served to underline the *voluntary and enthusiastic* presence of locals who were inherently rooted in this region, and for generations on end, tied to its traditional ways. In doing so, they thereby gave these often government-orchestrated events a character of local volition, and authenticity. Moreover, they helped fuel the myth of the national patriotic conviction of native Upper Silesians.

Minority groups on each side of the border were also an important agent representing folklore in national guise. On the German side the Harvest Festival was a favorite occasion on which Polish minority organization showed off the “Polish-Silesian” character of the local culture. Particularly during the Nazi era, when local NSDAP cells harassed and threatened members of the Polish minority in an attempt to assimilate

¹³⁸ For sources on this event, see note 80.

¹³⁹ Quoted from: *Katolik* 25 (Apr. 1931) in: *Gesamtüberblick über die polnische Presse*, from: GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 390, doc. 98.

everyone into high “Germandom” and regime ideology, events like these were an important show of defiance.¹⁴⁰ Even though members of minority groups enjoyed the protection of the 1922 Geneva Convention, and the right to practice their culture, there was still a risk in engaging in such open acknowledgements of one’s “otherness.” Nazi regime officials often recorded the names and photographed the appearance of participants, and then used this data to subject them to socioeconomic reprisals, public defamation, as well as violence and harassment.¹⁴¹

One well-recorded example of a Harvest Festival took place in early October of 1935. Numbering between 800 and 1,000, the participants were from the local Polish minority societies of the German side of the Industrial District, the Polish Gymnasium in Beuthen, as well as residents of the Voivodeship who crossed the border to attend. After celebrating mass at a church in the village of Rossberg, the participants assembled in the building of the Gymnasium and from there marched in procession through the streets of Beuthen. A number of men, women, and children, including two horse-back riders at the head of this parade, wore the local costumes of Rossberg, which Perlick and other German academics so adamantly regarded to be a relic of “age-old German Kultur.” The marchers meant to emphasize the “historical Polish character” of this dress promoted by ethnographers on the opposite side of the border.

And this they did by also sporting red-and-white (Polish) flags, and having children carry banners that read (in high-Polish) “We are the future of the nation” and

¹⁴⁰ On other episodes of folk tradition, particularly those religious, serving as a force of resistance to the regime, see: James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, “The Annaberg as a German-Polish ‘Lieu de Memoire,’” *German History*, 25 (2007): 373-400; Andrzej Michalczyk, *Kirchlichkeit und Nationalität: ein Spannungsfeld. Identität und Identitätspraktiken in OS, 1922-1939* (Unpublished Dissertation, Universität Erfurt, 2010).

¹⁴¹ See: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Historia społeczno-polityczna Górnego Śląska i Śląska Cieszyńskiego w latach 1918-1945* (Katowice 1994), 145-159.

“we are going to fight on further, since we have the power of righteousness.” The event succeeded in drawing a crowd of interested spectators who were not members of the Polish minority. In order to convince their superiors of the “inauthentic” nature of this folk festival, members of the local Nazi “Farmer’s Union” (*Bauernschaft*) made an effort to undermine the authenticity of the folk costume wearers at this Harvest Festival:

The Rossberg horse riders at the head of the parade are not from Rossberg at all. The true Rossberger did not participate in this event at all. In fact, the folk costumes that the girls and women were wearing were borrowed from the Ogoreki Costume Institute of Beuthen.¹⁴²

This comment is not so much different from that made by the Polish minority in reference to the German Plebiscite Festivity of 1931 in Beuthen. In both cases, the authors essentially underlined that “a wolf in sheep’s clothing is still a wolf,” or in other words, that only their own nationals felt “natural” in the local folk costume. To both Polish and German officials, folklore was a token of their nation’s rootedness in the industrial border area, a notion that each national camp represented by mobilizing “its own” to pose and express themselves in costumes, through songs, and other traditions.

Folkloric “Revival” and Performance

Because they carried this national symbolism, cultural workers on both sides of the border sought to awaken a public interest for, and engagement in, these age-old moors and customs. Public schoolings in folklore, and performances of costume-wearing singing and dancing societies, served this purpose on both sides of the border. During the mid-1930s in the Voivodeship, the PZZ was active in the formation of “folk song and dance groups,” which performed songs, dances, and theater, all geared to promoting traditional rural culture in “Polish-Silesian” (national-regional) guise. One of the most

¹⁴² All Quoted and drawn from following report: Sczodrok, to: NOFG, Betr. “Erntefest der polnischen Minderheit in Beuthen,” 15 October 1935, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

noted of these was the group from one of the important centers of folklore on the Polish side of the border, Dąmbrowka Wielka (Gross Dombrowka), located on the outskirts of Piekary Śląskie and Katowice. These folkloric performers toured parts of Poland and performed traditional songs that had been linguistically edited to resemble high Polish by the regional academic community in collections such as *Folksongs from Polish Silesia* and *Silesian Echoes*.¹⁴³ They also staged local dances, which like songs, were represented in national guise in popular scholarly texts on both sides of the border. One of the performances in this “song and dance group’s” repertoire was the “Wedding in Dąmbrowka,” which meant to promote this traditional festivity as it had been practiced on the outskirts Katowice. This play was one of a few like it, the most important of which was *The Silesian Wedding*, written in 1934 by the radio comic, Stanisław Ligoń. Just as he did in his radio performances, in this play Ligoń sought to represent the inherent ties between local folklore and Polish national culture by popularizing the Polish-based “Silesian talk” that had been cleansed of Germanisms in song and verse. *The Silesian Wedding* was performed not only in Poland but also among Polish minority societies in the O/S Province.¹⁴⁴

This politicized “revival” of folk-culture also had its place on the German side of the border. In the tri-city area on the German side of the border, the BDO—which, like its Polish counterpart, the PZZ, was in charge of culturally homogenizing the borderlands—

¹⁴³ Demonstration of use of the edited volumes by the performing societies, in: Szodrok, to NOFG, 3 Sept. 1935, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

¹⁴⁴ Schodrok referred to “Wesele na Śląsku” as “eine wirkungsvolle Propagandastück,” and noted that it was being performed in schools and the workplace, and at Polish minority centers in the O/S Province. This from: Schodrok, to NOFG, “Verschiedene Nachrichten,” Tgb. Nr. 138/37, p.1-2, 10 Feb. 1937, *ibid*. On Ligoń and the promotion of folklore, see: Irena Bukowska-Floreńska, „Uwarunkowania społeczne i kulturowe folkloru śląskiego (do 1939 r.), in: Pośpiech & Smolińska, ed., *Z dziejów* (Opole 2002), 21; Celestyn Kwiecień, *Karlik z "Kocindra" Wspomnienia o Stanisławie Ligońiu* (Warsawa, 1980), 5-25.

led this effort. It had the aid of the “Strength Through Joy” (*Kraft durch Freude*, KdF), the regional section of the NSDAP’s organization for worker tourist, pastime, and leisure activities, as well as Beuthen’s Pedagogical Academy. Together, these organizations established over thirty song and dance societies on the German side of the Industrial District in 1937 alone. Officially the “most notable” of these were the groups of Beuthen and Hindenburg, made up of workers from the local mines and metallurgy plants, and also one made up of the students of the Pedagogical Academy.¹⁴⁵ These groups toured around villages in an effort to teach peasants about officially-acceptable traditional customs. The BDO also organized assemblies aimed to teach locals the “correct” forms of folklore (songs, dances, costumes), or in other words, to represent the latter as free of the Slavic-based dialect and any connection to the eastern neighbor. Apart from forums of performance and entertainment, these events also served as occasions for Nazi ideological indoctrination.¹⁴⁶

This “Kulturarbeit” on the part of the Nazi party faced competition from a counter-effort to promote traditional culture in “Polish-Silesian” guise by the Polish minority in the O/S Province. On the German side of the border, students and faculty of the prestigious Polish minority Gymnasium in Beuthen carried out the function of publicly performing their area’s dances, songs, and customs in order to represent them as inherently tied to Polish high-culture. By no means did the Nazi regime just give them

¹⁴⁵ From: “Aus der Grenzlandarbeit des Senders Gleiwitz,” 1937, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu (hereafter, APWr.), 171 (wydział samorządowy prowincji śląskiej we Wrocławiu)/935, doc. 132ff.

¹⁴⁶ Some of these were well attended. For example, in the county of Beuthen-Tarnowitz (outskirts of Beuthen) over 40,000 individuals, including over 6,000 youth, attended the 81 “School District Image Evenings (Schulgemeinde Bildabende)” that the organization held in 1934-1935, and another over 25,000 during the winter of 1935-6. The organization called this campaign a success, considering that close to 500 people on average attended each event in an area where rural towns and villages have population sizes that range from 700 to 8,000. This from: “Kulturelle Tätigkeit der Kreisfilmstelle der NSDAP, Beuthen O/S,” first half of 1935, APWr. 171/905, doc. 117ff.

free reign in doing so. Due to the Geneva Convention, and threat of Polish retaliation against Poland's German minority, they were unable to just prevent these performances from taking place. Nevertheless, the Nazis imposed all sorts of obstacles against them. These included making it difficult for Polish minority activists to rent facilities to hold their performances and to get rights to hold them. In September of 1936, the Gestapo conducted house searches of suspected Polish minority members, during which it confiscated personal copies of the "Polish-Silesian" standardized folk-song collection, *The Silesian Echoes*.¹⁴⁷ A more routine strategy regime officials employed was to stage rivaling events in the same places and at the same time that the Polish minority held theirs in order to draw away public attention from the former. For example, in early September of 1936, the Polish minority organized a folk-festival in the town of Randsdorf (Wieszowa) on the outskirts of Beuthen. Afraid that the event would draw the interest of "curious locals," the local chapter of the BDO organized its own competing festivity "in demonstration of the German character of Randsdorf" in the center of this town. This spectacle was of larger scale than that of its competitors, and the Nazi organization managed to rally a large crowd to see a local costume-wearing singing group perform, and then to engage in an evening of music and dancing.¹⁴⁸

On both sides of the border, this folklore "revival" aimed to represent folk cultural forms as variants of the national culture, and thereby also the latter as inherently locally "rooted" in the region. The aim here was not just to propagate this to native Upper

¹⁴⁷ Kon. Op., to: Amb. RP., dot. "konfiskaty śpiewników 'Echa Śląskie,'" AAN 482/98, doc. 249. Polish authorities retaliated against this by confiscating German folk song collections, and in return, the Nazis promoted a more thorough confiscation of the Polish song edition. Also on this: Teresa Smolinska, "Dorobek Polskiej folklorystyki na Górnym Śląsku. Do drugiej wojny światowej," in: Pośpiech & Smolińska, ed., *Z dziejów...*, 44.

¹⁴⁸ Szodrok, to: NOFG, Tgb. Nr. 1668/36, 15 Sept. 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

Silesians, but also to the national and international communities. Having inherited a territory that had belonged to Prussia for centuries, the Poles had a particularly strong burden in this regard. Polish folklore societies from the Voivodeship toured not only the country and occasionally the German side of Upper Silesia, but also sometimes went abroad to perform, including to London in 1935. Observing their activity in this regard, the Silesian Ostforschung network noted that these groups were representing folklore in Polish guise to the public “in large scope over several times during the course of that year.” These performances were also held in other parts of Poland’s western territories. For example, Silesian folklore groups performed in Gdynia (Gdingen), an event to which cultural officials organized trips for a large group of workers from the Voivodeship.¹⁴⁹ At the end of June during the following year a central conference of singing societies was organized in Warsaw, and attended by various choirs and song groups from all over the country and abroad. Although not hosted by the heads of the government, the event meant to represent Polish national community united in song across national borders. With the permission of the Nazi government, Polish minority performing societies from the O/S Province travelled to Poland’s capital to participate.¹⁵⁰

The Nazis’ decision to allow them to do so was a strategic one. In the following year, German government agents reminded Polish diplomats of this “favor” and in return asked that 4,000 German minority singers, including a number from the Voivodeship, be allowed to attend a rivaling event staged in August of 1937 in Breslau, the capital of Gau Schlesien (Lower Silesia and the O/S Province) about 150 miles to the west of the Upper Silesian border. Assuring the Polish consulate in that city that this “would not be a

¹⁴⁹ All quoted and drawn from: Sczodrok, to: NOFG, 3 Sept. 1935, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

¹⁵⁰ Ambasad RP Berlin, 10 June 1937, AAN 482/375, doc. 68

political event,” Nazi officials referred to it as an act of “cultural exchange aimed to deepen understanding and closeness between the two neighboring states.” As a posited gesture of sincerity, they invited the Polish government to send its own singers to perform as well. Although limiting the figure of German minority performers that could freely attend the event in Breslau to only 1,000, Polish government officials agreed.¹⁵¹

Contrary to the story of it being an “a-political” act of friendly “cultural exchange,” this Congress of German Singing Choirs turned out to be the largest and most politicized event since the Olympics hosted by the Third Reich in the year before. Apart from commemorating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the German Singer’s Union, the event aimed—indeed, like its counterpart in Warsaw—to demonstrate the cross-border extension of the “national community” of territories and peoples. The gathering of folkloric song and dance groups, not only from the Polish provinces, but from other parts of Europe and beyond, was the chosen form of representing this “Volksgemeinschaft.” Personally presided over by Adolf Hitler and his top ministers, this event of over 100,000 participants (20,000 from outside of Germany) far outdid the Warsawian counterpart in size and political bombast.¹⁵² One of its chief functions was that of yet another propaganda spectacle promoting two of the regime’s revanchist geopolitical concepts. One was that of a “Greater Silesia”, the idea that Germany has cultural, historical, and ethnic/national claims to all parts of the Silesian (Lower and Upper) region, including those belonging to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Another was that of the “German East,”

¹⁵¹ More specifically, Breslau governors asked the Polish Consul for the suspension of the high price fees of passports, which hindered Germans living in Poland outside the area protected by the Geneva Convention from traveling to the Third Reich. Kons. RP Breslau, To: Amb. RP Berlin, 11 May 1937, AAN 474/375, doc. 58-67, and, same file set, doc. 68, 72.

¹⁵² 20,000 of these participants were from abroad (among them 20,000 from Austria, 6,000 from the Sudetenland, and 1,000 from Poland). See: reports of the Polish Consulate to the Polish Foreign Ministry and Polish Embassy in Berlin, all in: AAN 474/375, doc. 57, 75ff.

marking the notion that foremost the former Prussian provinces, but also territories as far east as Cracow and beyond, were “German.” Speaking at the central site at which the event was held, Breslau’s architecturally revolutionary assembly center for mass events, “Centennial Hall” (Jahrhunderthalle), the vice-governor of Gau Schlesien, Fritz Bracht, conveyed the following to the crowd:

[In your presence at this event] you follow the path of every courageous early medieval German frontier settler, who with the song of ‘let us ride to the East [nach Osten wollen wir reiten]’ *recovered* [zurückwannen] ancient German territory for Germandom and emphatically gave this Silesian land its eternal German face. They recovered this ancient German heritage for Germany not with the sword but through honest and peaceful German work. They never took anything away from anyone, but rather founded our German cities and villages ‘on plain green grass.’¹⁵³

Backstabbing their claim to wanting to promote good relations with the eastern neighbors, the Nazis thus made clear their intention for the “recovery” of the contested borderlands. And the principle that they based their claims on was that which even centrists and liberals had echoed before 1933—that promoting and representing a legacy of “work” entitles a nation to territory. And so in underlining the principle that the “East” is a land of “Arbeit” and “Kultur” and that its “recovery” will be attained through continuing this cultivation, Bracht was echoing the words of Weimar era leaders such as the Prussian Minister Gustav Severing.

For three days the hundreds of song and dance societies participating in this event held their performances at various sites across the city of Breslau. Among them were groups from the Voivodeship, including the most important figure of the Polish German minority’s music life, Andreas Dudek from Katowice, who was also the head of the consortium of German Singing Societies from all of Poland. Although so much of it went on, ironically the singing and dancing itself was not as important to the true political

¹⁵³ Quoted from: Ibid., doc. 73. Emphasis mine.

purpose of this spectacle as was the parade of all participants in front of Hitler and his regime leaders. According to the Polish Consul, who had a seat right behind the Third Reich's dictator, many performers were weary of, and irritated by, having to first wait for hours assembled in rank and file order, and then to parade for another two hours.¹⁵⁴ Dressed in folk costumes the marchers represented the rootedness of the "German Volk" in the territories that the Third Reich had claims to, particularly "Greater Silesia" and the "German East." The German songs they sang, dances they danced, the societies they represented, and languages they spoke, made the performers icons to official claims of "German land" and thus living symbols of the Nazi's revanchist politics. Having forced the performers to rally in front of him, Hitler thus depicted them as "proof" that the "Volksgemeinschaft" (racial national community) is made up of "98 million Germans" across borders.¹⁵⁵ Next to him stood Joseph Goebbels, the mastermind behind this shameless use of many plain enthusiasts of folklore as puppets of the regime's imperialist ventures. After underscoring the importance of the "German East" to the Third Reich, he made the following statement in the spirit of that made by his chief: "one can erect wooden or steel barriers on borders, but all that is German will nevertheless feel an unrelenting bond between itself for eternity."¹⁵⁶

The last time that a rally of this size echoed the message of "no borders will divide us" with a revanchist intention was during the tenth Plebiscite Festival (21 March 1931) in Beuthen (chapter 2). Whereas in 1931, the message was still motivated by a

¹⁵⁴ Consul's report of the whole event: Ibid., doc. 75. Despite this exhaustion he also underscores the enormous enthusiasm expressed by the crowds gathered and claims it to have been a successful propaganda event.

¹⁵⁵ "Bekanntnistag der Nation: überwältigende Kundgebung für das unlösbare deutsche Volkstum," *Schlesische Tageszeitung*, 210 (2 Aug. 1937): 1-2, in: AAN 474/375.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., doc. 75ff.

sincere liberal ethos, the Nazis' utilization of this discourse of "overcoming politically-imposed divisions between people" was strictly instrumental. Caring little about regional affairs, the regime merely sought to capitulate on this already decade-old "cold war" over territory between Germany and Poland, as well as that between the former and Czechoslovakia, France, and other nation-states, to justify the initiation of their own imperialist goals. Having refrained from staging revanchist spectacles for a few years to forge their powerbase, the Nazis reopened this "tradition" from the Weimar period via events such as this one in Breslau. Indeed, their rallies of this sort were significantly different from those promoted by the KVP in the O/S Province, as they were not regional-focused, but on the contrary, strictly all-national, and more so, cross-continental in character. This was because the Nazis did not intend to cultivate a revanchist spirit for this or that territory per se, but to fuel a zeal for the "recovery" of the former Prussian provinces as part and parcel of preparing the populace for the building of the "Grossdeutsche Reich" (Great German Empire).

To do this they utilized facets of the transnational political culture of revanchism that developed in Upper Silesia and other contested borderlands. This included, among other things, the use of folklore to represent "German rootedness" and "Kultur" in contested territories. During his speech at the Breslau rally, Bracht singled out Oberschlesien as a source of "positive values" for the Third Reich, in that here "the German song" and singing societies were not just for entertainment but had always been "mobilized for the Volkstumskampf"—or war between peoples/nations.¹⁵⁷ This militant term and phrase marked the new meaning that the Nazis gave to "Kulturarbeit." Whereas

¹⁵⁷ "Feierliche Eröffnung des Sängerbundfest in der Jahrhunderhalle," *Schlesische Tageszeitung*, 1, in: *ibid.*, doc. 73.

to the pro-republicans the concept was about demonstrating the inherent superiority of German work and acculturation as a way of lobbying for the “return” of “Ostoberschlesien,” to the Nazis it—and indeed, the entire revanchist “cold war”—was a convenient experience for the promotion of their Social Darwinist ideals.

On both sides of the border the popular exhibition of ancient history and folklore, including dialects, songs, dances, and costumes, went hand-in-hand with the construction of modern landscapes and avant-garde political symbolic forms. All of these policies were geared towards representing Germany’s/Poland’s past and present cultural roots as well as historical track-record of promoting cultivation and progress in this contested borderland. They also served another function that complimented the first one: as the legitimating factors for homogenization and early forms of ethnic cleansing. Having already demonstrated how the deconstruction, symbolic erasure, and removal of the heritage of the national “other” was part and parcel of acculturation politics, I now turn to address how the latter worked in support of the relatively limited policies of repression and homogenization that the regimes on each side of the border promoted during the interwar era.

Measuring Progress One Less “Other” at a Time

During the ZOKZ “Silesian Propaganda Month” of November 1931 the organization boasted the “achievements” of Polish governments during ten years of “work.” These marks of the rapid integration of “recovered Silesia” with its “motherland” (Poland) included newly-built roads that connected the Voivodeship with Galacia and Mazowia, the Magistrale rail-line connecting the Industrial District to the Polish shipping ports along the Baltic, as well as the numerous architectural marvels that were in the

process of being built as part of Grażyński's program of "regionalism." Along with these constructive measures of "Polonization," the ZOKZ also considered the following as part and parcel of the track-record of *progress*:

Despite all difficulties the de-Germanization (*odniemczanie*) of the Silesian Voivodeship is continuously progressing forward, evidenced by the enormous drop in German votes during elections and the drop in the percent of children registered for German school in all localities.¹⁵⁸

ZOKZ agents represented this assertion statistically just as they did that of how under Poland Upper Silesian industry was rapidly reaching pre-WWI levels of production when the Germans controlled the entire industrial complex, and in some sectors (i.e. coal mining) even surpassing them. For example, the organization demonstrated that just as the productivity of iron ore numbered 440,901 tons in 1927, and in the next year 467,646 tons, and then 476,059 in the following one, so too during elections the percentage of votes for German parties was progressively declining from 41.2% in 1926, to 37% in 1928, and 21.8% in 1930.¹⁵⁹ Officials referred to this policy of limiting the influence and social status of "Germans" in the Voivodeship as "de-Germanization." Used extensively during the postwar period to denote the ethnic cleansing of the Germans from the Oder-Neisse territories, this concept had already been coined during the interwar era and used to describe Grażyński's program of giving the Voivodeship a "Polish face."

Promoting "de-Germanization" as a form of progress signified that governing authorities already endorsed the "dream" of building an "all-Polish" borderland long before 1945, and particularly during the Sanacja era. The mythology of the "Lud Śląski," which depicted Upper Silesians and the region (both sides) as an ethnicity and territory that "was, is, and remains Polish," marked the legitimating ideology behind this official

¹⁵⁸ Quoted from: W.K., "Polacy i Niemcy w Granicach: Województwa Śląskiego," in: *Śląsk*, 33

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 31 and 36.

zeal to homogenize. As I have demonstrated in this and previous chapters, the government and its nationalist aides were realizing this goal symbolically by the invention of a “Polish-Silesian” official high-culture, and by its public dissemination in the form of mass rallies and festivals, tourism, the media, social organizations, the school system, and a network of adult education. This program was aimed to reshape local consciousness and identity, and to propagate the inherent “Polishness” of the region. Indeed, the building of architectural marvels, staging of folklore performances, and the broadcasting of programs and theater in the nationalized local dialect were part and parcel of this symbolic program of cultural homogenization.

This “Polonization” went hand-in-hand with efforts to deconstruct and marginalize the influence, culture, and identity of the ethnic/national “other.” Grażyński’s regime was not only Germanophobic in this regard, but also anti-Semitic.¹⁶⁰ However, because Germans were by far the largest, most influential, and thereby “threatening,” group “de-Germanization” was far more extensive than any other discriminatory and repressive measure. It included government-endorsed terror, violence, censorship, and extortion, as well as the destruction of cultural icons that were deemed to have a “German” character. Moreover, as the core aspect of this policy from the late 1920s, and particularly by 1935, Grażyński began to fire and remove “Germans”—a category with

¹⁶⁰ On the Sanacja policy towards Jews, see: i. Jacek Piotrowski, “The Policies of the Sanacja on the Jewish minority in Silesia, 1926-1939,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 14 (2001): 150-55. According to this author, the Silesian Sanacja regime promoted the politics of its rivals, the Endecja. A major official “excuse” for anti-Semitism was that Jews were “pro-German.”

The Jewish population of the Voivodeship numbered 12,262 Jews in 1922, and 23,571 in 1939, making up from 1.1-1.7% of the total population. 85% of the Jewish population lived in Kattowitz and Königshütte, the two largest metropolises of the Voivodeship, as well as in the Southeastern parts, in Bielsko (Bielitz) and Cieszyn (Teschen).

According to Franciszek Serafin: there were circa 4,800 native Upper Silesian Jews in the region in 1923. By the outbreak of WWII, there were 15,273 Jews in formerly Prussian areas of the Voivodeship, most living in the Industrial District. See: Serafin, “Stosunki...,” 89.

which individuals in this bilingual society were often arbitrarily and capriciously labeled—from the sectors of society that he had the most control over, including the state bureaucracy, public institutions and certain sectors of industry. Here the Voivode had the aid of the ZOKZ/PZZ and the Insurgent Union, who singled out individuals for the purges, organized public boycotts of “German” and “Jewish” businesses, and worked to drive “Germans” out of industry and landownership.¹⁶¹ This nationalizing camp also made efforts to limit German language Church services, against which it encountered the strong resilience of the Church until 1939, when these masses were finally done away with.¹⁶²

Scholars estimate that between 1921 and 1935, about 190,000 individuals left the Voivodeship Silesia to Germany. About 15,000 of these did so in 1935 as a result of Grażyński’s politics of „de-Germanization.” When the Geneva Convention expired in July of 1937, another 4,000 individuals, the so-called “optants” (German citizens who opted to continue living in their homeland after it was ceded to Poland in 1922), were expelled from the Voivodeship to Germany.¹⁶³ From March to May 1939, a time when

¹⁶¹ See: Mieczysław Grzyb, *Narodowościowe-polityczne aspekty przemian stosunków własnościowych i kadrowych w górnośląskim przemyśle w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1978) 240ff.; Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922-1939* (Katowice 1982) 120-136.

¹⁶² See last section of this chapter for more on the Silesian Sanacja’s relations with the Church.

¹⁶³ These statistics from: Serafin, “Stosunki...,” 86-88. To the best of my knowledge, there are no known statistics of the migration from the O/S Province to the Voivodeship after the 1920s, apart from the expulsion of around 700 Polish “optants” by the Third Reich, which was a retribution for that of German ones from the Voivodeship. It’s important to note that I mean *permanent* movement, and not the voluminous everyday commuting of Upper Silesians from one side of the border to the other and back for work and social engagements. Also: Pia Nordblom, „Die Lage der Deutschen in Polnisch Oberschlesien nach der Ersten Weltkrieg,” in: Kai Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Erinnerung*, (Marburg 2003) 114.

From 1924, and “for the next years,” about 100,000 individuals migrated from German to Polish Upper Silesia. If at all significant, this number must have been lower than that of east to west migration. See: Heffner & Lesiuk, “Ekonomiczne...,” 148.

On Optants see: Guide Hitze, *Carl Ulitzka (1873-1953) oder Oberschlesien zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Düsseldorf 2002) 478. This movement of individuals across the border during the interwar era

rumors of an imminent outbreak of war between Germany and Poland were roaming about, another 15,000 individuals fled to Germany.¹⁶⁴ Although both the Nazis and Grażyńskiites were eager to expel all their “unwanted,” in the first 15 years after the partition, the Geneva Convention, and thereafter up to the outbreak of WWII, fear of retaliation from the national neighbor for any hardship in done to its minority group, prevented these sides from taking more drastic measures to this effect. As a result, each side could only make the commonly shared dream of a homogenous society into a posited reality.

The official census served as one important means for authorities to represent homogeneity. December of 1931 marked a month of census data collection throughout Poland. In the Voivodeship, authorities tried to co-opt locals to declare the state language (Polish), and not German, as their native tongue. One of their methods to this end was to officially describe “native language” with the confusing phrase of “the language that the individual feels closest to.” Otherwise, working in the service of the government’s intent to “scientifically” represent a homogenous national society, census takers imposed fines, used harassment, and threats against the individuals they surveyed, and sometimes even filling out the questionnaire ballots out on for those questioned.¹⁶⁵ In light of having attained its goals, this effort was a success. Marking the nearing of the tenth anniversary of his government, the PZZ “Silesian Propaganda Month” of 1936 was an occasion for the Voivode to boast his “accomplishments.” During a nation-wide radio address in early April of that year, Grażyński spoke of “what all of Poland should know about Silesia.”

had been studied by Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996) 160-66.

¹⁶⁴ Pia Nordblom, “Die Lage der Deutschen in Polnisch-Oberschlesien nach 1922,” in Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien*, 114.

¹⁶⁵ O/S Grenzbericht, for October-Dec. 1931, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. 593, Bd. 3, doc. 38ff.:

First off, he underscored the success of his “regionalism” program, noting how the Voivodeship’s academic consortium’s had been working to “preserve and cultivate” the “treasure-house” of a “historically Polish regional folk culture” that extended all the way “past Opole [Oppeln].” Next, he proudly stated “the results” of the census of 1931, which reflected that the Voivodeship was “92.3% Polish.” Based on this statistic, Grażyński thus referred to this regional district as “the most Polish region in Poland” when in fact, it was actually one of the most diverse.¹⁶⁶ Thereafter, popular scholarly and tourist guides of the region echoed his phrase to the end of the interwar era.¹⁶⁷

Revisionist politics continued on both sides of the border during the era of “Polish-German nonaggression” (1934-9). With the rise of the Third Reich, the regime made terror, intimidation, discrimination, and violence against Polish-conscious locals a permanent part of everyday life that only escalated significantly after the expiration of the Geneva Convention. Firings from jobs, the shutdown of minority organizations, and the forced movement of the non-compliant from the border to more mainstream parts of Germany on the pretext of “work assignment” were just some of the favorite tools of the Nazi’s homogenization measures.¹⁶⁸ This politics of repression against the Polish minority and “Poles” went hand-in-hand with the larger “racially-based” program of forging national homogeneity via ethnic cleansing. Up to the expiration of the Geneva

¹⁶⁶ Quoted from: “Co cała Polska winna wiedzieć o Śląsku,” PZ 93 (3 Apr. 1936): 3. These statistics were disputed by Ostforschers, who claimed that there were at least 200,000 Germans in the Voivodeship. On their protest: Szodrok, to NOFG, Bericht 4: “Polen u. Ost-O/S,” p. 2, March 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.; ii. “Co cała Polska winna wiedzieć o Śląsku,” PZ 93 (3 Apr. 1936): 3; iii. Szodrok, to: BDO, Landesgruppe Schlesien, 1450/36: „Polnische Nachricht,” 2 July 1936, BArch 153/1302, n.p.; iv. Szodrok, to NOFG, Tgb. 2063/36: „Verschiedene Nachrichten,” 9 Nov. 1936, same file set and file, n.p.; v. Szodrok, to NOFG, tgb. Nr. 305/37, p. 1: „die Deutsche in Westpolen,” 22 Mar 1937, same file set and file, n.p.

¹⁶⁷ See for example, Łakomy, *Ilustrowana*, 18-29; Berezowski, *Turystyczno-Krajoznawczy*, 47ff.

¹⁶⁸ Reports on this persecution and discrimination include: i. Die Lage im Mai 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 16-17; ii. Kon. Op., dot. Wygaszenia Konwencji Genewskiej, 25 Feb. 1937, APK 482/3926, doc. 10ff. Also: Wanatowicz, *Historia*, 145-159. .

Convention, Jewish residents of the O/S Province were protected against Nazi terror, including the discriminatory Nuremberg Laws. After mid-July of 1937, they became the prime target of legalized violence and social marginalization. On the night of 28-9 October 1938, regime officials violently compelled about 6,000 individuals they regarded to be Polish Jews to cross over to the Polish side of the border during the late night hours.¹⁶⁹ This episode, which was had its echoes all across the German-Polish border, marked the prelude to the Reich Pogrom Night (“Kristallnacht”) in the tri-city area. On 9-10 November, local authorities burned down the synagogue of Beuthen, as well as Jewish stores and other businesses. The Gestapo and bands of the SS and SA performed house searches and arrested hundreds of Jews. From among the arrested, 600 male Jews were

¹⁶⁹ This statistic from: Joachim Bahlcke, *Schlesien und die Schlesier* (München, 2000) 142.

Most of the victims of this campaign did not reside at the border. They had been pulled out of their homes at moment’s notice, and given a court order of expulsion from Germany. Most had also been given Polish passports, while some were not, and others were given bogus papers. After being locked up in arrest temporarily and stripped of all money but 10 Reichsmarks, the victims were then transported to the border in the late night hours. They were then broken up into groups for the border crossing. Some were sent to cross at legal crossing points, while others were forced to run across pitch dark forests while being beaten by Nazi thugs with rubber batons and treated at gun point. Under this stress, and without being able to see where they were running, many stumbled and fell and thereby lost whatever meager possessions they were allowed to take with them.

According to one report, 1,015 adults and 62 children had crossed the border at Beuthen, and were taken into custody by the Voivodeship police. According to another, 785 had crossed the border illegally and 523 legally at Radzionków/Radzionkau (county of Tarnowskie Góry/Tarnowitz). In line with the general Polish reaction to this campaign, in the Industrial District, authorities were not welcoming of the expellees, tried to halt the crossings and to send them back. When prevented from crossing at a certain crossing point, Nazi officials (mainly Schutzpolizei and SS) took their group of victims to try at other places. Many of those who crossed and were not detained continued on to parts of central Poland. The Voivodeship police detained at least 1,000 individuals and took them to Katowice, some after being held at the border in gymnasium halls beforehand. Sources: Police reports to the Voivodeship government, APK 38/178 (27-30 Oct 1938), doc. 70, 76, 84ff, 89ff, 228.

On the Reichspogromnacht in Beuthen: Powiatowa Komenda Policji Tarnowskich Gór, 10 Nov. 1938, *ibid.*, doc. 98, 141. Because local residents on the Polish side of the border (according to the Voivodeship Police, “Polish workers working in Bytom”) commuted to Beuthen to work on a daily basis, upon returning some gave the Polish police an account of what had happened. They reported witnessing how fire fighters only secured neighboring buildings but let the synagogue and Jewish stores burn to the ground. Jews were subject to beatings by regime thugs, and after being arrested, were taken to view the burning synagogue by the Gestapo. Rumors quickly spread in Beuthen that the Jews here were going to be expelled to Poland (just as they had been just a few days ago). These workers told the Polish police that Nazi authorities themselves were disgusted by this affair and claimed to only be following orders.

turned into slaves and used to build the Autobahn going over the Mount of St. Anne (Annaberg).¹⁷⁰

Unlike Jews, Catholic locals often had the option of cooperating with the regime's policies and repressing their Polish/Slavic regional ways to avoid persecution, which many indeed did. On both sides of the border, the regimes promoted policies of forcefully assimilating native Upper Silesians, who they recognized as "theirs." Both the German and Polish official programs of promoting national-regionalisms were meant, among other things, to serve as vehicles of regional assimilation and nationalization. In the Third Reich, the BDO promoted "Greater Silesian" identity in its effort to tear borderland residents away from local ways associated with the "other," especially from the use of Polish or the Slavic dialect. The "Union of Heimatkunde" aided this effort of local cultural reconstruction by formulating "Germanic" place names to replace Slavic-/Polish-sounding ones.¹⁷¹ The BDO in turn pressured individuals with personal names that sounded "un-German" to change them accordingly, a campaign that its rival, the PZZ, was carrying out against "Germanic names" on the Polish side of the border.¹⁷²

Just as authorities in Poland did, Nazi officials aimed to construct a "scientific" and "objective" homogenous image of society that legitimated the ends of their social engineering efforts. Thus, in the Spring of 1939, the regime initiated its own census data collecting campaign, which was even more intensively accompanied by terror and chicanery against potential declarers of minority ("Polish") identity than the Polish

¹⁷⁰ See sources for Reichspogromnacht in preceding note.

¹⁷¹ Sources for renaming of place names: i. Sczodrok, To: Landrat in Beuthen O/S, Tgb. Nr 1396/36, 20 July 1936, BArch 153/1302; ii. A report underscoring that Poles use the existence of „Polish sounding“ place names as „proof“ that West OS belongs to them: Landesgruppenleiter, To: OP, Betr. Götische Beschriftung im Grenzland Schlesien, 21 June 1937, BArch 59/863, doc. 190.

¹⁷² Sources: i. Wilhelm Mak, "Welche Namen wähle ich?" (Schriftenreihe BDO Landesgr. Schlesien, 1938); ii. In the Voivodeship some 40,000 people „Polonized“ their names by the summer of 1937: Sczodrok, to: NOFG, Tgb. Nr 750/37, 2 July 1937, BArch 153/1302, n.p.

counterpart of 1931. In order to maximize their potential to limit the number of “Poles” in this data, the regime counted anyone speaking in the local Slavic/Polish dialects, which its agents officially referred to as “Oberschlesisch” (Upper Silesian) as “German.” The results of this census did not come out by the outbreak of the war, which rendered them pragmatically useless. I now turn to shed light on local reaction to these policies of acculturation.¹⁷³

Revanchist Cultural Politics and the Local Level

While the two camps of governments and patriotic elites often expressed envy at each other’s “cultural work,” the latter’s reception was often quite different at the local level. In the Voivodeship the “Defense Union of Upper Silesia” (ZOG) led by Jan Kustos led the attack on Grażynski’s “Polonization.” Although never scoring major victories during elections, this party vowed to protect the rights of Upper Silesian locals, be they German or Polish conscious, or “nationally indifferent.”¹⁷⁴ Due to its understanding of local level concerns, the ZOG enjoyed widespread sympathy, and was thus persecuted by the Sanacja as a dangerous “separatist movement” and ultimately shut down in 1934, two years after death of its charismatic leader.¹⁷⁵ Its bilingual newspaper, *The Voice of Upper Silesia* (and its German section, *Der Pränger*), serves as one of the few venues that expressed non-national- oriented regional views. It is thus a valuable source examining the opinion of the regionally-oriented and “nationally indifferent” in the Voivodeship.

¹⁷³ On the census: Report for June and July 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 31-33, 57. See also: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, *Od indyferentnej ludności do śląskiej narodowości? Postawy narodowe ludności autochtonicznej Górnego Śląska w latach 1945-2003 w świadomości społecznej* (Katowice, 2004) 48.

¹⁷⁴ The zenith of the ZOG’s electoral success was during the communal elections of 1926, when it received slightly over 9,000, or 2.3% of the votes. See: Dobrowolski, *Ugrupowania*, 155.

¹⁷⁵ On the ZOG, see: i. p. Serafin, ed., *Województwo...*, 140,162; ii. Piotr Dobrowolski, „Ugrupowania i Kierunki Separystyczne na Górnym Śląsku i w Czeszyńskim w latach 1918-1939,” (Warsawa, 1972) 136..

The ZOG's core criticism against Grażyński and his politics was that he favored high Poles as well as national interests and ways over Upper Silesians and those regional. Kustos regarded Grażyński's "regionalism" as a program that privileged newcomers at the cultural and financial price of locals. Newcomers were after all appointed to head most of new research institutes and schools of higher-education that were part of this program, including the Silesian Institute, Music Academy, and Katowice Pedagogical Academy. Particularly during the economic crisis of the early thirties, Kustos criticized that valuable taxpayer funds were being "wasted" on the establishment of "Polonization" institutions and the construction of avant-garde buildings to the neglect of the welfare of locals.¹⁷⁶ As a strong champion of bilingualism and regional ways, the ZOG disdained the Sanacja government's effort to "Polonize" these, declaring that "the Upper Silesian people will not allow the usurpation of its customs and moors, nor that of its rights."¹⁷⁷ The organization's spokespersons were particularly disdainful of the Cieszyn Poles, whose dialect was the model for Grażyński's "Silesian talk," for thinking that they were "better Poles" and thus better than the natives of the former Prussian parts of Upper Silesia.¹⁷⁸

In his "Polonization" efforts, the Voivode encountered both opposition and backing from the leaders of the Katowice Diocese and also the ChD party and its coalition, which together carried the support of the bulk of the local native population in

¹⁷⁶ „Ludności Górnos Śląskiej ku uwadze,” *Głos Górnego Śląska* (hereafter: GGŚl.), 26 (1 July 1930): 1.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted from: „Zakusy Cieszyńiaków na Górnym Śląsku,” GGŚl. 15 (7-13 April 1926): 1.

¹⁷⁸ „Oni to mogą bo to 'swoi' : Zalew Górnego Śląska przez Cieszyńiaków,” GGŚl. 14 (31 Mar – 6 Apr. 1926) 2.

the Industrial District.¹⁷⁹ For the most part, both these Catholic factions supported most of Grażyński's "constructive" measures of Polish-Silesianism, including the opening of museums, and the building up of Katowice, and of the Cathedral in particular. However both Church leaders and Korfantiites opposed policies of deconstructive "Polonization," including discrimination against German speakers and even non-politically active Germanophiles. One particularly heated conflict that Grażyński had with the Church—supported by the ChD—from the early to the late 1930s was over his insistence that the clergy either liquidates or significantly limits the administration of German-language church services. To Bishop Stanisław Adamski this measure of "de-Germanization" threatened to alienate the part of his congregation that were used to, and preferred to, pray in German. Adamski's resilience against the Voivode's demands in this and other respects made the Church a champion of age-old local ways, as well as a counterforce to nationalization and nationalism. This was the case even as the Bishop continued to hold mass at official ceremonies that promoted the cult of the radically Germanophobic Voivode and his violent Insurgent Union.¹⁸⁰

On the other side of the border the "Germanizing" and homogenizing policies of the Nazi regime were also met with discontent and defiance. In one respect, this defiance was aimed against the regime's attack on the use of the Slavic-based local dialect. Even

¹⁷⁹ James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, 2008), 269; Sefarin, *Województwo*, 157; iii. Krzyżanowski, „Kościół,” 180-1.

¹⁸⁰ On relations between the Church and the Silesian Sanacja see: On the political conflict between the Sanacja and the Katowice Diocese, see: Lech Krzyżanowski, „Kościół katolicki a władza państwowa w województwie śląskim (1926-1939),” in: Maria Wanda Wanatowicz & Idzieg Panica, ed., *Wieki Stare i Nowe*, Vol. 2, (Katowice 2001) 177-85; Jarosław Macała, *Duszpasterstwo a narodowość wiernych: Kościół Katolicki w Diecezji Katowickiej wobec mniejszości niemieckiej 1922-1939* (Wrocław, Katowice, 1999) 26-148; James Bjork, „The National State and the Territorial Parish in Interwar Poland,” in: Charles Ingrao & Franz A. J. Szabo, ed., *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, 2008) 243-252; Kopec, „Z zaganień,” 31-4.

as the BDO officially referred to this “Oberschlesisch” as a “German” and not a “Polish” “way of speaking” (*Mundart*), in actuality, its agents still considered its use a threat to the Reich’s territorial integrity and sought to stamp it out, particularly in the work place and in places of worship.¹⁸¹ Ordinary individuals were quick to take advantage of this new “official discovery” of their dialect’s “German character” to defend their rights to use it. For example, during July of 1939, an NSDAP trustee tried to intimidate the workers at Guidogrube, a coal mine of Hindenburg (Zabrze) to stop speaking among themselves in the local dialect and to use German instead. Faced with their resilience, in outrage he threatened to report them to the management—and in doing so, to put their jobs in jeopardy. In response, one of the workers took out a BDO propaganda flyer that represented “Oberschlesisch” as a mere inflection of high German and called on anyone that regarded it her/his primary language to declare “German” as their mother tongue in the census ballots. Showing this document to the party trustee, the workers stated that they “were only speaking the language of our Heimat,” and that since the census, the former “is officially called Oberschlesisch.” The trustee ultimately gave into their argument and left the scene to the defiant laughter of 80 to 100 onlooking workers. Reports by regime opponents demonstrate that this episode was not just a isolated incident. To quote one:

in the coal mines these discussions of ‘Polish-Oberschlesisch’ take place on an almost daily basis, and our buddies [fellow workers] do not let [the authorities] prohibit their ‘Oberschlesisch.’ Our friends say that ‘Oberschlesisch’ is now the ‘mother tongue’ of conversation. And so does the Union of the German Oxen [the popular derogatory

¹⁸¹ See: Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache*, (Dortmund, 1999)134-42.

term for the BDO], which had deemed ‘Oberschlesisch’ the equivalent of a German dialect.¹⁸²

Next to the use of the local dialect, Catholic religiosity marked another prime target of the regime’s homogenization politics. True to their Weimar era policy in this regard, the Nazis regarded political Catholicism in the region—in similar respects to how they viewed the Slavic-based dialect—to be an instrument of Polish irredentism. Thus, they shut down and waged war against the most popular political faction in the region, the Catholic People’s Party (KVP), who they represented in their propaganda as “the Polenpartei” (party of Poles). This war against Catholicism on the part of the Nazis was a core factor of the latter’s unpopularity in the region. Moreover, the regime’s ventures to break the back of religiosity was just as strongly met with defiance as its venture to standardize everyday language use. The Mount of St. Anne, the most important site of pilgrimage and worship, as well as of the Nazi-endorsed national-regional identity, thus quickly became an object of contention between the regime and native populace. As a study of James Bjork and Robert Gwerth points out, locals found the building of the “neo-pagan” Reich Memorial atop the Mount of St. Anne to be an affront on the site’s Catholic identity and heritage. This and widespread resentment against the Nazi’s war on their traditional ways of multilingualism and multiple collective identities, catalyzed an enlivened public participation in pilgrimages and other religious festivities in the late 1930s.¹⁸³ For example, on 18 June 1939 the NSDAP staged a folk music festival at their Reich Memorial in an effort to obstruct the regional public from participating in the

¹⁸² Most likely these reports were drafted by members of the German Communist Party and given over to the Voivodeship police. Quoted and drawn from: Policja Woj. Śl., dot. “sytuacja na Śl. Op. i ogólne nastroje w Niemczech,” situational report for June, 15 June 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 33-35.

¹⁸³ According to reports by Nazi opponents, since the regime started to crack down on religious festivities in 1938, the pilgrimages to St. Annaberg had grown livelier, numbering 100,000 or more each time. Policja Woj. Śl., dot. “sytuacja...,” APK 38/176, doc. 37. See also: Bjork and Gerwarth, “The Annaberg,” 388-89.

men's pilgrimage at the cloister near this site. The Nazi party instructed all work place folk singing societies (*Betriebsgesangvereine*) to participate in this event, which was to include a sizeable song and dance contest.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, officials also took more active efforts to impede the pilgrims, who they regarded—and rightly so—to be a catch-all crowd of their political opponents. These included not allowing car, bus, and train travel to the site, closing up the Franciscan Cloister Hostel, where pilgrims normally spent the night, and warning locals that they would be treated as “Poles,” and thus face the prospect of job loss and a number of other sanctions against economic and personal well-being, if they engaged in this and similar religious festivities.¹⁸⁵ In the end, their efforts—in the words of local administrators—“did not have the path-breaking success that was expected.” Only about 5,000 were present at this event, a meager number compared to the circa 80,000 who courageously took part in the competing Catholic rally of devotion and defiance.¹⁸⁶ And indeed, both of these last two words mark the motive for events such as pilgrimages to the Mount of St. Anne, and other religious festivities, including Corpus Christi marches. On the eve of the outbreak of the war, not only devout Catholics took part in them, but so did other opponents of the regime, including devoted communists.¹⁸⁷

Just as in the Voivodeship, it was not just ordinary locals who opposed the official regime policy, but also elites. The Nazi persecution of the Polish minority marked one factor that divided state functionaries along the lines of regional natives versus those from without Upper Silesia. There were members of the first group, even those who

¹⁸⁴ Policja Woj. Śl., dot. “sytuacja...,” Situational Report for May 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 12-14.

¹⁸⁵ Policja Woj. Śl., dot. “sytuacja...,” APK 38/176, doc. 37.

¹⁸⁶ Lagebericht über die polnische Minderheit für die Monate April, Mai, und Juni 1939, APO, 1191/1937, doc. 562.

¹⁸⁷ Policja Woj. Śl., dot. “sytuacja...,” APK 38/176, doc. 36.

actively joined the regime, who opposed the latter's handling of their fellow regionals, even if these Upper Silesians exhibited "pro-Polish" leanings. According to local reports by regime opponents, particularly resented were the Nazi's policies of forcefully transporting suspected "Poles" from the borderland to Germany proper and the expropriation of farmers as part of this process. In the words of one of these accounts: "these measures even raise disappointment within Nazi circles, a part of the population, which recognizes these so-called Polish sympathizers [polnische Mitbürger] as equally standing human beings, [and thus] rejects these policies."¹⁸⁸

Another source of division among regime elites was caused by the Nazi party demand for the cultivation of a "Greater Silesian" official identity over a particular Upper Silesian one. Karl Sczodrok's circles of Heimatkundler, and pro-German regional activists stemming back to the 1919-21 era, wanted to continue to cultivate promote the second of these over the first. A dispute thus broke out in the O/S Province over which concept of national-regionalism to endorse. Sczodrok's circle of local scholars and cultural activists lamented the Nazi's shutdown of the Weimar era plebiscite festivities, and disapproved the "Gleichschaltung" of their work and institutions—or in other words the subjection of these to the strict central directives of the BDO and regional governance (Gauleitung) from Breslau, as well as conformity to the principles of "Greater Silesian" regional identity. Indeed, the party's policy in this respect was driven by a will to break the strong regionalist and Catholic ethos, and to pry western Upper Silesia from Polish cultural influence alike. Although they formally agreed with these goals, these Heimatkundler warned the Nazi party that unless they get more autonomy for the cultivation of their distinctly (German) Upper Silesian identity, locals will become

¹⁸⁸ Quoted from: Policja Woj. Śl., dot. "sytuacja...", Situational Report for May 1939..., doc. 16.

alienated from the Third Reich, and will get the impression that the latter is treating their Heimat as a “German colony” rather than a “true part of Germany.”¹⁸⁹

All of these examples in this section illustrate that although the agents of cultural politics deemed their projects to be manifestations of “progress” and “cultural uplifting” at the border, the residents of this area, including disappointed native elites, thought otherwise. One common view that Upper Silesians from both parts of the border shared was that these efforts to revise their ways as a way of integrating them into the region were inherently foreign and colonial in nature, and to the political and economic benefit of the regimes coordinating these acculturation projects. Due to their venture to homogenize and standardize the multilingual culture, pluralist identities, and religiosity of this borderland, Polish and German politics of “recovering” the borderlands had an alienating effect on one key social segment they aimed to win over, the native inhabitants. Although the nationalization of the border region marked a core aspect of the revanchist contest, for both the Grażynskiite and Nazi camps, it backfired in this regard. In the face of the regionally foreign NSDAP elites governing them from Breslau, and also the high Polish newcomers taking up leading posts in their homeland, local natives only begot a still stronger sense of their own regional cultural peculiarity.

Conclusion:

In this chapter I have examined how in an effort to demonstrate that they and the nation they represented were the best historical carriers of “culture” and progress, governments and borderland activist societies on both sides of the border promoted programs of “cultural work.” Each side did not carry out its cultural politics only in the

¹⁸⁹ Quoted from: OP, Abschrift Betr. “Gegenwärtige Lage der Deutsche Kulturarbeit in West O/S,” 23 Apr. 1936, PA-AA Kattowitz, 63 A (Politik, Bd. 10), doc. 12. This paragraph also based on same file set: doc. 9-15.

context of its own intra-national politics, but rather in reaction to, and under the influence of, policies of the other side. In utilizing an interactive approach to the various aspects of acculturation I have addressed in this chapter, my aim has been to demonstrate how strongly transnationally interwoven Polish and German processes were both in terms of their content and underlying premises. I have argued that a fundamental principle driving this contest—indeed one recognized by both national camps—was that the demonstration of a track record of promoting progress and cultural deliverance in the past and present entitled a nation to the contested territory. In this sense, even before the Nazi regime was in power, the regional German government and its patriotic aids strove to represent “Germans” as the historical carriers of “Kultur” and promoters of “Arbeit,” and these concepts as inherently superior to “Polish” culture and work. Grażyński’s program of “regionalism,” including the symbolic urban development of Katowice, and the symbolic nationalization of traditional local ways, was a reactive response to this assertion, and in turn aimed to demonstrate Poland’s superiority in cultivating the region over that of Germany. As I have shown in this chapter, a whole range of symbolic avant-garde architectural structures, ethnographic and archeological museum exhibits, as well as folkloric spectacles, were part of the outcome of this “cultural work.” Moreover, in their competition against one another, both sides interactively debated and shaped each other’s various projects and discourse in this area.

Along with the mass rallies that were a part of it, this contest to acculturate the border area was a prime facet of the Polish-German “cold war” over Upper Silesia. While in competition against one another both sides used urban planning and the representation of folklore in an effort to revise the heritage and identity of their side of the region—and

via minority groups, to some extent, also that of the other. The forging of national-regional traditions, or in other words, forms and ways that stemmed from the region's heritage, but which inherently symbolized their tie to the respective nation, formed a basic staple of this revisionist cultural politics on both sides of the border. The constructive aspects of inventing these regional-based high cultures went hand-in-hand with deconstructive ones promoted particularly by the Sanacja and Nazis: namely, the denial and erasure of the "work" and heritage of the other—indeed, here not just referring to the national rival, but also to non-nationally oriented regional identities. This cultural cleansing in turn legitimated the Sanacja and Nazi regime's policies of repression, destruction, socioeconomic marginalization, and in the second government's case, also expulsion, of groups and individuals that represented alternative identities to the ones officially endorsed. In this sense, this acculturation contest was driven by nationalist ideals of constructing culturally homogenous border societies.

Restricted by international law, internal factionalism, and the threat of the retaliatory potential of the national rival, before the outbreak of the war, the governments and elites involved did not realize their desired ultimate solutions to the border contest. Nevertheless, the interwar era "cold war" over Upper Silesia served as a forging ground for the discourses, symbols, ideals, and policies that marked the nature of how the "recoveries" were "made" once the political arena had changed. I now turn to examine the era (1939-1950) when many of these factors restricting attempts to thoroughly cleanse the borderland of the "unwanted other" were no longer there, starting with the period of the Second World War.

CHAPTER 4:

Giving “Polish Silesia” a “German” face: The Cultural Politics of “re-Germanizing” the Voivodeship, 1939-45

“You [eastern Upper Silesians] have returned home [to Germany] under the conditions of a war that had been imposed on us. No German ... wants war for war’s sake. But [he] wants that which is owed to him. No one could prevent that our brothers of the eastern provinces [Ostmark] unite themselves with the Reich and just as well could no one impede that the Sudeten Germans return home [Heimkehr] again. ... The times in which the German Volk is betrayed from its holiest of rights are over ... You return home to Greater Germany and your mother province. There is only one Silesia.”¹

—Joseph Wagner, Gauleiter of Gau Schlesien, address before rally commemorating “Freedom Day,” 16 October 1939.

“No one in Germany thought about destroying the Polish state and the Polish peoples. The hatred that stood between the two nations was unilateral. And we have to always remember this track record of Polish hatred against everything German—yes, also for our continued work on this territory we have to, indeed, keep that before our eyes.”²

—Walter Gottschalk, inspector for the establishment of the BDO in annexed eastern Upper Silesia, speech in the Kattowitz Market Hall, 16 February 1940.

The Nazi attack on the Voivodeship Śląsk began shortly before five o’clock in the morning on 1 September 1939. Even this military campaign had in part been orchestrated to support what would serve as the fundamental myth of the “German” identity of this territory: that the latter “was, is, and remains” a “German land.” To do this, the Nazi government mobilized Freikorps battalions made up in bulk from among able-bodied men who had fled to West Upper Silesia sometime after the partition, most within a year before the outbreak of the WWII. The most widely popularized of these units was the six hundred man-strong “Ebbinghaus” squad led by Freikorps commander, Ernst

¹ Quoted from: Hannes Peuckert, „’Es gibt nur ein Schlesien!’ Gauleiter Wagner beim ,Tag der Freiheit’ in Kattowitz,” *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost* (16 October 1939): 2ff.

² Quoted from: “Losungen unseres Volkstumskampfes: ganz klare Scheidung vom Polentum.” *Kattowitzer Zeitung* (hereafter KZ) 46 (16 Feb. 1940), pages not numbered (n.p.)

Ebbinghaus. Trained in military camps and equipped with weapons by the regime, these “volunteers” were then sent out to “re-take their Heimat” and thereby give the Nazi invasion of Poland an aura of justice.³ They were joined by fifth-column groups from among the Voivodeship’s German minority in their assignment to seize industrial plants and thus assist Wehrmacht regulars, the main force of the advance. However, their service in this military tactical regard was marginal compared to their propaganda use. Like the symbolic participation of native Upper Silesians in the border rallies, the function of these individuals in the armed attack was to give the latter an image of local support, and thus of “liberation” and “recovery” rather than invasion and conquest. Interestingly enough, armed battalions of former insurgents met the Freikorps advance and thereby all the more gave the first days of battle the flavor of a return to the border struggle of 1919-21—this time with the Germans invading.

This chapter focuses on some of the rallies, reconstruction projects, and schooling efforts that aimed to give “Polish Silesia” a “German” face. More specifically, the discussion here is on the cultural politics of ethnic cleansing. I argue that the annexation of eastern Upper Silesia, and the obliteration of Poland as a sovereign nation-state, did not end Germany’s revanchist mission in the territory. Instead, September 1939 marked the beginning of a project to revise its cultural, social, and biological landscape by way of ethnic cleansing. Working to re-symbolize spaces and re-educate the public according to an ideology that idealized and legitimated the larger Nazi social engineering mission,

³ Grzegorz Bębnik, *Katowice we Wrześniu 1939* (Katowice 2006) 34. According to the author, SA storm troopers were in the ranks of this group. Also: Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas wojny światowej: między utopią niemieckiej wspólnoty narodowej a rzeczywistością okupacji na terenach wcielonych do Trzeciej Rzeszy* (Katowice, 2006) 42-3; and: Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: the Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939*, (Lexington, 1993) 229.

cultural politics was an inherent part and parcel of it. The regime's cultural agents, including the local level Heimatkundler, conceptualized this mission as a "struggle" to make a "clean break" (*"reinliche Scheidung"*) between "Polishness" and "Germandom." This utopian language clouded the real nature of such a project in a borderland without any cultural, ethnic, or linguistic borders: namely, the arbitrary construction of conceptions of "Polishness" and "Germandom," and the promotion of these as official knowledge, as well as a discursive guide for pragmatic programs of schooling, landscape reconstruction, and population politics. The interwar Polish-German cultural-political "cold war" over Upper Silesia provided old-time specialists of borderland affairs (i.e. German Ostforscher and Heimatkundler) of this era with the discourse and symbolism conceptualizing the "German/Polish," and of promoting this to the public.

I begin my analysis of Nazi acculturation of the Polish Voivodeship Silesia during 1939-1945 with a focus on the regime's politics of representing this de facto invaded and occupied territory as a "recovered" and "liberated" province, including the revival of interwar era revanchist rallies as part of this effort. Then I turn to address the new role of old agents of German cultural politics in making this mega-myth⁴ a reality. Here I also address the population politics of ethnic cleansing that the "Kulturarbeit" of these individuals buttressed and legitimated. In the fourth section of this chapter, I address their quest to conceptualize a "German" landscape vis-à-vis confronting the "Polish" one, as well as actual projects aimed to publicize and to construct the latter, and how these intersected with local-level society. In the fifth section, I examine the cultural agents'

⁴ By mega-myth I mean an official belief that constituted the legitimating foundation of politics, including, the basis of the narrative of Upper Silesia as belonging to a given nation. Moreover, this belief was supported by an entire mythology that was multi-disciplinary and artistic in form and promoted to the public by a variety of media.

work conceptualizing the new “Upper Silesian”, and how this discourse translated into programs of mass schooling. Finally, I examine the fate of this acculturation effort in the context of larger program of segregating the populace into national categories.

From “Recovered Śląsk” to “Recovered Ostoberschlesien:” Re-mythologizing the landscape of a contested territory

The mobilization of refugees and migrants from the Voivodeship into the front ranks of the attack on Poland marked only one of a whole array of aspects of the regime’s propaganda. In fact, geared towards forging positive public predisposition for the attack, this agitation began long before 1 September 1939. One of its important pillars was marked by the regime’s reopening of the public commemoration of the 1919-22 Polish-German struggle over Upper Silesia for revanchist purposes. In 1933 the Nazis had suspended the promotion of this Polish-German official cult in the form of large-scale rallies. Thereafter, BDO activists worked to “Nazify” the history of this era, foremost by usurping the official memory of the Freikorps, Selbstschutz, and the right-wing VVHO activists for the regime’s pantheon of “Fore-Fighters (Vorkämpfer) for the National Socialist movement.”⁵ Moreover, the whole struggle for Upper Silesia was reinterpreted in a way that valorized the military struggle of a “united German front” against “invading Polish hordes” and their allies, “the Versailles Powers.”⁶ To promote this Nazified version of 1919-22, the regime reopened the tradition of large-scale border rallies in

⁵ For Nazi use of myth of Freikorps, see: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, „Mythos Oberschlesien in der Weimarer Republik: die Mythisierung der oberschlesischen Freikorpskämpfe und der ‚Abstimmungszeit‘ (1919-21) in Deutschland der Zwischenkriegszeit,“ in Heidi Hein-Kirchner & Hans Henning Hahn, eds., *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Marburg, 2006) 279-300. Also: James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, „The Annaberg as a German-Polish ‘Lieu de Memoire’,” *German History*, 25 (2007) 373-400.

⁶ See: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956* (Osnabrück, 2008) 268-76.

Upper Silesia in May of 1938 on occasion of unveiling two sites of memory to fallen “border fighters.” One was a fortress-like memorial atop the Mount of St. Anne that stood over the largest-built amphitheater during the Nazi era. The other was an over 40 meter high Water Tower right at the Polish border near Ratibor (Raciborz), which contained a memorial to the Freikorps and Selbstschutz as well as a smaller sized amphitheater that surrounded the structure at its base.⁷ Both sites served the effort of doing that which Polish and German elites had been working on long before the Nazis were in power: to make the memory of the immediate post-WWI era into a “positive value” of raising (national) patriotism in the border area, of agitating for the “return” of the other side of this territory, and of warding off the neighbors’ revanchist agitation. In this sense, the regime strove to make its two memorials into centers of organized border tourism as well as “public enlightenment” (*Volksbildung*) on Nazi ideology and the Nazified memory of this revanchist struggle.⁸

This cultivation of a cult glorifying war against Poland went hand-in-hand with a simultaneously-promoted grass-roots propaganda that depicted a straight line of continuity between the violence of “Polish marauders” against Upper Silesians (officially “Germans” in Nazi discourse) in 1919-22 and 1939. Moreover, by 1938 the Nazi-controlled press and radio started to expose often exaggerated and hysterical accounts of any possible incident that could be interpreted as an act of persecution on the part of “Poles” and “Poland” against “Germans” in the Voivodeship. At this time it also started to underscore the revanchist spectacles that Grażyński continued to promote from 1938

⁷ This site’s height was extenuated by its standing on a hill 250 m. above sea level. *Ratibor: die Stadt an zwei Grenzen: Der Grenzlandturm*, (publisher unknown, May 1938) n.p.

⁸ „Freikorpsehrenmal auf dem Annaberg,” *Völkische Beobachter* 140 (20 May 1940): 3. And: “Schulungslager im Grenzlandturm,” in: *Ratibor...*, n.p.

into the summer of 1939, including the annual Insurgent Union's March to the Oder, the Third of May Festivities, and various openings of monuments that glorified the third insurgency, as well as the violent government-endorsed destruction of the Graf Reden Statue (July 1939) in the municipal park of Chorzow (Königshütte). All of this propaganda served as "evidence" to support the following assertion: that from 1919 to 1939 "the Poles" had been promoting an indefatigable "war of destruction (*Vernichtungskrieg*) against everything German." In other words, Nazi agents were accusing Poles of carrying out a de facto campaign of ethnic cleansing against Germans long before such a phenomenon fully entered into realization at the end of WWII.⁹

The construction of a cultural racist discourse against "Poles" and the precocious legitimization of war against Poland was key to this propaganda. Indeed, there were various other aspects to the discourse and publicizing of the latter than just the ones I have space to describe here. For example, as part of this effort, local party cells mobilized their "experts" of borderland affairs, the Union of the German East (BDO), to hold assemblies in villages as well as coal mines and metallurgy plants in the tri-city area in order to indoctrinate the population in this Nazi version of national-regionalism—or in other words, depiction of regional affairs inherently based on party ideology and a national German perspective. Next to the themes I have already mentioned, this discourse underscored "eternal Polish aggression" against Germany, the inherent "anti-German

⁹ One of the main Nazi and BDO organs of the region, Hans Schadewald's Gleiwitz-based *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost* (hereafter ODM), was full of this propaganda, particularly in 1939. Some of the headlines included: „Neue Entlassungen deutschen Arbeiter in OstO/S,“ 26 July 1936; „Planmässige Verdrängung des Deutschen in Oberschlesien,“ 23 Aug. 1936. „Wojewode Grazynski verlangt Schlesien bis zur Oder,“ 4 May 1939; „Polen bestrafen Deutsche Geistlichen,“ 7 July 1939; „polnische Vernichtungswille tobt sich aus: der Deutsche Kulturkampf in Ostoberschlesien,“ „Neue Entlassungswelle in Ostoberschlesien,“ 12 July 1939; „Grazynski vernichtet die Oberschlesische Heimat: polonisierung der ortsfremden Elemente & das Schicksal der Grenzgänge,“ 14 July 1939, „Neue Willkürmassnahme Dr. Grazynskis,“ 29 July 1939. For general scope of Nazi propaganda against Poland, see: Eugeniusz Cezary Król, *Polska i Polacy w propagandzie narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech, 1919-1945* (Warszawa 2006).

conspiracy” between “the Poles” and the “Versailles Powers” (England and France), as well as Hitler’s “honest and ardent commitment” to “peace” with the eastern neighbor.¹⁰

In all these endeavors the NSDAP enjoyed limited, but nevertheless, significant success in its endeavors. Although the general negative predisposition to the regime on the part of locals made them natural skeptics of Nazi ideology, the party’s anti-Polish propaganda did have its persuasive force. According to the reports of informers in Gleiwitz, who were working for the Polish police, the public credibility of the BDO’s propaganda was limited. People were particularly doubtful of the organization’s claims regarding Hitler’s sincere will to peace, but nevertheless did support its harpings on the “*injustice of the partition*” of Upper Silesian in 1922. In the words of one informer’s report:

One fails to realize the effects of the ‘Union of German Ochsens’—as people in the general political circles here call the BDO—including the wide amount of ground outside of Nazi circles that it managed to win over with its agitation regarding the unacceptability of the Versailles Treaty and the self-evident need to recover the German territories lost as a result of this document.¹¹

The BDO did not openly call for war against Poland. On the contrary, in echo of the words of Nazism’s staunchest opponents, the Catholic centrists and their liberal allies, these Nazi agents propagated that the “stolen Ostoberschlesien” should be “recovered” by peaceful diplomacy.¹² According to informers, the BDO was convincing in its assertions that the conflict with Poland over the borderland was not the Nazi regime’s doing, and that by striving to take back the ceded territory, the regime was only acting in the best

¹⁰ Spy reports, most likely by German centrists and communists, that were shared with the Voivodeship police on the Polish offer the nature of the propaganda that locals were subjected to on the eve of the war. See: Odpis, „Die Lage im Mai 1939: Die Hetze gegen Polen und die Unterdrückung der polnischen Minderheit,” May 1939, Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (hereafter, APK) 38 (Policja Województwa Śląskiego)/176, doc. 15.

¹¹ Quoted from: Lagebericht vom Juni 1939, 15 June 1939, *ibid.*, doc. 32. This point also made in: Maibericht 1939, doc. 21ff.

¹² Lagebericht vom Juni..., doc. 32ff, and doc. 46. Also: Juni-Bericht 1939, same file, doc. 57.

interests of the region and of Germany.¹³ In this sense, the legacy of the revanchist conflict provided the National Socialist dictatorship with an opportunity to cloak its otherwise unpopular Social-Darwinist and imperialist-driven zeal for conquest in overtures of utilitarianism to Upper Silesia. By doing so, the Nazis able to win consent for their revanchist propaganda even among their opponents.

One significant factor that gave the Nazis this advantage was the real persecution that locals on the Polish side of the border faced from officials. Even as the violence and harassment that “Germans” suffered at the hands of government-endorsed thugs was often provoked by Nazi persecution of “Poles” in the Province, it fueled resentment against the Grażyński regime on the part of locals. And the Nazi propaganda apparatus skillfully played on this discontent and instrumentalized the harassment that border area residents faced at the hands of Polish officials, particularly during the very tense political atmosphere in the months preceding the war. For example, the BDO was quick to make the public aware of the restrictions and harassments that border crossers to Germany were facing at the hands of Polish guards at this time. To do so, they also made use of individuals who had crossed the border—and had received the appropriate political schooling from Nazi party agents—to share their “horror stories” with workers in the work place, and the public in market squares.¹⁴ Given that the discriminative measures imposed on local residents by Polish officials were real, widely known, and resented,

¹³ Ibid., doc. 45-46.

¹⁴ The NSAP Kreisleitung Hindenburg are full of records on this. See: i. Kreispropagandamt to Reichspropagandaamt in Breslau, May-August 1939, APK 147 (NSDAP Kreisl. Hindenburg)/256, doc. 28-92; ii. APK 147/258, doc. 13-175; iii. 147/257, 132-200. Also, evidence of organization of pressure on locals to flee to Western Upper Silesia by German Minority organizations, in: Lagebericht vom August 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 91. On persecution of German minority by Polish state in 1939, see: Blanke, *Orphans*, 218-232.

these tactics carried at least some success. As demonstrated by the following statement of an informer in the summer of 1939:

one is hardly able fend off this [propaganda] in the work place, since everyone has relatives on the other side whom [Polish border guards] have refused a visit. Workers come into contact with their border crossing relatives and their stories of hardship make it hardly doubtful that in Poland terror is promoted against Germans. And so all this gives substantiation and legitimation to the Nazi's hysteria against Poland.¹⁵

And in the months preceding the strike on Poland, this hysteria aimed to give substance to the notion that "Ostoberschlesien" was in need of "the Führer's liberation."¹⁶ In other words, it was to pave the rhetorical ground for the Nazi propaganda bureau's successive public message: that the Third Reich's attack on Poland was not an act of aggression but of defense.

This story came in the form of the well-known regime-orchestrated "Polish capture" of the radio station in Gleiwitz on 31 August 1939. There was more to this propaganda than just the staged takeover of this facility by Germans in Polish military uniform. In an effort to give this organized lie credibility, the local newspapers promoted it in a language that tapped into long-standing fears of an invasion of the O/S Province by Grażyński's insurgents: the headlines in the local press on 1 Sept. 1939 thus read, "Polish insurgents invade German soil!"¹⁷ Moreover, this "attack" was not just one against the radio station in Gleiwitz but—according to the press—was accompanied by artillery fire on the city of Beuthen (Bytom) by the "Polish army," which had left "two civilians dead and thirty-five injured." According to press propaganda, this shooting was meant as "a signal to the insurgents to begin to carry out the orders they received from the Polish

¹⁵ Quoted from: Lagebericht vom Juni..., doc. 32.

¹⁶ Lagebericht vom August 1939, APK 38/176, doc. 92, 95.

¹⁷ Quoted from: „Polnische Aufständische haben die oberschlesische Grenze überschritten," ODM 240 (1 Sept. 1939): front page.

army command to invade Beuthen, Gleiwitz, and Hindenburg during the ... night so as to clear the path to the Oder River” for regular soldiers.¹⁸ In this sense, the sacking of the Gleiwitz radio station was represented as part of this larger mission of the Polish state to forcefully annex the territory it had claims to. Nazi propaganda thus claimed that the Polish government was doing exactly what the German one was in actuality: dispatching local “frontier fighters”—or in other words, veterans of the military conflict 1919-22 and their trainees—to create a diversion for the invasion of the regular national army. The staged “Gleiwitz provocation,” and the wider propaganda surrounding it, thus demonstrates how the regime instrumentalized the cross-border fears and tensions developed in the course of the interwar “cold war” over the borderland to fake a Polish attack. In this sense, the Third Reich officially opened WWII under the pretext of an invasion of Germany on the part of Grażyński’s Insurgent Union.

Not even all of the propaganda that I’ve discussed so far exhausted the regime’s effort to deny that the attack on Poland marked an invasion, and that the annexation of eastern Upper Silesia was anything other than a justified act of “recovery” and “liberation.” Only hours after the Third Reich’s military forces unleashed “Blitzkrieg” on its eastern neighbor, Hitler came before the Reichstag to try to justify and rationalize the event to Germany and the world. The initial statements of his address echoed the most essential myths legitimating territorial claims, or what I have referred to as a revanchist trinity: “Danzig was and remains a German city ... The Corridor was and is German!” Moreover, he also underlined the most fundamental supporting premise for these mega-myths that both German and Polish elites had long recognized, namely the notion that having a history of promoting cultivation and development, or “cultural work,” in a

¹⁸ Quoted from: „Polen beschoss die offene Stadt Beuthen,“ ODM 241 (2 Sept. 1939): front page.

contested territory gives a nation the right to its appropriation. In the words in which Hitler echoed this principle in Germany favor: “all these areas [eastern provinces] owe their cultural development exclusively to the German people, [and] without these eastern territories would have been engulfed in the deepest of barbarism.” At the end of this opening statement the Third Reich’s dictator echoed the demonic picture of “the Poles” that the propaganda bureau had been promoting at least a year before the military strike: that of Poland as an “annexor” of German lands, and of a “brutal abuser of the German minority.” He also underscored what long before the Nazis were in power had served as a central symbol of the suffering imposed by the cession of the Prussian provinces to Poland on the part of the “Versailles Powers:” the refugees who “were forced to flee their Heimat,” which Hitler noted as “over one million in number.” Although he does not make any explicit references to “Ostoberschlesien,” this territory is part and parcel of his conception of the “Ostgebiete (eastern provinces)” that he spoke to.¹⁹

Apart from its radical slurs, including labeling of the eastern neighbor with terms such as “barbarism,” much of Hitler’s speech echoed the more mainstream revanchist propaganda endorsed even by pro-republicans during the Weimar era. As a prime example of this liberal-endorsed discourse, Kayser’s propaganda film, “Land under the Cross” serves as a relevant point of comparison to Hitler’s address here. The dictator’s speech echoes the mega-myth of the timeless “Germanness” of this “eastern Prussian territory,” which the film had also underlined twelve years prior. This myth was based on premises that included the following, all of which were echoed in both the Nazi and Weimar era propaganda: the notion of the eastern Prussian territories as historical products of “Kultur” and “Arbeit,” the “capture” and “robbery” of a German land by “the

¹⁹ Quoted from: “Der Führer spricht,” ODM 241 (2 Sept. 1939).

Poles” and the “Versailles Dictate,” the subjection of Germans who had been left in Poland as a result to “hatred against everything German” on the part of Poles, and finally, the “loss of Heimat” by the refugees of the partition.²⁰ All this demonstrates that by overturning the territorial settlement of the Versailles Treaty and Geneva Convention (1922), the Nazis capitulated on a familiar revanchist discourse that Germans across political platforms had supported. The “recovery” of long agitated for territories thus gave the initial phase of the regime’s militant empire-building a deceptively attractive façade.

Apart from these similarities, the Nazi revanchist discourse was also different from that which dominated during the Weimar era. Whereas particularly in Upper Silesia, Weimar era revanchism took on a strongly regional character, the Nazi regime strove to get away from this particularity by promoting a *total conception* of “the German East (der deutsche Osten),” which included territories beyond just those that had belonged to the Prussian Empire. As discussed in chapter three, “Greater Silesia (Gesamtschlesien)” marked one of the greater provincial variants of this larger conception.²¹ In September of 1939, the Third Reich used the labels of “the German East” and “Greater Silesia” to legitimize its annexation of not only the formerly Prussian territories that German leaders had long-standing claims to, including the Polish Voivodeship and Czechoslovakian Hultschin Provinces, but also the territories that neighbored them to the east. These included the formerly Habsburg Teschen area (Tessin/Olsagebiet/Zaolzia), as well as

²⁰ Source: Ulrich Kayser, Director, „Land unterm Kreuz: ein Film von Oberschlesiens schwierigsten Zeit,“ Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv.

²¹ Scholarly and quasi-scholarly propaganda that promoted this identity included: i. Heinz Rogmann, *Schlesiens Ostgrenze im Bild*, (Breslau: Selbstverlag der Landesgruppe Schlesien des BDO, circa 1938); ii. Friedrich Heiß, *Das Schlesienbuch: Ein Zeugnis Ostdeutschen Schicksals*, (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1938); iii. *Schlesische Jahrbuch für deutsche Kulturarbeit im gesamtschlesische Raume* (annual periodical); iv. *Schlesische Stimme: Monatschrift fuer Volkstum und Heimatarbeit*.

Dabrower Basin. The regime skillfully incorporated all of these areas into one large “Gau Schlesien” governed (to 1941) by Gauleiter Joseph Wagner from its administrative capital of Breslau.²² Moreover it mobilized its Ostforschung academic consortium to draft narratives that symbolically represented the Dabrower Basin, which had never been a part of the historical Silesian province, nor even a Germanic state, as a natural part of a “Greater Silesian” province.²³ This again demonstrates how the regime instrumentalized long-standing German territorial claims to justify the conquest of areas that went beyond these.

Territorial “recovery” and the “return home” marked the idealistic aspect of the Third Reich’s militant empire-building and murderous biological engineering ventures. Whereas initially the term “recovered provinces” (*wiedergewonnene Länder*)²⁴ referred to the annexed Polish and Czechoslovak regions, by late 1940 the French Alsace and Lorraine and the Belgian East Cantons were also labeled by it. Moreover, by this time cultural officials promoted the popularization of “recovering” “ancient German territories” in tandem with the mission of “returning home [*Heimkehr*]” people of “German blood” from all over Europe, particularly provinces that still lay outside the

²² For the parts of Gau Schlesien, see: Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej: między utopią niemieckiej wspólnoty narodowej a rzeczywistością okupacji na terenach wcielonych do Trzeciej Rzeszy* (Katowice, 2006) 97-122.

²³ „Heimkehr: zu O/S kam das Dombrowär Revier, das durch deutsche Oberschlesische Kraft gebaut aber durch Russland und Polen ausgebeutet worden war.” The notion of one wholesome region was also constructed through studies of folk costume, whereby the woman’s corsage in from Rossberg (outskirts of Beuthen) was deemed to be similar to that of Dombrowka. See the main tour guide for the region: Gerhard Sappok, Joh. Papritz, und Hermann Weidhaas, et al., eds. *Oberschlesiens Großstädte: ein Führer und Handbuch für Fremde und Einheimische*, (Leipzig: Verlag S. Hirzel, 1943) 94, 143

²⁴ In addition to this phrase, the areas were also referred to officially as the “annexed territories” (*eingegliederten Gebiete*), the “new East,” “new Gauen,” “Ostland,” apart from the “German East.” The BDO and academic Ostforschung consortium used the media to raise excitement about the “recovery” of these “ancient German lands,” which included not only the formerly Polish and Czechoslovak provinces, but by late in 1940, also annexed western territories. See: Götz Aly & Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the logic of destruction* (Princeton 2002) 73. This work uses the term “re-incorporated territories.”

boundaries of the new German empire. This mission of bringing “German blood and soil” “Home into the Reich” (“*Heim ins Reich*”) served to rally the support and collaboration of revanchist-minded idealists to work on the realization of this subset of the regime’s larger “New European Order.”²⁵ Otto Spatz’s 1940 popular scholarly publication, *Recovered Germany (Wiedergewonnenes Deutschland)*, expressed this nationalist benevolent idealism in the following words:

German land and German people in East and West, who have had endured years of forceful annexation by foreign states, have now returned to the Reich, of which they are now part, thanks to the goodwill of the Führer.²⁶

The regime’s Silesian propagandists also idealized the annexation of the former Voivodeship, and its eastern extensions, as “Ostoberschlesien being rejoined with its motherland.”²⁷ In this sense they echoed a long-standing slogan that many German centrists and liberals, as well as Polish elites, endorsed as a means of idealizing demands for territorial revision. All of these romanticized overtures blurred a very different reality: manifested in the “General Plan for the East” (*Generalplan Ost*), the Nazis’ “New Order” was not just about “recovering” lost peoples and territories, but also about cleansing the Reich of the “unwanted” via forced expulsion and resettlement, killings, genocide (against Jews), and the material expropriation that accompanied these processes.²⁸

²⁵ On recent works on the various facets of this, including expuls, resettlement, and genocide, see: Isabel Heinemann, “‘Deutsches Blut’: Die Raseexperten der SS und die Volksdeutschen”, and, Rainer Schulze, „Der Führer Ruft!’ Zur Rückholung der Volksdeutschen aus dem Osten,” in: Jerzy Kochanowski and Maike Sach, ed., *Die "Volksdeutschen" in Polen, Frankreich, Ungarn und die Tschechoslowakei: Mythos und Realität* (Osnabrück, 2006). Also: Ally & Heim, *Architects*, esp. Chapter 4 and 12.

²⁶ Quoted from: Otto H. Spatz, *Wiedergewonnenes deutsches Land*, (München-Berlin, 1941), 3 (“Vorwort des Herausgebers”). See also: 47-211.

²⁷ During the Kattowitz rally of 15 Oct. 1939, Gauleiter Joseph Wagner posits the idea of Ostoberschlesien’s return to the „Mütterprovinz,” or in other words Schlesien. Source: „Es gibt nur ein Schlesien,” ODM 16 Oct. 1939. Also: Wolfgang Förster and Friedrich Stumpe, eds., *Schönere Heimat*, (Breslau: Schlesienverlag, circa 1941) 18.

²⁸ On „Generalplan Ost”: Andrzej Leszek Szczesniak, *Plan Zagłady Słowian*, (Radom, 2001); Ingo Haar, „Inklusion und Genozid: Raum- und Bevölkerungspolitik im besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1944,” in: Dietrich Beyrau Mathias Beer, Cornelia Rauh, ed., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in*

Next to the notion of “recovered” and “returned home,” eastern Upper Silesia—and the annexed provinces in general—were also referred to as territories “liberated”²⁹ from “Polish tyranny.” At the heart of this myth was the official narrative of a “Polish war against everything German,” which the regime’s cultural agents also extended to incorporate the events of September 1939 (the so-called “September Days”). The last, and most intensive, effort to demonize the Poles were the number of “atrocities against Volksdeutsche (German minority members)” that the propaganda bureau had orchestrated in various parts of Poland’s western borderlands, including in Pless (Pszczyna) and other parts of the Voivodeship. The epitome of this aspect of the Polonophobic propaganda was the so-called “Bromberg Bloody Sunday” (Bromberg/Bydgoszcz), based on photos of slain civilians which they noted were “Germans” “massacred by Poles.”³⁰ Based on these fabricated accounts, for the rest of the war era the Nazi party and its organizations propagated that “the Poles had brutally murdered” as few as “10,000” and as many as “60,000” innocent “German civilians.”³¹ The regime thus posited the notion of a mass murder of Germans by Poles so as not only to incite hatred against the latter, but to justify the real mass murders, and ethnic cleansing, it carried out against this group. Once the initial uproar surrounding the

Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950 (Essen, 2009), 35-61; Isabel Heinemann, „Wissenschaft und Homogenisierungsplanungen für Ostmitteleuropa,” in: Heinemann & Patrick Wagner, ed., *Wissenschaft - Planung - Vertreibung* (Stuttgart 2006) 45-72; Ally & Heim, *Architects*, chapter 12.

²⁹ This also noted in Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956*, (Osnabrück, 2008) 298.

³⁰ See: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 72. And also: Król, *Polska*, 274-9; Doris Bergen, “Instrumentalization of Volksdeutschen in German Propaganda in 1939: Replacing and Erasing Poles, Jews and Other victims,” *German Studies Review* 31:3 (October 2008) 447-70; Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: the Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939*, (Lexington, 1993) 232-37.

³¹ “Losungen unseres Volkstumskampfes: ganz klare Scheidung vom Polentum.” Kattowitzer Zeitung (hereafter KZ) 46 (16 Feb. 1940), n.p. Also: Król, *Polska*, 232-37.

invasion died down, the regime turned to creating a tradition of celebrating the “recovery.” I now turn to this issue.

A Revival of Border Rallies

All the variegated propaganda efforts aimed to construct the official foundation myth of “liberated” and “recovered” “Ostoberschlesien” for the annexed eastern Upper Silesian territory culminated in a revival of the interwar tradition of revanchist border rallies in Katowice (now officially Kattowitz). Indeed, officials were not explicit about drawing precedence from the interwar era rallies on the former Polish and German side of the border. However, the place that the new official festivities were held, their purpose, and the discourse and symbolism they conveyed, made it clear they were doing so. The new authorities aimed to uproot the population for a “clean break” from “Polish” identity, as well as the various hybrids of regionalism/localism (in the official language, “Upper Silesian particularism”).³² Moreover, they wanted to take advantage of the seemingly neutral mission of schooling locals on how to be “German” to raise a “new man” here—a “Nazi German.” No longer in need to promote one of their former functions of agitating for territory and defending against the neighbor’s revanchist offence, the revived border rallies now focused on promoting the second function: to nationally re-assimilate the public of this border area of multifarious identities. In this sense, they were to continue to serve as forums of “public enlightenment” (*Volksbildung*). Before turning to examine the actual rally I will discuss the ideological premises and official concepts that formed the basis of its broad pedagogical function.

³² This used in: i. „Reinliche Scheidung“ KZ 186 (8 July 1940); ii. „Losungen unseres Volkstumskampfes: ganz klare Scheidung vom Polentum,“ iii. KZ 46 (16 Feb. 1940); iv. Landrat Kattowitz, „Lagebericht für Nov. 1940,“ Geheimstaatsarchiv Preussische Kulturbesitz, (hereafter, GStA PK) HA Schlesien, Rep. 201 e. (hereafter omitted), Nr. Ost 4, Regierung, Kattowitz (hereafter, Reg. Katt.), 18, n.p.

Relaying the new official foundation myth for the annexed Industrial District to the public via a revived wave of border rallies marked the initial phase of a wider mission to “re-Germanize” this society, a fundamental facet of the regime’s acculturation program. This term was meant to promote the notion the regime was not interested in turning “Poles” into “Germans,” but in “winning back” “lost” “German blood” for the nation. It is already well known that Hitler regarded “Germanization” (turning “Poles” into “Germans”) be a failed practice of the Kaiserreich, and one that went against the Nazi’s fundamentally biological (“racial”) conception of nationality that made switching the latter on the part of the individual at least theoretically impossible. In this sense, officials avoided using the term “Germanization” (*Germanisierung*) and instead used “Eindeutschung,”—which I translate here as “re-Germanization”—which connoted that this was a process of the re-assimilation (re-socialization) of “biological Germans” that had been “stolen” by foreign powers, rather than assimilating foreigners. Apparently even the use of this term (*Eindeutschung*) did not convince officials that what they were actually doing was quite different from the assimilation politics that cultural officials had practiced in this border era before the Nazi regime—and indeed, because it was hardly so. Thus, in mid-April of 1942, regional governors ordered that the use of this term be replaced with one that made the “winning back” aspect of the Nazi’s borderland “cultural work” blatantly clear—“Wiedereindeutschung” (again “re-Germanization” with the prefix “re”/“wieder” included).³³ This implicitly constructive term, “re-Germanization,”

³³ Fritz Bracht, Anordnung A 71, *Gau Anordnungsblatt* Ausgabe K, Folge 10/42, (17 Apr. 1942), in: Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv (hereafter RGVA), 1232 (Oberpräsident der Provinz O/S, Kattowitz)/35, doc. 112ff. It’s important to note that often administrators did not have a clear cut sense of proper terminology. For example, in October of 1941 the RKF (Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums) demanded that the term „Eindeutschung“ be applied to denote the turning of „threes“ (DVL cat. 3) into full-fledged Germans (here via making them full citizens), while for „twos“ the

had its de-constructive counterpart, which was not as often used in the official discourse, “de-Polonization” (“*Beseitigung der Polonisierung*”).³⁴

The premier “Freedom Day” (*Tag der Freiheit*) rally marked the official initiation of the “re-Germanization” acculturation program. First commemorated on Sunday, 15 October 1939, and thereafter on the more fitting first of September, the very name of this occasion already echoed the foundation myth of “recovered Ostoberschlesien” it served to promote.³⁵ The premier staging of the festivities marking this “holiday” were particularly crucial for the regime since they were aimed to awaken public consciousness to the new national identity of their local Heimat. To serve this purpose this event was simultaneously a forum for the promotion of a new national-regional symbolic enclave, or in other words, the symbols and discourse that went into representing the former Voivodeship as an inherent part of the Third Reich. The most fundamental of these was the phrase that marked the central message of the event, namely that the “German” native population in the region “gives outward jubilation for ... the re-union of Ostoberschlesien with the motherland, from which they were never separated in spirit.”³⁶ In other words, like the borderland rallies of the interwar era, this one served to represent the official identity of the populace of this borderland. Not at all so different from the „Lud Śląski,” the new „Silesian” (or “Upper Silesian Person”) was an unrelentingly defiant upholder of his Germandom.

term „Rückdeutschung” should be used in this respect. Source: Abschrift, „Vermerk über die Abteilungsleiter-Besprechung,” 11 Oct 1941, BArch, R 49 (RKF)/3113, doc. 1.

³⁴ „Beseitigung der Polonisierung“ from: *Laberbericht für Januar 1940*, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg. Katt., 23, n.p. See: Haar, *Raum-*, 44-5.

³⁵ A similar official festivity was staged in the Warthegau. See: Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland*, (New York, 2010) 250.

³⁶ Quoted from: “Grossdeutschland nahm uns auf,” *Kattowitzer Zeitung* (hereafter, KZ) (16 October 1939): cover page.

Inadvertently also in the spirit of Grażyński's Third of May rallies, this event served foremost as a glorification of the "recovery" of this territory by arms. The governor (Gauleiter) of "Gau Schlesien," Joseph Wagner, the highest ranking official to speak at this rally, declared that the war the Third Reich had started had been one for "our holiest of rights" to allow "our brothers of the eastern provinces [Ostmark] to unite ourselves with the Reich." Moreover, he also argued that by denying Germany its rights, Poland and the allies "imposed the war on us" "which we did not want for war's sake."³⁷ Along with Hitler's Reichstag Address of 1 Sept. 1939, this statement thus demonstrates how the Nazis used claims to the formerly Prussian provinces—and not mere ideological overtures to "Lebensraum"—to justify the initiation of their imperialist war. In this sense, the regime conveniently appropriated the almost two-decade long political culture of "revanchism," which even some of the staunchest supporters of the republic—and opponents of Nazism—helped to develop, and used it as a way of representing its imperialism as "recovery" and "liberation."

That they were drawing precedence from this trans-national "cold war" over territories was all the more clear in the new authorities' convenient choice of the Voivodeship Government Building (VGB) and "Katowice Forum" as a site for their rally. Although the choice stemmed from pragmatic purposes, it was nevertheless still an ironic one. After all, the VGB and its surroundings had been the core symbolic showcase of "Polish-Silesian" identity, which was fundamentally based on discourse that held "Germans" to be eternal oppressors and the Prussia era a period of "captivity" and "slavery." Hasty to stage the first rally to proclaim the territory's renationalization, the

³⁷ Quoted from: Hannes Peuckert, „'Es gibt nur ein Schlesien!' Gauleiter Wagner beim ‚Tag der Freiheit‘ in Kattowitz,“ *Ostdeutsche Morgenpost* (hereafter, ODM), (16 October 1939): 2ff.

regime's agents made only cosmetic changes to this ceremonial ground and the city as a whole: these included the destruction of Polish statues, removal of public Polish language signs, "re-Germanization" of street and place names, as well as showering the VGB and surrounding parade grounds with the proper party fanfare.³⁸

As an opportunistic demonstration of "loyalty" to the new overlords by locals, this premier grand rally, like smaller and more local ones similar to it, was a well-attended event. According to the former provincial daily of the Voivodeship's German minority (Volksbund), *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, which now, under strict Nazi auspices, became the official newspaper of the Industrial District, 30,000 had attended.³⁹ In one respect, the sizeable turnout was owed to grass-roots mobilization by the Nazi party and its organizations. The new authorities placed as much pressure on locals to attend their rallies as they did on them to join Nazi organizations.⁴⁰ In another, it was owed to the fact that locals were anxious to demonstrate "loyalty" to the new government that imposed itself on them. Thus, during the first months of the annexation at least, locals attended

³⁸ The NSDAP's main daily, *Kattowitzer Zeitung* (KZ) even boasted that regime officials had destroyed the monument to the Polish insurgent that was being built in the late 1930s in front of the VGB and used its pedestal to support the German/Prussian eagle, which was erected just in time for the „Freedom Day“ rally (15 Oct. 1939). On the other hand, KZ simultaneously besmirched the Poles for having destroyed the „Monument to the Two Kaisers“ (erected before WWI) in Kattowitz to use its high pedestal as a monument to the „Unknown Silesian Insurgent.“ To the Propagandaamt this constituted „proof“ that the Poles merely built their cultural relict on a rooted „German“ culture in this city, contributing little of their own. This in: i. Hannes Peuckert, „'Es gibt nur ein Schlesien!'“ 2ff. ii. „Erst Sockel eines Kaiserdenkmals, dann ‚Aufständischen Grab,‘“ KZ 23 Mar 1941, n.p. See also: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 86-7; Tomasz Fałęcki, „Nazwy miejscowe Katowic jako obraz przemian politycznych i kulturalnych,” in Antoni Barciak, ed., *Katowice w 138. rocznice uzyskania praw miejskich* (Katowice, 2004) 22-9.

³⁹ Source: Peuckert, „'Es gibt nur ein Schlesien!'“

⁴⁰ Available evidence of party-organizational mobilization for this rally is from the NSDAP Kreisleitung Königshütte: NSDAP Gau Schlesien, To: Kreisleitung Königshütte, 9 October 1939, 149 (Kreisleitung Königshütte)/23, doc. 28-29. On NSDAP pressure on locals to mobilize to their cause, see: Adam Dziurok, *Śląskie Rozrachunki: Władze Komunistyczne a byli członkowie organizacji nazistowskich* (Warszawa, 2000) 38-9.

rallies in—what according to official reports—were favorable numbers, and also signed themselves up for Nazi organizations.⁴¹

In order to understand the rallies and other regime events geared to “re-Germanize” the masses, it’s important to note the nature and causes of this “participation.” In Katowice and its surrounding county alone, an area of 483,200 in population size in December of 1939, 54,629 individuals signed themselves up for the BDO by March of 1940—or in other words about 11% of the total population.⁴² Before the establishment of the “German National List” (*Deutsche Volksliste*) in 1941, this Nazi organization specializing in eastern borderland affairs functioned as one of the leading regime agents for determining whether locals were “of German” blood and to school them on how to be “good Germans.”⁴³ Neither this sign-up rate nor any other token of participation marked a necessary indicator either of the national identity or the political conviction of the locals involved. Rather, as party reports often underscored, native residents of the Industrial District were commonly driven by social and material interests, and not by genuine commitment, in their various gestures of “loyalty to the Third

⁴¹ Such reports include: i. Politische Lagebericht für Februar 1940, APK 148 (NSDAP Kreisleitung Kattowitz)/1, doc. 1; ii. Pertaining to „very good“ attendance at the „public enlightenment“ evenings of the DAF: Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF), Arbeits- und Lagerberichte für February 1940, APK, 149 (NSDAP Kreisleitung Königshütte)/119, doc. 68; iii. Lagebericht für Juni 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg. Kattowitz, 23, n.p.; iv. Polizeipräsident Ost-O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht für Februar 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg. Kattowitz, 7, doc. 19.

⁴² The BDO membership statistic from: Politische Lagebericht der Kreisleitung NSDAP Katt., March 1940, APK 148, doc. 23 (Blatt 5). Population statistics from: „Bevölkerungszahlen der Kreise,” APK 122 (Reichspropagandaamt, hereafter RPA)/8, doc. 11.

⁴³ According to the organization’s self-representing propaganda: „Der BDO baut mit seiner Organisationen die Einheitsfront des Deutschtums deisem Gebiete auf. Aus dem BDO baut sich dann die NSDAP auf.“ Quoted from: Gauverband Schlesien des BDO Aussenstelle Kattowitz, (not dated circa 1940), APK 149/21, doc. 4; ii. „Aus der Mitglieder des BDOs wird die parteit die würdigste in Ihren Reichen aufnehmen,” same file, doc. 3; iii. „Der BDO ist die grosse Erziehungsorganisation des Deutschen Volkes,” same file, doc. 2. See also: Karol Fiedor, *Bund Deutscher Osten w systemie antypolskiej propagandy* (Warszawa-Wrocław, 1977) 15-49; Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk*, 267.

Reich.”⁴⁴ Indeed, they were also motivated by the fear of social reprisals and even punitive measures if they did not at least mimic the political activism that the new authorities expected of them.⁴⁵ Former insurgents—those who survived the combat and did not flee the Voivodeship along with Grażyński and other high-ranking government officials—were particularly quick to sign themselves up for the BDO in an effort to hide their political past and sport the official image of being German.⁴⁶

The most well-know gesture mimicking German nationality among the locals was the declaration of this identity in the Nazi census (the so-called “finger print” census or “Fingerabdruck“) of mid-December 1939 among 77.81% of this population. Not just opportunism but also fear and pressure from local Nazi authorities was behind this declaration of German nationality. About 10% of the population declared “Silesian” as their nationality, and only 11.9% “Polish.”⁴⁷ By two months later it became clear that “Poles” faced loss of job, property, and, as rumored, were also to be systematically transferred out of the region, most to the Generalgouvernement (GG). In reaction to the news, and because the census has been based entirely on one’s subjective notion of national identity, a number of those who originally declared themselves as “Poles”

⁴⁴ A good example of this is a report by the O/S RPA on the county of Pless (Pszczyna) in December of 1939: out of 7,177 residents in this area, the RPA considered 80% to be „unclear political elements.“ According to the report: „Sie betonen gross und breit heute ihr Deutschtum, um wirtschaftlicher Vorteile zu gewinnen, wie sie früher aus den gleichen Gründen sich als Polen bezeichneten. ... Dabei wäre es vollkommen verfehlt, wenn man ihrem heute Bekenntnis zum Deutschtum ohne weiteres Glauben schenken würde.“ Quoted from: Bericht auf den Fragebogen von 15 Dec. 1939, APK 122 (RPA)/8, doc. 1ff; ii. In similar respect, the RPA Kreisleitung Tarnowitz also characterized the mood of the 80% of the “German” population (a total population of 107,000 in Dec. 1939) of this county as having: “kein Gefühl für Begeisterung.” Quoted from: RPA, Kreisleitung Tarnowitz, Lagebericht, 5 January 1940, same file, doc. 29ff; iii. The Polizeipräsident of the formerly Polish parts of the Industrial District underscored that all the “good turnouts at the rallies of the party and BDO” marked “opportunism.” Quoted from: Polizeipräsident, Lagebericht für April 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4, Reg. Kat., 7, doc. 41-2.

⁴⁵ See: Dziurok, *Śląskie*, 38-9; and also penultimate section of this chapter.

⁴⁶ NSDAP Treuhand (HTO) noted this: der Trauhänder und Liquidator, 19 August 1940, APK 119 (Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz), doc. 18. See also: Dziurok, *Śląskie*, 36.

⁴⁷ These statistics from: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 174.

petitioned their local administrators for a change of their declaration to “German.”⁴⁸ The widespread nature of this change of mind marked one of the factors behind the regime’s skepticism as to the validity of the census results, and the possibility of determining nationality among Upper Silesians on a mere subjective basis. Eventually, the statistical products of this ethnic screening were de facto nullified by the introduction of a more complex rubric for making a “clean break” between “Poles” and “Germans” in 1941.⁴⁹

In the meantime regional authorities estimated that roughly 80% of the residents of the formerly Polish parts were “conditionally reliable,” or in other words, those who could be “raised” to be “good Germans.”⁵⁰ The “Freedom Day” rally marked the premier event aimed for this purpose. Foremost, it was to convey the popularity of the “recovery”/“liberation” and the regime that delivered it. As such, regional NSDAP officials took a number of efforts to extenuate the event’s image of “popular volition.” Taking precedence from the interwar culture of border rallies, regional regime leaders mobilized coal miners to march in uniform along with folk costume wearers. In this respect, they also took this occasion to publicly represent Otto Ulitz, the legendary leader of the Volksbund, as a “Fore-Fighter,” a title that not only denoted his service “in the struggle for Germandom” but also his devotion to “Nazi ideals.”⁵¹ In this sense the Nazis demonstrated that they were just as eager to usurp and Nazify the history of the German

⁴⁸ Polizeipräsident, Lagebericht für Februar 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4, Reg. Kat., 7, doc. 19. It’s important to note that only about 2/3 of the local population participated in the census. Most who did not were from the countryside. As was a typical reaction on their part for failure to mobilize native Upper Silesians, authorities blamed this on underground Polish propaganda. i. NSDAP Kreisleitung Königshütte, “An alle Ortsgruppenbeauftragte,” 4 Apr. 1940, APK 149/18, doc. 194; ii. Polizeipräsident Ostoberschlesische Industriegebiet, Lagerbericht f. February 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg. Kattowitz, 7, doc. 19.

⁴⁹ This census also discussed by: Adam Ehrlich, “Between Germany and Poland: ethnic cleansing and the politicization of ethnicity in Upper Silesia under National Socialism and communism,” (Unpublished Dissertation: University of Indiana-Bloomington, 2006) 59-60.

⁵⁰ This was the opinion of authorities even before the „Fingerabdruck.” This evident in: i. Polizeipräsident Ostoberschlesische Industriegebiet, Lagerbericht für Dezember 1939, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg. Kattowitz, 7, doc. 1ff.

⁵¹ Peuckert, „Es gibt,“ and „Grossdeutschland nahm uns auf.“

minority's social and political activism in the Voivodeship, just as they had been that of the "frontier fighters" of 1919-22. To do this they turned Ulitz and his cohort of the interwar era Volksbund activists into privileged public celebrities. In addition to the title of "Fore-Fighters" many high ranking members of this cohort also received shiny posts in the regional government. Remembered particularly for his struggle for German schooling, Ulitz was thus appointed to the post of the regional Minister of Education, while his colleague, and former leader of the Kulturbund, Viktor Kauder, was appointed to that of Director of the new (German) "Silesian Library" in Kattowitz.⁵² It hardly mattered to regime leaders that Ulitz had not been a committed Nazi, and even resisted the Nazification of the German minority during the interwar era. More important to the NSDAP was to symbolically root itself in "the history" of the region by representing Ulitz and other veterans as long-time Nazis.

At this rally, the former Volksbund leader also served as an "eyewitness" to the new NSDAP-serving master narrative of the region's history, which officials took the occasion to publicly promote. Carrying the title "Fore-Fighter," Ulitz thus officialized the myth of Upper Silesia as a "land of struggle" (*Kampfland*) where the rooted "German" natives had been engaging in a "war between peoples" (*Volkstumskampf*) for centuries.⁵³ This scenario of permanent conflict was particularly appealing for nationalist and Social-Darwinist political movements, which is why it had not only been promoted by the Nazis, but also, in similar version, by Grażyński and the PZZ ("Polish Western Union"). Just as the Voivodeship's governor had taken occasion of his own border rallies to promote

⁵² See: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 342 and 344.

⁵³ He underscored the „Kampfland“ myth by issuing the following statement during his address: „Das Deutschtum, das jetzt in das Vaterland zurückkehre, sei *im Feuer des nationalen Selbsthauptungskampfes* geläutert und gehärtet worden.“ (Emphasis mine) Quoted from: Peuckert, „Es gibt.“

himself at the head of his Insurgent Union as “Silesia’s liberator,” so too did the Nazis here in their use of Ulitz. Walking up to the podium placed on the long pedestal in front of the main façade of the VGB, this “Fore-Fighter” thanked “the Führer” on behalf of “the Silesian people” for “rescue from Polish slavery.”⁵⁴

The promotion of this new master narrative in turn served to lay the ideological ground for the regime’s politics of social engineering—which officials already forecasted at this rally. Disseminating an anti-Polish culturally racist discourse was one of the prime pillars of this operative ideology of ethnic cleansing. In his public address, the Gauleiter Joseph Wagner also announced that the Polish era marked “the ruin” (“*Verdarb*”) of Ostoberschlesien.⁵⁵ Indeed, the idea that by way of their Germanophobia and inability to uphold “German standards” of “Arbeit” and “Kultur,” Poland was ruining this borderland dated back to the mainstream revanchist discourse of the Weimar era. The Nazis radicalized this propaganda, including by explicitly using the term, “polnische (Miss-)Wirtschaft, or “Polish mismanagement,” which Wagner also used in his statement.⁵⁶ Next to the “Polish anti-German war of destruction,” “Polnische Wirtschaft” marked the two central pillars of Nazi Polonophobic discourse, which formed the ideological backbone of the regime’s politics of cleansing and repression.⁵⁷ These two ideas marked radicalized echoes of accusations of “persecution”/“enslavement” as well as “ruin”/“neglect” that Polish and German elites cried against each other during the border rallies of 1922-1931.

⁵⁴ Quoted from Ulitz’s speech in: Peuckert, „Es gibt.“

⁵⁵ Wagner’s full statement in this regard: „Nur noch kurze Zeit und es ist alles das gutgemacht, was *polnische Misswirtschaft verdarb*...“ (Emphasis mine) Quoted from: *ibid*, n.p.

⁵⁶ Quoted from: *ibid*, n.p.

⁵⁷ On the socioeconomic dimensions of this discourse see: Hubert Orłowski, “*Polnische Wirtschaft*” : zum deutschen Polendiskurs der Neuzeit (Wiesbaden 1996).

This discourse of “German” Upper Silesians as victims of persecution and ruin (*“Verschandelung”*) served foremost to forge a utopian image of “united Oberschlesien” in the Third Reich. In chapter three, I addressed how Grażyński’s promise of a “better” borderland went hand-in-hand with his discursive besmirching of Prussian era “cultural work” in the territory of the Voivodeship. Indeed, Nazi officials also promoted this strategy of denigrating the work of their Polish predecessors in this territory, albeit in a more radical and racist tone. The “Freedom Day” rally formed the first occasion for officials to refer to the “degradation” and “disfigurement” of landscape and culture, so that they could extenuate the “glory” of what was to come. In the words of Gauleiter Wagner:

Now the German people on this former Polish territory have been steered in a better course. With time this land will take on a different character in all walks of life as that which was once imposed on it, a character that only exists there where there is Germany.⁵⁸

In 1926, the SPD Prussian Minister, Gustav Severing, called on the people of the O/S Province to through everyday work “prove that they are better than their eastern neighbor,” since this would in turn demonstrate to the world that the eastern part of the borderland would be better off with Germany than Poland. Wagner’s statement was similar in this respect: in an effort to morally tie locals to the Third Reich, he ushered out a promise of progress and improvement—one that very quickly proved a huge challenge for authorities to deliver on. This statement piggy-backed on an already longstanding more in the Polish-German political culture of territorial appropriation of the Upper Silesian borderland: namely, that the promotion of progress and cultural cultivation underscored a nation’s right to territories. Although the regime no longer had to contest

⁵⁸ Quoted from: Peuckert, „Es gibt.“

an existing Polish state on demonstrating the superiority of its “cultural work” over that of its rival, it still had to live up to public expectations, and in particular, to the popular memory of the “achievements” of the Poles during the interwar era.

The propaganda campaign that accompanied the Nazi strike against the Voivodeship and the revival of the border rallies all served as venues of promoting the myth of the annexation as a “recovery” and “liberation.” These spectacles marked the Nazi’s instrumentalization of the culture of the Polish-German cultural “cold war” of the region to deny that the annexation of eastern Upper Silesia was an imperial venture. Moreover, this propaganda conveyed the basic ideological pillars of the new identity, and of the new nationalization politics, for this territory. Fundamental in this regard were the notions that, having been “reconnected to its German motherland,” the eternal “land of struggle,” Upper Silesia was to undergo a “progressive” process of “re-Germanization” to overcome the traits left by “Polish” “aggression” and “tyranny.” These core ideological pillars served to legitimate and romanticize the politics of reshaping landscape and minds that the Nazis promoted throughout the war era. These politics in turn marked the cultural counterparts of the bloody and dislocating population politics, into which they also served to fuel a flair of idealism. Since expulsion, genocide, resettlement, and immigration formed the most impactful and conflict ridden aspect of the Nazi project, I now turn to give a brief overview of this already well researched topic.

“Gardening Society” (1939-45)

Unbounded by law, and, until mid-1941, unhampered by war in the East, the Nazi regime had free reign to try to engineer society according to its ideological premises. The annexed territories were to form the muster areas of the Third Reich’s murderous and

disruptive zeal to remake society. In the eyes of the regime, the expulsion of “Poles” and “Jews,” went hand-in-hand with resettlement of Germans from the Eastern Europe, as well as the “re-nationalization” (officially “Umvolkung”)⁵⁹ of the native population. Although it was not exactly a blueprint for all Nazi policies to this end, scholars have used the “General Plan for the East” (drafted in June of 1942) as a reference to the inherent connection between all these variables of the social engineering effort.⁶⁰

Jews, and those the regime identified as such, were the main victims of this grand scheme. In eastern Upper Silesia, their doom began already by the second month of the annexation, as 5,000 were expelled from an assembly point in Kattowitz. Prior to meeting this fate, most were also expropriated and impoverished.⁶¹ Before being shipped to death camps by 1941, these individuals were transferred to ghettos established in the neighboring Dabrower Basin. The decision to amass this population in this area was owed to the large percentage of Jews that inhabited the Basin before the war, forming popular majorities of the area’s main cities, Sosnowitz (Sosnowiec) and Bendsburg (Będzin). By war’s end the vast majority of interwar German Upper Silesia’s circa 3,000

⁵⁹ This term has also been translated into the English as „ethnic conversion.“ See: Aly & Heim, *Architects*, 87.

⁶⁰ See: Aly & Heim, *Architects*, chapter 12; Isabel Heinemann, „„Deutsches Blut’: Die Raseexperten der SS und die Volksdeutschen“; iii. Rainer Schulze, “Der Führer Ruft!” Zur Rückholung der Volksdeutschen aus dem Osten,” 187, both in: Jerzy Kochanowski and Maïke Sach, ed., *Die "Volksdeutschen" in Polen, Frankreich, Ungarn und die Tschechoslowakei: Mythos und Realität* (Osnabrück, 2006) 182; Haar, „Inklusion,” 56; Heinemann, “Wissenschaft,” 45-72; Szcześniak, *Plan*; Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, “Violence as the Basis of National Socialist Landscape Planning in the ‘Annexed Eastern Areas,’” in: Franz-Joseph Brüggemeier, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, (Athens, 2005) 242-256.

⁶¹ Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 220. According to this author, circa 100,000 were impoverished in the Katowice Regency (Prussian Upper Silesia and Dabrower Basin) before their expulsion.

Jews, and circa 5,000 of the Polish side of the region, fell victim to the various murderous variables that marked the Holocaust.⁶²

Scholars underscore the labor needs of industry as a major factor impeding the regime's aim to make a final "clean break" between "Poles" and "Germans."⁶³ So as not to disrupt industrial production for the war cause, the full realization of this project was put off until the ultimately unrealized "Endsieg" ("final victory"). The mostly agrarian Warthegau (Poznań/Posen & Wielkopolska region) was actually the only annexed region where expulsions and resettlements occurred on a large scale, and thus a kind of "Mustergau" for Nazi population politics.⁶⁴ In contrast, in annexed Upper Silesia most of the population remained sedentary. According to the 1943 official balance sheet of the SS, up to that year circa 80,000 "foreigners" or in other words, "Poles" and "Jews," had been expelled from the whole so-called Kattowitz Regency (eastern Upper Silesia and Dabrower Basin), marking some 3-5% of the total population. Of this amount most of the "Poles," or 22,148, were sent to the Generalgouvernement, the majority of them as part of the well-known "Operation Saybusch" in October of 1940 meant to clear the Saybusch (Żywiec) county, which lay circa 50 km. to the south of Kattowitz, for resettlement by Galacian "Volksdeutsche." Another 5,100 were sent to labor in the Altreich (Germany proper), and starting in 1943, over 9,000 were incarcerated in 21 so-called "Polenlager" (concentration camps for "Poles") in various parts of the region. None of these statistics

⁶² There were 90,000 Jews in these ghettos in 1939, and 50,000 by the end of the following year. See: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 219-230. On Jewish population in the Dabrower Basin cities, see: Aly & Heim, *Architects*, 102.

⁶³ See for example: Adam Dziurok, „Górnoślązacy w szeregach organizacji nazistowskich podczas II wojny światowej—zarys problematyki.” *Przegląd Historyczny*, XCII (2001): 240; Haar, „Raum,” 57; Aly & Heim, *Architects*, 80-1, 104.

⁶⁴ And thus it is fitting that the token extensive English-language study of this phenomenon focuses on this region. See: Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939-41* (Kansas, 2007); and also: Epstein, *Model Nazi*.

take into account the extensive forced movement within the region and local areas that also took place. Once labeled as such, “Poles” often faced the loss of home and property, and transfer to inferior residential areas.⁶⁵

Valid as it is, the argument of economic determinism only goes so far in its ability to account for the nature of population politics in this region. Ideology, or more specifically the official project of “recovering German blood and soil” for the Reich, also played a significant role in this regard. The need for laborers certainly did not prevent the regime from expelling “Jews” and from transporting in so-called “Volksdeutsche resettlers” (Umsiedler) already by the end of 1940. To 1943, the regime settled 24,585 individuals from Galicia and Bukovina mostly in the agrarian parts of the Dabrower Basin and in Saybusch.⁶⁶ This group formed but a small percentage of the over one million “resettlers” transferred to other parts of the annexed territories and GG during the war. Instead, initially recognizing 80% of the local population as of “German blood,” the Nazis staked their fantasies of “recovery” in the “re-Germanization” of this group. According to general official ideology, Upper Silesians were “Volksdeutsche” and a fundamental basis for the Reich’s claims to eastern Upper Silesia.

The introduction of the so-called “Deutsche Volksliste” (DVL) in March of 1941 set official policy at odds with this seemingly all-inclusive ideology. De facto annulling results of the subjective-based “finger print” census, this system subjected locals to an official verdict concerning “national belonging” based on objective criteria. Political and

⁶⁵ „Die im Zuge der Ansiedlung in Oberschlesien ausgesiedelten und umgesetzten Fremdvölkischen,” BArch, R 49/3102 (RKF), doc. 37. Also: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 200-2. For „Volksdeutsche“ as a politically constructed category, see: Doris Bergen, „The ‚Volksdeutschen‘ of Eastern Europe, World War, and the Holocaust: Constructed Identity, Real Genocide,” *Yearbook of European Studies*, 13 (1999): 71-4. On “Aktion Saybusch,” see: Wolschke-Bulmahn, “Violence,” 249.

⁶⁶ RKF, „Entwicklung, Organisation, Arbeitsleistung, September 1939 – Januar 1943,” BArch, R 49/3102, doc. 44, 65, 74, 75. And: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 215.

cultural activism during the interwar era, including during the conflict of 1919-21, were among this core criteria, which local level party officials applied while they interrogated individuals and the people who claimed to know them. This project of categorizing the population into four categories of “Germandom,” one, two, three, or four, was carried out foremost because Upper Silesians were both willing and—as a borderland population with the capability of mimicking high national identity—also able to cooperate. Bishop Stanisław Adamski, the former head of the Polish Diocese of Katowice, who continued to serve the Church in the region before his expulsion to the GG in the Spring of 1940, encouraged locals to do so as a means of escaping persecution and forced exile.⁶⁷ To avoid delving too deeply into a topic that is only peripheral to the main object of study, here it suffices to mention that in the formerly Prussian parts of eastern Upper Silesia 64% of the population was assigned the Volksliste “category three” of the four category rubric, and thus given *provisional* German citizenship, subject to revocation.⁶⁸ Authorities found them not to be “German” in the cultural and political sense, but nevertheless, “re-Germanizable” (“*Eindeutschungsfähig*”).⁶⁹ Winning this bulk of society over for “Germandom” marked a prime ideal shared by many of the cadres of high

⁶⁷ See: Andrzej Grajewski, *Wygnanie: Diecezja katowicka w czasach stalinowskich* (Katowice 2002) 33-7; Jerzy Myszor, *Stosunki Kościół - Państwo Okupacyjne w Diecezji Katowickiej* (Katowice 1992) 45-52.

⁶⁸ More recent studies of the DVL in Upper Silesia include: Adam Ehrlich, ““Between Germany and Poland””; Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 175-215; Haar, “Raum-,” 41-6, 56-9; Ally & Heim, *Architects*, 82-7, 103-104. On the DVL in the Warthegau (Poznań and Wielkopolska region), see: Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland*, (New York, 2010), chapter 6. And on ethnic/national segregation in the “Protectorate” of Bohemia and Moravia, see: Chad Bryant, “Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946,” *Slavic Review* 61:4 (Winter 2002): 683-706.

⁶⁹ One source for this: Abschrift, Vermerk u. Die Abteilungsleiter-Besprechung, 11 Oct 1941, BArch, R 49/3113, doc. 1. On the limits of „race“ as a basis of policy and its pragmatic realization, see: John Connelly, „Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice,” *Central European History* 32:1 (1999): 1-33.

Germans who actually came to colonize this region, but sought to convince themselves that they were actually re-claiming a “stolen” German land.

Eventually, about 53,000 of these individuals migrated in from the Reich (20,000 to Kattowitz alone) to take over prestigious bureaucratic, civil servant, and industrial functions, and to serve as the new economic, political, and cultural elites of the region. They made up about 4.77% of the formerly Prussian parts of Upper Silesia by October of 1943.⁷⁰ Their presence had a similar social effect to the previous one of 1922. After all, these cadres merely replaced the resented dominant class of high Poles, most of whom either fled, or were ousted from their positions. Just as they had towards the elites coming from the east, locals responded with resentment towards the Germans. Class conflict again erupted between locals and newcomers—or as these groups were referred to in the official language, “Volksdeutsche” and “Reichsdeutsche” respectively—and only grew worse as the war progressed and social stringencies became more severe.⁷¹

Similar factors that had fueled the newcomer versus native conflict of the interwar era also exacerbated this one. The most fundamental was the aura of superiority with which this group of newcomers carried itself vis-à-vis the borderland population. As educated Germans, and more importantly, as “(NSDAP) Party Comrades” (Parteigenossen), these elites thought of themselves as inherently better than the Polish

⁷⁰ Ryszard Kaczmarek, „Katowice podczas II Wojny Światowej,” (Unpublished manuscript cited with author’s permission) 4; and *Górny*, 182.

⁷¹ Vast archival records reflect this conflict. For example, in the industrial plants of Königshütte: Hüttenverwaltung Laurahütte, Bericht über die soziale Lage der Gefolgschaft, 27 Feb. 1940, APK 149/119, doc. 189ff.; ii. „Sonstige Vorgänge,” DAF Kreisleitung Königshütte, Lagebericht für May 1940, same, doc. 257; iii. In the new district of Beuthen-Tarnowitz: Stimmugsbericht under der polnischen Bevölkerung, “Aufnahme in die Partei,” Oct. 1941, 142 (NSDAP Gauleitung)/207, doc. 42. See also sources in the next notes. On this conflict, see also: Ehrlich, “Between,” 89 and chapter 1.

and Slavicized dialect-speaking plebeian masses.⁷² During the interwar era, the “Defense Union of Upper Silesians,” as well as the ChD and Church, saw themselves as natural defenders of the rights of natives against the newcomers, and often referred to the latter as “colonists” and “gold-diggers.”⁷³ As anywhere in the Third Reich, in “recovered Ostoberschlesien” the regime strictly prohibited the existence of political parties or assemblies other than the NSDAP and the organizations of its formation. Nevertheless, even high-ranking party officials noted that the “Reichsdeutsche” were carrying themselves as “conquerors,” “gold-diggers,” “careerists” and “opportunists,” and thereby also treating the annexed territory as their “helot society” and “new America.”⁷⁴ Meanwhile, locals sometimes referred to these elites in derogatory stereotypes that reflected social conflict and the alienation of the first group from the second. These terms included “western mountaineer” (“*Westgorol*”), marking an appropriately adjusted pejorative term („*gorol*“ or mountaineer)⁷⁵ that locals had used against the high Poles

⁷² Much of these conflicts between newcomers and locals occurred in the work place. Examples found in: NSDAP KrsI. KH, Ortsgruppe Immelmann, Betr. politische Lage- und Stimmungsberichte für August 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 108; ii. Bericht für den Monat Juli 1941, same file, doc. 31-33; iii. Der Bürgermeister der Freien Bergstadt Tarnowitz, Betr. Lagebericht von 23. März, 26 März 1940, APK 1441 (Akta Miasta Tarnowskie Góry)/3092, doc. 8ff; iv. SS-Sicherheitsdienst, Aktenvermerk Betr. Aufbau der Herman Göring Werke im hiesigen Bereich, 21 May 1940, APK 140 (SD)/7, doc. 55.

⁷³ See chapters 1 and 3.

⁷⁴ According to one report of the NSDAP Kreisleitung Kattowitz: „Leider zeigt sich hier, dass es aus dem Altreich hervorsetzte Beamte durchaus für notwendig halten, wie die Eroberer aufzuspielen, andere wieder glauben, hier durchaus höherer Posten zu erringen, und sind dessen unverantwortlichen Männer zur Erreichung ihres Zieles....“ [sic!]. Quoted from: Politische Lagebericht, “Das Verhältnis der Bevölkerung zu den Behörden,” Feb. 1940, APK 148/1, doc. 12. “Goldgräber,” “Neu-Amerika,” “Helotgesellschaft,” quoted from the unpublished analysis of social affairs in the Industrial District by the RKF Agent for Gau O/S, Fritz Arlt, “Übersicht über die O/S Bevölkerungsstruktur als erster Beitrag zum Problem des West-Ost Gefällens,” APK 117 (Oberpräsidium Kattowitz)/435, doc. 41ff.

⁷⁵ Police reports from the Industrial District noted the parallels between this new newcomer versus native conflict and the one that had ensued in the Voivodeship before the war. For example, according to one report: „In der Zeit der polnischen Herrschaft lehnte die O/S Bevölkerung auch, soweit sie sich äusserlich mit dem Polentum abgefunden hatte, die eingewanderten Kongresspolen, Galizier und Juden als eindringliche ab, die der einheimischen Bevölkerung nur die guten Erwerbsmöglichkeiten wegnahmen.” This and “Gorolen aus dem Westen” from: Polizeipräsident Ost-O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht für Dez. 1939, Nr. Ost 4, Reg. Katt., 7, doc. 4.

before the war. This stereotype, along with that of the „September Germans“⁷⁶ functioned to underscore that these newcomer elites—indeed, like the high Poles before them—were „foreigners“ in the region. Locals also referred to the newcomers as “West-bombers,” and to the initials of “P.G.” placed next to their names, to signify that they were “Parteigenosse,” as standing for “pierońskie gorole” (damned mountaineers)—marking the readjustment of another favorite term that had once been a pejorative label for high Poles.⁷⁷ All of this social discontent on the part of the “threes” manifested itself in the revival of what officials referred to as “Upper Silesian particularism.” Just as the conflict of newcomers versus natives in the Voivodeship sparked outward manifestations of local/regional identity on the part of the second group, the new version of this conflict during the war era did the same. In similar respect to how Grażyński’s government agents had referred to any non-officially endorsed manifestations of this localism/regionalism as „separatism,” Nazi administrators called it „Upper Silesian particularism“ („Oberschlesische Partikularismus“).⁷⁸

The Heimatkundler as Social Engineer

In December of 1939, leading figures of the “North East Ethnic German Research Society” (NOFG) held a conference in the newly-annexed city of Kattowitz to incorporate “Ostoberschlesien” into the regional, and nation-wide, academic and cultural-political Ostforschung consortium. Already during the interwar era, academic research had become the basis of regime homogenization policy in the borderlands, and now Ostforschung officials were expanding this policy to incorporate the annexed territories.

⁷⁶ „Septemberdeutsche,” quoted from: NSDAP Gau Schlesien, Ortsgruppenleiter, to: NSDAP Kreisleitung Königshütte, 149/72, doc. 108.

⁷⁷ Quoted from: Polizeipräsident Ost-O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht für März 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4, Reg. Katt., 7, doc. 31.

⁷⁸ Ibid., doc. 31.

Previously existing regional cultural-political consortia of the Nazi interwar era, including the “Silesian Union for the Defense of Heimat” (*Schlesische Bund für Heimatschutz*), the Silesian section of the BDO, along with the “Union of O/S Heimatkunde” (renamed to the “Department for Research on the Silesian Region/*Amt für Schlesische Landesforschung*) started to focus their work on a terrain where they had been unwelcome before, the former Voivodeship. Activists of the Kulturbund (the former Voivodeship’s German minority cultural/academic union), including Viktor Kauder and Edgar Biodol, now openly joined figures such as Karl Schodrok, Franz Pfüntzenreiter, and Alfons Perlick, their Heimatkunde colleagues in the western part of the borderland, as well those in Breslau, including Ernst Birke and Hermann Aubin.⁷⁹ On both sides of Upper Silesia, between 500 and 600 of these intellectual interwar-era “frontier fighters for Germandom” (*Grenzkämpfer/Frontkämpfer*) now continued their work under auspices of the NSDAP and BDO.⁸⁰ With time this new regional Ostforschung consortium was increasingly under the control of the “Reich Commission for the Strengthening of German Nationhood” (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums* or RKF) headed by Heinrich Himmler. Working hand-in-hand with the SS, this organization was devoted to planning and executing social engineering measures in the annexed and occupied territories.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Source for this conference: „Bericht über die Besprechung der Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft am 14. Dezember 1939 in Kattowitz,” R 153 (Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem)/1359, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (hereafter BArch), n.p.. For the work of Aubin and his Ostforschung circle during the war era, see: Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf, 2005) 358-390.

⁸⁰ „Bericht über die Besprechung,” n.p

⁸¹ Indeed, here I am presenting only a general picture of this consortium, particularly its complex and dynamic internal political affairs, the examination of which fall outside of the scope of the present study. A notable essay on the Ostforschung consortium (NOFG) notes that it had cooperated with the SD (of the SS) since as early as 1938. Moreover, after the Nazi power takeover, the BDO and its close cooperant, the VDA, were the main roof organizations of policy, scholarship, and planning on the „German

Subordination to the Third Reich's apparatus for ethnic cleansing and ideologizing in turn stepped up the political importance of these Heimatkundler circles, which included local-level cultural activists and scholars. Having worked in the service of revanchist agitation during the Weimar era, and to promote the homogenization of the borderlands after 1933, they now had an even larger task: to carry out the scholarly and acculturation side of the Nazi regime's ethnic engineering program, marked by expulsion, resettlement, and genocide.⁸² Even the BDO, the roof organization they worked for before 1941, was active not only in the process of segregating "Poles" from "Germans," but also in going through local Catholic Church parish records—often despite the protest of the clergy—to "uncover" "Jews" whose forefathers had Christianized themselves.⁸³ Thereafter, their role in ethnic cleansing was all the more blatant, as these scholars and cultural activists were placed under the auspices of the SS and RKF. In other words not long after the annexation, the work of the Heimatkundler constituted far from just

East." See: Ingo Haar, "German Ostforschung and Anti-Semitism," in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, ed., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1920-45* (New York 2005) 8-20. Wojciech Kunicki examines the various internal factional conflicts in the all-Silesian cultural-political circles. He notes that since before the rise of the Nazis these circles (in Upper and Lower Silesia) had been devoted to promoting the „German character“ of the region in scholarship and official culture. In the late 1930s a conflict ensued between Schodrok's Upper Silesian circle of Heimatkundler and the Breslau (Silesian) BDO, who wanted to dominate. In the end, the BDO had significant control over the whole Silesian cultural-political consortium. According to Kunicki, by 1941, the former was under the supervision of the SS. See his: *„... auf dem Weg in dieses Reich.“ NS-Kulturpolitik und Literatur in Schlesien 1933 bis 1945* (Leipzig, 2006) 19-20, 28-9, 38-9, 95, 110-111. One of the important points scholars have made in recent years was that the NOFG and BDO were inherently involved in Nazi politics of social engineering in the „Eingegliederte Gebiete“ and the GG, including in Genocide, all marked by the Generalplan Ost. See: on Ostforschung, Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988); on the RKF, including its role in Upper Silesia, Ally & Hein, *Architects...*, 74-114; on the RKF, Alexa Stiller, „Grenzen des ‚Deutschen‘: Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in Polen, Frankreich, und Slowenien während des Zweiten Weltkrieges“; on the Generalplan Ost, and Nazi planning and social engineering, see: Ingo Haar, „Indklusion und Genozid: Raum- und Bevölkerungspolitik im besetzten Polen, 1939-1944,” the last two works both in: Dietrich Beyrau Mathias Beer, Cornelia Rauh ed., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950* (Essen 2009) 35-84.

⁸² See: last part of last note, including: Haar, „German,” 16-20; and Kunicki, *...auf dem Weg*, 111.

⁸³ Local party reports in Königshütte demonstrate that the BDO was doing this particularly because the local population and clergy was unwilling to consider “baptized Jews” as Jews. Kreisamtsleiter der RPA bei BDO Kreisverband KH, „Betr. Rassenpolitische Amt,” to: NSDAP Kreisl. KH, 19 May 1940, APK 149/21, doc. 57.

material for suggested public reading, but instead became the basis of aggressively-promoted programs of “public enlightenment” (*Volksbildung*) and the blueprints of all sorts of building and social engineering projects. In this sense, once serving to promote the content for lectures at Beuthen’s Pedagogical Academy, and also the exhibits of the city’s “Landesmuseum,” the ethnographic work of Alfons Perlick on the Industrial District now became “the basis for a new work of public rearing (*Erziehungsarbeit*) and for a new cultural renovation (*Kulturaufbau*) among the working class.”⁸⁴ Apart from “Kulturarbeit” officials now used the terms “(Wieder-)Aufbau”, or “(re)construction,” as well as “Volkstumsarbeit,” or “nationalization work,” to refer to the new social-engineering-oriented cultural politics.⁸⁵

Although the Polish-German “cold war” over the Upper Silesian borderland had formally ceased, cultural politics nevertheless remained particularly important. Since the regime was unable to re-engineer this society via large-scale population transfers, it fell on the Heimatkundler to do so by way of cultural politics. The greater goal of these cultural agents was to convince the populace, and by 1941, its majority “threes” (those with DVL “category three”) that they and their Heimat were part of the German “Volksgemeinschaft” and Third Reich. To do this, these activists followed a practice that both Polish and German cultural activists had established during the interwar era: to

⁸⁴ Quoted from Alfons Perlick, “Zur Würdigung des oberschlesischen Industriearbeiters,” in: *Heimatkalender 1942 des Kreises Kattowitz und der Städte Kattowitz und Königshütte*, (Kattowitz: NS-Gauverlag O/S, 1942) 54. Perlick makes a similar argument in his ethnographic study of the character of the Upper Silesian child. In this case, this work is to form the basis of more efficient raising of children in the region: “[es] ist notwendig zunächst die psychologische Anlage unserer Kinder einer Untersuchung zu unterziehen und andererseits die Forderung zu erwägen, die in diesem Zusammenhange von einer volkskundlichen Schularbeit zu erfüllen sind.“ See: “Das oberschlesische Kind und seine raumbedingte volkskundliche Erziehung,” *Der Oberschlesier* 3 (July/Sept. 1942): 55-8.

⁸⁵ See: Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, “The Languages of Occupation Vocabularies of German rule in Eastern Europe during the World Wars,” in Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland and Colonial Expansion to the East* (New York 2009) 127-32.

invent a national-regional tradition that would overwrite both the legacy of Grażyński's "regionalism" (the official Polish-Silesian identity) and the non-official "Upper Silesian particularism," or in other words, regional/local identity. Indeed, during the first year of occupation they had to contend with pressure from Breslau for adherence to the official program of forging a pan-Silesian identity.⁸⁶ This changed with the formation of a Kattowitz-centered "Gau Oberschlesien" in January of 1941 which incorporated both parts of the once nationally-divided region (western and eastern Upper Silesia). This establishment of their own separate regional district gave cultural officials a reinvigorated mandate to also invent a "proper" identity for it.

Apart from moving their local cultural elites and institutions from the former western Upper Silesia to Kattowitz, the new "Gau capital," authorities also appropriated the apparatus of Grażyński's "regionalism" that they found there.⁸⁷ Most of the institutions that had been used to invent and popularize "Polish-Silesianism," including the "Silesian Library," the radio station, the Musical Conservatory, and the "Silesian Institute" were now used for the new elites' venture to promote official "Oberschlesianism." As a notable example of this, in 1941, Nazi cultural authorities remodeled the "Silesian Institute" into their own "Central Institute for Upper Silesian Regional Research" (*Zentralinstitut für Oberschlesische Landesforschung*, thereafter ZIOF). Opened in the architecturally avant-garde (Polish) "House of Enlightenment,"

⁸⁶ A prime manifestation of this conflict was Schodrok and his Heimatkundler circle's effort to retain their fundamental journal of official „Oberschlesianism," *Der Oberschlesien*. See: Kunicki, „...auf dem Weg," 114-23. And: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 343-5.

⁸⁷ Many Heimatkundler, including Schodrok himself, were not happy about trading the hegemony of Breslau for that of Kattowitz, which meant having to reorganize and transfer their institutions to this city. Nevertheless, this did take place. One example of it was the liquidation of the O/S Landesbibliothek in Beuthen, and its replacement with a German Schlesische Bibliothek in Katt., headed by Victor Kauder. Source: „Direktor der Hochschule für Lehrerbildung, to OP, 5 Dec. 1939, APK 117/114, doc. 14. On the topic of the transfer and conflict surrounding it, see Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 343-5.

which had headquartered the Polish counterpart, the ZIOF's mission seemed so similar to that of the "Silesian Institute" that officials even felt guilty about this (see image 3.3).

This guilt was evident in a statement given by one of the regional BDO chiefs from Breslau, Ernst Birke, as he worked on building the ZIOF up on the basis of the materials left behind by its Polish predecessor:

We Germans have to renovate [aufbauen] something entirely different [from the Polish predecessor]. I don't believe it's worthy of us merely to establish a German institute from the inheritance of this Polish propaganda institution.⁸⁸

Despite all the efforts to build something completely original, the ZIOF's main task hardly differed from that of its predecessor: to construct a tradition of "regional knowledge" that served the larger mission of giving the former Voivodeship a "German" face—one inherently based on the ideology of the regime the organization worked for.⁸⁹

To ensure this, Dr. Fritz Arlt was appointed to the directorship of this establishment.

Apart from being a sociologist specializing in racial theory, Arlt was also the regional RKF leader and Himmler's trustee. As the work of Götz Ally and Susanne Heim points out, he was one of the notable planners of the Holocaust, especially of the Auschwitz extermination complex, which, as an area of the Dabrower Basin, was part of Gau O/S.⁹⁰

In carrying out this mission, the ZIOF served as just the academic wing of a larger multi-specialist consortium devoted to the forging of a Nazi-German Upper Silesian national-regionalism, the "Oberschlesische Heimatbund" (hereafter, OHB). Established in mid-1941, and headed by the main figure of cultural politics in Gau O/S, Georg Kate,

⁸⁸ Quoted from: Dozent Dr. Ernst Birke, 20 Oct 1939, APK 117/416, doc. 4ff.

⁸⁹ Evident from Arlt's claim that the work of the Institute was to „destroy the myth of a Polish coal miner in Upper Silesia.“ Arlt, to: Dr. Papritz, Leiter der Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem, 2 Oct. 1943, BArch 153/1092, n.p.

⁹⁰ On the background and activism of the SS racial politics expert, Fritz Arlt, see: Aly & Heim, *Architects*, 102-114, 132-8; Frank Mecklenburg, „Von Hitlerjugend zum Holocaust: die Karriere des Fritz Arlt,“ *Deutsche, Juden, Völkermord: der Holocaust als Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Darmstadt, 2005) 87-102.

this organization took over the tasks of the Silesian-wide consortia, including, with time, also of the BDO.⁹¹ The word “Heimat” in its name exemplified how the Nazis instrumentalized the German tradition of provincialism for the purpose of nationalization and Nazification. Indeed, they did so not just in Upper Silesia or borderlands but—as the work of Celia Applegate points out—in German provinces in general.⁹² The OHB was just a regional section of the nation-wide “Deutsche Heimatbund,” which was headed by high-ranking NSDAP official, racial theorist, and SS agent, Alfred Rosenberg.⁹³ As such, coordinating the acculturation aspect of ethnic cleansing was its main mission—a fact about which the organization’s spokespersons were rather explicit. In its pamphlet-sized programmatic statement, entitled “*What does the OHB want?*” the new Gauleiter of “Gau O/S,” Fritz Bracht, gave the following answer to this question:

To cleanse the Heimat of all traits of the degeneration [Verfall] that particularly during the epoch of Polish tyranny distorted the face of our land via a foreign way of doing things [artfremde Geschäftemacherei].⁹⁴

Thus, to the Nazis, the turning of an eastern Upper Silesia “ruined by the Poles” into a “beautiful German Heimat”—the phrase marking the slogan of the OHB—was to be an inherent process of “cleansing.” And it was to be carried out via cultural politics (acculturation) working hand-in-hand with other forms of social engineering.

This new Nazi program of national-regionalism mobilized a whole range of fields, disciplines, and areas of specialization. In his article on the OHB in Gau O/S’s official daily, *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, Georg Kate noted that “rearing” the local population into

⁹¹ Hitler liquidated the BDO on 16 Dec. 1942, merging it with the VDA. Source: BDO Gauverband OS, Hindenburg, Verwaltungs Rundschreiben, 21 Dec. 1942. APK-Oddz. Gliwice, 95 (Kreisverb. BDO Hindenburg)/1, doc. 41.

⁹² See: Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, (Berkeley 1990).

⁹³ See: Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 348.

⁹⁴ Quoted from: „Was will der O/S Heimatbund?“ August 1941, APK 117/413, doc. 9-11.

“good Germans” presupposed the “re-Germanization” of the region in a variety of facets, including changing the appearance of its landscapes, promoting “German” folk traditions, as well as constructing a new pedagogical tradition of “Heimatkunde,” to name just a few.⁹⁵ Just as Grażyński’s effort to construct it in the first place had done so, that of the Nazis to de-construct „Polish-Silesianism” and replace this with the traditions of a „German O/S Heimat” mobilized specialists from a range of areas and fields, including History, museum work, photography, prose and poetry, landscape development, language teaching, folklore, and even puppet theater. Financed by a specially-established foundation for the promotion of “Upper Silesian culture,” the “O/S Stiftung,” the work of these activists was broadcasted to the public through multimedia forms, such as school-books, almanacs, pamphlets, the press, radio, film, theater, and public rallies. The party and its organizations, in particular, the Nazi Teacher’s Union (NSLB), Worker’s Union (DAF), the “Strength Through Joy” leisure agency (KdF), Women’s Union (NSF), the Hitlerjugend, and BDO, also worked to school the public in the new “Heimatkunde.”⁹⁶

This effort to “cleanse out” and “reconstruct” a “German O/S Heimat” had its own ideological *modus operandi*—the notion of permanent ethnic (“racial”) struggle in this borderland. The incorporation of eastern Upper Silesia into the Third Reich threatened to end this history of permanent ethnic conflict, and thereby deprive the regime of an important public mobilization instrument for its policies of re-nationalization. Regime agents by no means wanted to allow public peace of mind to set in in this now officially *former* border area. On the contrary, they promoted the imagined scenario of an international-turned-intra-national war over “Oberschlesien.” Whereas in

⁹⁵ Georg Kate, „Schönere O/S Heimat: Die Aufgabe des O/S Heimatbundes,” KZ 347 (17 Oct. 1941), n.p.

⁹⁶ Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 352-4.

the first conflict the official aim was to “take back” the eastern part of the region from the Poles, that of the new one was to draw a “clean break” between “Polishness” and “Germandom,” and rid the Heimat of the former. This “re-Germanization” mission was not just to be carried out by an elite, but—in accordance to the demands of the party and OHB—was to mobilize the local public as a way of raising the new citizen. The OHB’s symbolic use of permanent conflict as a function to these ends was rather clearly spelled out in the consortium’s programmatic statement:

In the past the Upper Silesian learned to fight and sacrifice for his Heimat, and this deep love for it will now motivate him to mobilize all his strengths for the new shaping of Oberschlesien based on German precepts.⁹⁷

In accordance with this statement, 1 Sept. 1939 merely marked the waging of the centuries-old ethnic war in the Upper Silesian province by different means—namely, mass-mobilization for ethnic-cleansing-based acculturation. The OHB made it clear that this war to “re-Germanize” the province was not going to be easy and short, but rather a long-lasting one. In the words of the Gauleiter Bracht, “we can hardly correct [wiedergutmachen] decades of sinning [on the part of ‘Poles’] in only a few years.”⁹⁸ I now turn to focus on the particulars of this struggle for a national “clean break,” turning first to address this issue in the realm of the official imagination of the landscape.

Confronting a “Polish” landscape

Although the Industrial District had been a Prussian province for centuries, it was only outfitted to be a national symbolic showcase during the interwar era—by Polish elites. The landscape development aspects of Grażyński’s „regionalism” left blatant monuments that could not just be eradicated or concealed, particularly since the

⁹⁷ Quoted from “Was will der O/S Heimatbund?“, doc. 9-11.

⁹⁸ Ibid., doc. 9-11

constraints of the war would not allow for their speedy replacement by the Nazis. Except for a limited number of realized reconstruction projects, National Socialist regime authorities were left with having to symbolically re-label the topography that the Poles had built—and hope that the public would see things as they did. The “building” of a “German landscape” in the former Voivodeship that I will examine in this section was thus mainly an effort to re-cultivate the public’s taste for architectural forms, and topographies. I will first study the official discourse of confronting Grażyński’s landscape before turning to the topic of pragmatic efforts to re-construct it, and finally to that of the mobilization of the local-level public to take part this “re-Germanization” of the landscape.

The regime’s discourse on landscapes serves as a good example of how once the physical border between Poland and Germany disappeared, cultural officials sought to uphold it conceptually. To erase the legacy of “Polish-Silesianism” they sought first to tarnish and demonize it. In some respects, this marked a continuation of interwar era propaganda strategy. Before the war both German and Polish patriotic elites had underscored the historical “superiority” of their own building structures and represented those of the latter as either inferior or non-existent. But even this propensity to marginalize the achievements of the other had its limits on both sides of the border. As I demonstrated in chapter three, even the regional BDO commended Grażyński’s symbolic buildings in Katowice as having made a progressive leap in the development of this urban center. Just as nationalization politics in general reached one of the zeniths of its radical nature during the war, so too did the policy of officially slurring every mark of the other become unprecedentedly unrelenting.

The OHB's bureau for "Landscape Shaping" (*Landschaftsgestaltung*) led the regime's confrontation with Grażyński's symbolic spaces.⁹⁹ It was headed by the regional planner for Upper Silesia, Gerhard Ziegler, who had worked for over three years in the Reich Office of Regional Planning in Berlin prior to holding this function.¹⁰⁰ As a first step to casting a dark shadow on the legacy of Polish building in the region, he and his colleagues pursued a strategy of conceptualizing ideal types of Polish and German "approaches" to landscape development. This strategy presupposed one fundamental principle that they had faith in: that as one went from the politically German to the Polish territories one could notice a clear and visible national border present in the appearance of the landscape. Ziegler conceptualized this contrast in the following statement:

Here [in Oberschlesien one notices] in general a loving engagement with the Landscape, an agreeable exploitation of its resources, a friendly and purposeful embedding of the products of Man, namely houses, villages, cities, communication lines, etc., in mountains and valleys with appropriate trees planted around them, the stream flanked by alders, the forests beautified and cultivated. [In contrast], there [in Polish Silesia] the exploitation and plunder of the landscape, disorderly placement of buildings, no enjoyment for bushes and trees, barren and untamed monocultures of pines and therefore musty ground [stockiger Boden], debris deposits, affectionless and uncared for villages, bare streets and paths, considerable desertification and a distressed and drained soil, as well as much flooding on the one hand, and dust and drought, even outright desert on the other. Indeed, the poverty of the population has much to account for this, but otherwise, this is all a consequence of affectionlessness and thoughtlessness...¹⁰¹

Indeed, this discourse was not just one of neutral difference but a manifestation of the culturally racist discourse of "polnische Wirtschaft" cast on the topic of landscape.¹⁰²

There was hardly any empirical basis for this conception. Rather, Ziegler's statement

⁹⁹ See: Bericht der ersten Tagung des OHB in Gleiwitz, 9 August 1941, APK-GI, 1/5760, doc. 8ff.

¹⁰⁰ On Ziegler and his work in Upper Silesia, see: Ally and Heim, *Architects*, 105-114. The English translation of Reich Office of Regional Planning drawn from this source.

¹⁰¹ Quoted from: Gerhard Ziegler, "Landschaftsgestaltung in Oberschlesien," in: Förster & Stumpe, eds., *Schönere Heimat*, 14. See also: Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Violence," 248-53.

¹⁰² See: According to Orlowski, this myth promoted the notion of the Poles being mastered by the landscape, and not the other way around. This from his chapter on German travel reports from the GG. See: *Polnische*, 339-341.

represented an abstract construct of the “superior” landscape of “Kultur,” constructed by the simultaneous imagining of its “inferior” foil. He conceptualized the first sort as a space that had been cultivated on the basis of ideology-based central planning that reflected the following principles: harmony with nature, attention to “beauty” and aestheticism, and at the same time, also the fruitful use of space and resources. In contrast, he regarded the landscape of “polnische Wirtschaft” to exhibit strict, chaotic, and reckless, exploitation of territory and resources.¹⁰³

There was another facet to Ziegler’s notion of a “Polish landscape”, one more interwoven with the Nazi political worldview. To him, it represented an undesired western and liberal path to modernization and industrialization often otherwise referred to as “civilization” (*Zivilization*) in Nazi discourse. This concept functioned as the foil to, and supporting contrast for, the notion of a superior “Kultur”—or the German way. Whereas the latter were marked by “rootedness,” “idealism,” and “creativity,” in contrast, “civilization” “stood for the artificial and merely technical achievements of a soulless western way of life.”¹⁰⁴ German literati commonly represented “French” and “British ways” as the face of “civilization,” but in this case, Ziegler singles out what he calls “Americanism.” Most likely his choice was owed to the fact that even German elites had long recognized that Katowice, the most emblematic “Polish landscape” of the former Voivodeship, carried the label of an “American city.” Otherwise, it also reflected a broader strand of regime propaganda that depicted Poland as a tool of the “plutocratic

¹⁰³ See also: Ziegler, „Landschaftsgestaltung,“ 9-10, and 10ff. The RKF also underscored landscape cultivation according to plan: „planmässige Gestaltung der Landschaft dient der Festigung deutschen Volkstums. Sie ist ein entscheidend wichtiges Mittel zur Eindeutschung.“ Quoted from: RKF, “Allgemeine Andordnung über die Gestaltung der Landschaft in den eingegliederten Ostgebiete: Zielsetzung.” BArch, R 49/165, doc. 121.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted from Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 131.

west,” including the United States. To Ziegler, the “American way to landscape development” was marked by the same features as “polnische Wirtschaft” in this respect: an unkempt, barren, dirty and misused landscape resulting from a strictly exploitative, “affectionless,” aesthetically indifferent, and environmentally harmful, practices.¹⁰⁵ According to Ziegler, this “Americanism” first appeared in Upper Silesia “as a result of the rash tempo of economic development.”¹⁰⁶

Although they did not state so directly, the regime’s cultural agents held the “Poles” to have been the catalysts of this “reckless path” to modernity, or “civilization,” during the interwar era. This is exemplified by the statement of another important OHB agent of landscape management, Erwin W. Schramm, the head of communal (local-level) administration in Gau O/S:

In the Altreich [Germany proper] liberalism had raged most blatantly in the cities, but had also done countless damage to the countryside. The mutilation [Verschandelung] of the appearances of cities and villages was particularly extensive during the Polish period in the area of Ostoberschlesien. The integration [Eingliederung] of this eastern territory into the Reich imperiously demands that appearances of the places that had been mutilated during the Polish era quickly receive a German face again.¹⁰⁷

Here Schramm represents the “disfigurements” of urban and rural landscapes that had been ascribed to “liberalism” in interwar Germany as products of the “Polish period” in Upper Silesia. In this sense, he and the other OHB landscape specialists were merely placing the label of “Polish” on precepts that formed the negation of Nazi values.

Schramm’s notion of the “mutilation” of the landscape image during the “Polish period” was one aspect of a more extensive discourse on the structures built during the

¹⁰⁵ Ziegler, „Landschaftsgestaltung,” 9-10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted from: Erwin W. Schramm, „Die Entschandelung und Verschönerung des Stadt- und Dorfbildes im Rahmen der gemeindlichen Kulturarbeit,” *Der Oberschlesien* Heft 5 (September/December 1941): 5.

Grażyński era. So far, my analysis has focused on the abstract model of the regime's official concept of "Polish landscape." OHB officials also constructed a more specific and concrete discourse referring to the architectural works of the Voivode's symbolic capital, Katowice. Whereas before the war they were even explicitly admired, after the annexation Heimatkundler and other propagandists represented these structures as epitomes of "ruin," "tastelessness," "sinful building" and "uncultured polnische Wirtschaft."¹⁰⁸

To promote these overtures, they represented Grażyński's symbolic architectural structures with labels that denoted "cosmopolitanism," "decadence," and "foreignness" in Nazi ideology. This included, "Jewish-American-Polish" or any combination of these three labels.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the use of the term "Jewish" here is also indicative of the larger Nazi ideological resentment towards avant-garde modernist forms, and characterization of the latter as "degenerate art."¹¹⁰ In this regard, OHB specialists propagated that the erection of "cubic style" structures in Kattowitz marked a "Jewish" conspiracy to turn the city into their own "eastern stone desert" with the collaboration of the Polish government, but against the will of ordinary "Poles."¹¹¹ In this respect they also asserted that, "in the parts of Gau O/S that had been under a Polish regime for almost twenty-years we find

¹⁰⁸ „Verschandelung," and „Bausünde" quoted from: Grundmann "Aufgaben des Denkmalpfleges im Rahmen der gemeindlichen Kulturarbeit," *Der Oberschlesien*, Heft 5 (September/December 1941): 21. The rest quoted from: "Erziehung zur Anständiger Bausinnung [sic!]," KZ (23 Nov. 1941): n.p..

¹⁰⁹ Sources that use the construct „Jüdische-Polnische-Amerikanismus," including any combination out of the three terms, or out of two of the three include: i. Bericht der Oberbürgermeister der Baupolizei," 13 March 1941, APK, 119/10608, doc. 1-2; ii. „Die Gauhauptstadt"; iii. Alfred Perret, „Vom guten und schlechten Bauen," *Der O/S*, Heft 4 (January/March 1942): 4-6; iv. „Kattowitz im deutschen Aufbau," *Deutsche Bergzeitung*, 10 December 1940, in: APK, 119/1175, doc. 71; v. „Neues Leben in Oberschlesien" (same venue as the last).

¹¹⁰ On Nazi's concept of "correct" architecture, see: Brandon Taylor & Wilfried von der Will, ed., *Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture & Film in the Third Reich* (Winchester, 1990) 128-140; 146-7.

¹¹¹ Quoted from: Heinz Weber, „Als Pan Grażyński [sic!] hier ‚frohlich schuff'," *Heimatkalender Kattowitz* (1942): 83-5

these monuments of Jewish cubist architectural forms in large number, which give the land the flavor of an annex of Jerusalem.”¹¹² All of these slurs again demonstrate that to the regime “the Poles” were catalysts of the Nazi notion of “wrong path to modernity,” which in the realm of architecture was marked by non-traditional, and western forms, considered to be “decadent” and “foreign.”

Next to blaming the “ruin” of eastern Upper Silesia’s landscapes on “Polish incompetence,” the regime’s propagandists also tied this to their discourse of a Polish ethnic cleansing campaign against Germans. Based on variegated stories, such as those of how the Voivodeship’s governments wrecked German statues and “stole” their pedestals to stand their own symbols on, and how they painted over German signs, propagandists strove to promote a landscape variant of their official myth of a Polish “(anti-German) war of destruction.”¹¹³ Moreover, they denoted Grażyński’s symbolic landscapes as tokens of “Polish imperialism.” According to OHB agents, the Voivode’s “imitation” of „American” and „Jewish” architectural styles marked an artificial imposition of a “western identity” on a territory that had been “fortunate” to have been “spared western ways” for centuries. And this was done as an instrumental „search [for Poland] to become a great power (Grossmacht),” and to make Kattowitz its “window on the west.”¹¹⁴ More importantly, these experts of Voivodeship politics knew very well of the conflict that had raged here between newcomers and high Poles, particularly Sanacja supporters. They did not hesitate to play on the memory of this strife in their effort to gain public support for

¹¹² Quoted from: Alfred Perret, „Vom guten und vom schlechten Baues,” *Der Oberschlesier* Heft 1 (Jan/März 1942): 4.

¹¹³ Examples include: on destruction of statues and „stealing” pedestals, „Erst Sockel eines Kaiserdenkmals,” and on painting over German signs, „Deutsch unser Raum – Deutsch unser Wort,” *KZ* 27 (29 Jan 1940), n.p.

¹¹⁴ Quoted from: Weber, „Als Pan Grażyński.”

their message. Thus, the regime's cultural agents held the buildings of Katowice to be a symbol of how the "regionally foreign" Polish government spent handsomely on its "Polonization" effort while neglecting and marginalizing the welfare of the local "German" population.¹¹⁵ In this sense in one of the OHB's annual almanacs for the city of Kattowitz, Otto Ulitz stated that "the German character of the region is marked by its [Prussian era] stone buildings, not by the *overpriced* and over-decorated Polish architectural creations."¹¹⁶ This discourse of exploitative Polish newcomer elites versus the exploited native masses was strikingly similar that used by Jan Kustos' Defense Union of Upper Silesia had used against Grażyński. It demonstrated the eagerness of Nazi propagandists to use the memory of social conflict between high Polish migrants and Upper Silesian natives in the Voivodeship as a means to slander Poland.

In their confrontation with Grażyński's symbolic landscape, regime cultural officials encountered a haunting dilemma. On the one hand, they did not like what they saw, and on the other, while the war was raging they did not have the means or resources to do any serious reconstruction.¹¹⁷ But the needs of locals and now also newcomers and visitors from the "Greater German Reich" to identify the Gau Capital by way of its topographic appearance could not wait. As a result, even as they were besmirched by Heimatkundler and the media, paradoxically, the Voivode's icons of modernity continued

¹¹⁵ One example is propaganda of Polish investment in glamorous high rise buildings at the cost of neglecting housing for ordinary workers and allowing for the development of slums and poverty. This in: Hans Tiessler (Oberbürgermeister of Kattowitz), "Ein Jahr Aufarbeit in der Regierungshauptstadt Kattowitz," *Heimatkalender Kattowitz* (1941): 128.

¹¹⁶ Quoted from: Otto Ulitz, „1742-1942“ in: *Heimatkalender Kattowitz* (1942): 95-96. Emphasis mine. Here Ulitz depicts the interwar Poles as „exploiters“ and „robber barons“ of the region's industrial resources, who leave the local population in poverty.

¹¹⁷ The Deutsche Heimatbund stated quite explicitly: „Für die Neuformung des deutschen Baugesichts ist im Kriege keine Zeit.“ Quoted from: Rundschrift vom NSDAP Reichsleiter, Hauptamt für Kommunalpolitik der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, To: alle politische Leiter des Hauptamtes für Kommunalpolitik und auch Gauamtsleiter für Kommunalpolitik, Feb. 1944, BAArch 8086 (Deutsche Heimatbund)/79, n.p.

to serve as the façade of the “Gau Capital Kattowitz.” One Munich newspaper article review noted this dilemma:

These mammoth buildings are not large enough to rouse one’s wonder, but also are too big to enable one to just overlook them. These buildings remain as tokens of the curse of Polishness [*Polentum*], and likewise serve as our scattered memorial to the hard times of foreign rule over the city.¹¹⁸

Without the possibility to hide them, officially endorsed postcards, travel guides, and popular publications sported images of Grażyński’s architectural marvels as the main icons of Gau Oberschlesien’s identity. Next to the municipal theater building and the train station from the Prussian era, the “skyscraper” and the “Gau House” (formerly the VGB) marked the *proud* landmarks of “Gau Capital Kattowitz” (see **image 4.1**).¹¹⁹

Because these icons now served as part of the new “German landscape” the press and the travel guides sometimes conveniently refrained from mentioning their origins in Poland—let alone that once they served as the pride of that nation at the border.¹²⁰ This was one strategy of resolving the dissonance that authorities faced in embracing these symbols of “polnische Wirtschaft” as the bold landmarks of “Kultur.” I now turn to address this issue of the regime’s pragmatic appropriation, and alteration, of the Voivodeship’s symbolic spaces.

¹¹⁸ Quoted from: „Die Gauhauptstadt auf der Kohle,” *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten*, 54 (23 February 1941), from: BArch, N.S. 5 VI/5943, n.p. The article appearing in this Munich daily was part of the stream of articles that publicized „Deutschlands jüngsten Gau” (Gau O/S) after its opening in early 1941.

¹¹⁹ See for example, i. *Führer durch die Stadt Kattowitz*, (Fremdverkehrsverband, 1940) 9-11; ii. Sappok et. al., ed., *Oberschlesische Grossstaedte*, 126, 198; iii. *Gauhauptstadt Kattowitz, O/S: Die politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Mittelpunkt der neuen Gau O/S*, (unknown publisher and place, circa 1941), cover; iv. *Heimatkalender des Kreis Kattowitz und der Städte Kattowitz und Königshütte 1941*, (Gauverlag O/S, 1940), illustrations between pages 31 and 33; “Kattowitz als Verkehrszentrum,” KZ 20 February 1941, n.p.

¹²⁰ Sappok, *Oberschlesiens*, 126, 190 (on high-rise in neighboring Königshütte); ii. sizable illustration of the „skyscraper,” without any caption underneath it, appears as part of article, „Die Gauhauptstadt“ iii. Picture of the „skyscraper” („Hochhaus”) along with that of the „Gauhaus” (Voivodeship Government Building) appears in state-endorsed postcard, „Kattowitz O/S”, from: Bibliotheka Slaska, Zbiory Specjalne, PA 13; iv. “Kattowitz als Verkehrszentrum,” KZ 20 February 1941, n.p.

From Words to Action: Attempts to give the Industrial District a “German Face”

Although they continued to castigate Poles for having done this during the interwar era, Nazi officials were themselves very keen on appropriating, and superficially altering, the appearance of former Polish places of national identity in the formerly Polish parts of the Upper Silesian Industrial District. I have already begun to discuss how in the haste to stage their own border rallies the Nazis started to redecorate Grażyński’s “Katowice Forum” already a month after the annexation. By the second “Freedom Day” event on 1 September 1940, a rally attended by over 100,000 local residents, including the guest of honor, Joseph Goebbels, the facility had already been turned into the central site of “German-Upper Silesian” identity. Displayed on the covers of tourist guidebooks of this area, Grażyński’s former Voivodeship Government Building, served as the architectural pride of Gau O/S—just as it had once been that for the Voivodeship.¹²¹ Apparently the fortress shape and classicist motifs of this structure gave it accordance with the regime’s norms of “healthy architecture.” As part of turning this structure into the “Gau House,” the seat of the Gauleiter and other regional administrators, regime conservationists had removed the large carving of a Polish eagle on its façade, among other national symbols. Interestingly enough they did leave the large “R.P.” initials (for “Republic of Poland”) running around its frieze visible and in tact. Although the reason for why remains unknown, perhaps it is because authorities thought that only the official meaning of these needed to be changed. In this sense, one press article represented these

¹²¹ This from correspondence between the director of the Staatsarchiv Kattowitz (before the war, the Polish Archiwum Akt Dawnych, Katowice) and the Regierungspräsident (or head of the industrial district of Gau O/S, which was officially called Regierung Kattowitz) on the so-called Gauhaus-Gebäude during the Spring of 1941: APK 137/25, doc. 1-20. See also sources in note 118.

initials as standing for official name of the provincial governorship that the building housed, namely, “Regierungs-Präsidium.”¹²²

The most important alteration that the authorities made to the “Silesian Forum” was the taking down of the “(Polish) Silesian Museum” building, which stood just across the street to the south of the “Gau House.” They chose not to appropriate this structure for the same function it had been built to serve in the Voivodeship. Instead, they cleared it of its museum apparel, which was transferred to the former Landesmuseum, now renamed to “Grenzland (Borderland) Museum” in Beuthen.¹²³ For a while officials used the avant-garde structure of the size of 80,000 cubic meters in area as an auction house for the confiscated property that had belonged to expropriated Jews and Poles who had been expelled. In 1942, officials started a gradual process of dismantling the museum, which continued all the way to war’s end when hardly any trace remained.¹²⁴ It is quite possible that the dismantling was in part motivated by the fact that the structure had functioned to quarter a major cultural and academic institutional rival for the Germans. However, it’s important to remember that the “Silesian Museum” building had actually never yet been officially opened, or been turned over for public use, by the start of the war. Moreover, Nazi authorities had not hesitated to appropriate another important national symbol, the “House of Enlightenment,” for their own academic “re-Germanization” endeavor. It certainly did not stop them from doing so even as after for years the facility had served as headquarters for the Polish “Silesian Insitute,” and other organizations of Grażyński’s effort to symbolically erase the German heritage of the region.

¹²²“Die Hauptstadt auf der Kohle,” n.p.

¹²³ Glazek, „Budynek Muzeum,” 115-7.

¹²⁴ Kreiswirtschaftsberater, Rundschreibung 5/40, 26 Jan. 1940, APK 148/6, doc. 31.

Not its political function as a museum but rather the building's symbolism as an architectural specimen of Grażyński's "Polish-Silesian" style drove the Nazis to designate it for removal. In light of the official discourse on the Polish symbolic architecture, and the promises that the OHB and the Gauleiter had made to "re-Germanize" the image of the city, this move made logical sense.¹²⁵ The building was after all a part of the ceremonial center that the regime used for all their rallies, from region-specific official holidays to all-German rallies, and a place visited by dignitaries from Berlin on this occasion. Given the regime's ideological resentment of avant-garde architecture, this massive monumental work of glass walls and cubic shapes was a disturbance to the authorities' plight to construct a place of national-regional identity. Unlike its neighbor, the fortress-like, bold looking, and thick-walled, "Gau House" (former VGB) and similar buildings standing next to, this structure marked an epitome of the regime's notion of "decadent (Polish) architecture."¹²⁶ Its removal—I would argue—served as a showcase of how the Nazis were making good on the Gauleiter's promise to give this territory "another character than the one that had once been imposed on it" by the Poles.¹²⁷ The gradual dismantling of this centrally-located structure served to demonstrate to local inhabitants how, in spite of its inability to promote the true improvement in the living standard, the regime was at least doing *something* in the direction of realizing its plans (see image 3.10 and 4.2). Above all, the deconstruction of

¹²⁵ According to the records of the Deutsche Heimatbund, the cities and villages of the „neuen deutsche Ostgebieten werden durch tiefgreifende Umgestaltung und zum grossen Teil völligen Neuaufbau ihr endgültiges deutsches Gesicht bekommen." Quoted from : "Plege und Verbesserung des Ortbildes im deutschen Osten," BArch 8086/79, not paginated.

¹²⁶ Taylor & Van der Will, eds. *The Nazification*, 145-7.

¹²⁷ This promise was announced, i.e., during the first "Freedom Day" rally. Quoted from Joseph Wagner's speech, in Peuckert, „Es gibt."

the tour de force specimen of Grażyński's "regionalism," the Museum Building, served as a prime example of the regime's ethnic-cleansing based "Kulturarbeit."

Even as the first far outweighed the second, the effort to "re-Germanize" the landscape, had its de-constructive and re-constructive counterparts. Long before they started to dismantle the Polish museum, regime agents first unleashed their cleansing venture on the landscape already in early September of 1939, when, taking advantage of ongoing combat, they burned down Kattowitz's municipal synagogue.¹²⁸ In the next year, they started to remodel the Polish "Katowice Forum" into a German national-regional place of identity. Designating all Polish statues and the avant-garde museum building for destruction, they replaced these with symbols of the Third Reich. The most important of these was a set of musical porcelain bells installed in the Administration Offices Building (*Gmach Urzędów Niezespólonych*) located across from the front of the "Gau House" (see **images 3.4, 4.3, and 4.4**). Forming the main attraction of this otherwise only cosmetically redecorated ceremonial plaza, this contraption played the melody of the new regional anthem for Gau O/S, Heinrich Gutberlet's "The March of the Germans in Poland," one of the patriotic songs sung by the German minority during the interwar era.¹²⁹ Its presence served to promote the official identity of the former Voivodeship as a land that had been "recovered" after a long and enduring "Volkstumskampf" on the part of the Germans here. This monument to "Germandom" in Kattowitz had an equally important counterpart in the neighboring city of Königshütte (Chorzow): the restored

¹²⁸ The Nazi propaganda bureau justified this destruction on grounds that the synagogue was a stronghold of resistance on the part of Grażyński's paramilitary Insurgent's Union. This in: „Insurgenten-Überfall in Kattowitz: Schüsse aus der Synagoge auf vorbeifahrendes Militär. Die Judentempel in Brand geschossen,” KZ 6 Sept. 1939.

¹²⁹ „Kattowitz als Verkehrszentrum,” KZ 20 Feb. 1941; and in tour guides: „Führer...,” 10-11. Sappok, *Oberschlesiens*, 126.

monument to Graf Reden, which originally had been torn down at the behest of local Polish authorities in the early summer of 1939.

The installation of the set of porcelain bells at the “Katowice Forum,” as well as the re-erection of the Statue of Graf Reden in the municipal park of Königshütte marked the OHB’s initiative to make these areas the main tourist sites for the Industrial District. To further promote the cause, one of the consortium’s leading photographers, the interwar prominent activist of the German minority Kulturbund, Edgar Boidol, helped coordinate the drafting of postcards of this larger effort.¹³⁰ The favorite images that these promoted included the pre-modern wooden churches, which had been transported by Polish cultural officials in the course of the 1930s to serve as icons of the historical rootedness of “age-old Slavic/Polish” culture in these modern metropolises (**see image 3.14**). Now these icons served the same function for the new authorities of these areas, who since the interwar era had insisted that contrary to what the Poles say, these were “doubtlessly the important witnesses of German woodworking technique.”¹³¹ By the spring of 1941, the broader public was able to acquire these postcards, along with local maps, and tour books, in the first general interest center for visitors coming to Kattowitz, run by the all-German “Tourist Association” (*Fremdenverkehrverband*) located across the street from the city’s Main Train Station.¹³²

Apart from all this de-construction, re-decoration, and re-narration of physical spaces, little took place in the way of original construction of the “German landscape”

¹³⁰ Plakatten „die O/S Landschaft“ zu erwerben, NSG 158/42, 13 Jan 1942, APK (not filed), Blatt 2. According to this source 1.250 million postcards of eastern Upper Silesia were printed. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Hab. Ryszard Kaczmarek for allowing me access to the non-filed documents of the NSG (Third Reich’s news service agency) at the Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach.

¹³¹ Quoted from: W. Grundmann, „Aufgaben des Denkmalpflegers im befreiten Oberschlesien,“ in: Förster / Stumpe, eds., *Schönere*, 18-19.

¹³² „Kattowitz als Verkehrszentrum,“ KZ 50 (20 Feb. 1941), n.p.

that the OHB conceptualized. The Nazi regime made promises to permanently resolve the housing shortage that had been plaguing the Industrial District since the late 19th century. They also staked the superiority of “Germandom” over “Polishness” in a program to “green” this area, including via the building of gardens, parks, and recreation areas, as well as a “Green Belt” surrounding the Industrial District.¹³³ The concept of “establishing ‘a clear separation between rural peasants and industrial workers’”—as noted by Götz Ally and Susanne Heim—was behind this effort.¹³⁴ None of these plans were realized in any significant manner. The constraints of war did not allow for much more than the renovation and completion of some of the building projects started in the war era to take place. In this regard, building officials of Gau O/S made around 20,000 apartments in Kattowitz “habitable”—which hardly resolved a continually existing housing shortage.¹³⁵ Otherwise, throughout the Industrial District and its surrounding rural areas, they renovated Polish-era built houses, public swimming pools, school buildings, city halls, roads, etc.. In accordance with their goals of making the Industrial District more “green,” the regime promoted the planting of trees along road sides, and the construction of garden plots in urban centers, including up to 300 in Kattowitz.¹³⁶ All this work was given more

¹³³ „Grüne Gürtel für Landschaftsschutzmassen,” KZ 29 Jan. 1940. For environmentalist projects of the Nazi annexed and occupied territories of interwar Poland, see: David Blackbourne, “The Conquest of Nature and the Mystique of the Eastern Frontier in Nazi Germany,” in: Robert L. Nelson, ed., *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East, 1850 through the Present*, (New York 2009), 141-62; and: Thomas M. Lekan, *Imaging the nation in nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1914*, (Cambridge, 2004), chapter 5; Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 231-2, 235-7, 240, 254-6, and chapter 7.

¹³⁴ Ally & Heim, *Architects*, 104-6 & 105-114. Most of the regime’s planning efforts examined in this study pertained to Dabrower Basin area, and thus fall outside the geographical scope of this study.

¹³⁵ The Nazi press’ statistics are never 100% reliable. i. “Schon 26,000 Wohnungen erstellt,” KZ 27 May 1942, ii. „Grossbaustelle Ostoberschlesien,” KZ 22 Mar. 1940; iii. The housing shortage continued to rage, and was only partly alleviated by the expropriation and eviction of „Jews“ and „Poles“ from their homes and apartments. Reports of Oberbürgermeister Kattowitz from May, and August – October 1940 and Sept. - Oct 1942, GStA PK, Tit. 856, Nr. Ost 4, Katt. 13, fol. 1-127, doc. 34ff, 46ff, 53ff, 63ff. For similar ambitions by regime authorities in the Warthegau, see Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 235-7.

¹³⁶ „Über 6000 neue Kleingärten in Kattowitz,” KZ 72 (9 Apr. 1940): n.n.; ii. “4,000 neue Kleingärten in O/S.” KZ 4-6 (Apr. 1942): n.p.

hype in the press than the public welfare that it actually provided. For example, propaganda officials represented the municipal pool of Kattowitz, which was once Grażyński's token of benevolence to the city folk as the Nazis' great gift to the „Volksdeutsche” here, as well as an icon of „German superiority.”¹³⁷

Much of this work took place after the spring of 1941, when in collaboration with the OHB and with local-level administrators the Gau government initiated the “Operation More Beautiful Silesia” (*„Aktion schönere Schlesien”*). As part and parcel of this campaign, the regime subsidized owners and managers in up to half of the costs to renovate and “beautify” the facades of their buildings, houses, stores, and sign-posts. Even if they were hardly building anything original, the authorities propagated that all these projects marked the “removal of the ruin/disfigurement” (*Entschandelung*) that the Poles “imposed” on the region's landscapes. Based on this logic, the Nazis promoted the notion that they were bringing a superior “beautiful” appearance to this borderland and thus underscoring Germany's rights to it.¹³⁸ I now turn to examine the grass-roots campaign devoted to this.

“Community Service”: Mobilizing the Masses to the Ethnic Cleansing of the Landscape

One of the goals of the “Operation More Beautiful Silesia” was to engage the populace in the process of Germanizing the landscape. Since officials were hardly able to restructure its appearance, and could only make relatively minor changes, they thus used

¹³⁷ Source: „Badereise rund um Kattowitz,” KZ (28 Apr. 1940): n.p.

¹³⁸ The official name of this campaign was also the „Sonderaktion für die Entschandelung und Verschönerung des Stadt und Dorfbildes.” Tiessler, „Ein Jahr,” 128; ii. Erwin Schramm, “Die Entschandelung und Verschönerung des Stadt- und Dorfbildes im Rahmen der gemeindlichen Kulturarbeit,” *Der Oberschlesier* Heft 2 (December 1941): 4-6. For similar discourses and developments in the Warthegau, see: Epstein, *Model Nazi*, chapter 7.

propaganda in an effort to cultivate “good taste” for this new “German landscape” in the making. With its rallying slogan, “casting out the ugly and returning home the beautiful” (*“Auskehr des Hässlichen und Heimkehr zum Schönen”*),¹³⁹ this “Operation” aimed to do this. As the head of the “communal government,” Erwin Schramm noted the following in his article representing “Operation More Beautiful Silesia:”

In the new and beautiful Oberschlesien the native local [Oberschlesische Mensch] should foremost be emotionally overtaken and aroused by this operation. [He should] become strongly impressed through [working to] improve and beautify his Heimat, indeed so that he himself feels more bound to his Heimat [heimatlicher fühlt], thinks more of the commonality, and proudly gains his fulfillment from common accomplishments.¹⁴⁰

In other words, public engagement in the move to create “a beautiful O/S” was to serve the larger goal of re-socializing the local resident in a “German Heimat,” of getting her/him to take an active part in regime politics and social engineering, and thereby of raising her/him into a “good German.” The Operation thus marked the regime’s propensity to build community in local areas based on the forging of an ideologically-based landscape.

Local party cells, administrative officials, and OHB “block leaders,” along with the press and radio, worked to rally the public to engage in various petty projects.¹⁴¹

These included the cleaning up of streets, water ways, public parks, local sign posts and

¹³⁹ Originally this slogan was conceived for a public exhibit on how to „beautify“ one’s surroundings in the industrial region of Westfalen. Its Oberpräsident thought that Goerg Kate, head of the OHB, could benefit from the exhibit’s principles and thus sent its contents in three boxes to him. OP Provinz. Westfalen, to: Kate, 26 May 1941, APK 118 (Provinzialverwaltung)/4822, doc. 3 and 20.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted from: Erwin Schramm, „Gaukommunalamtsleiter: Verschönerung des Stadt- und Dorfbildes,” KZ (21 May 1941): n.p.

¹⁴¹ Sources on the coordinating agents include: i. „Zur Heimatidee gehört Heimatkenntnis,” KZ (2 May 1941), n.p.; ii. Abschrift, Oberbürgermeister KH, to Kreisleiter NSDAP Amt. f. Kommunalpolitik, 1 July 1941, APK 149/174, doc. 31; iii. Schramm, „Gaukommunalamtsleiter,” n.p. iv. „Kattowitz muss schöner werden!” KZ (1 Juni 1940), n.p.; v. The OHB worked closely with the NSDAP’s „Entschadelungsausschuss,” which was one of the agents coordinating the Operation: APK 117/4712, doc. 42; vi. Bekanntgabe B 25, Betr. „Das Schöner Schlesien,” in: NSDAP Gau-Anordnungsblatt, 5 May 1941, from: APK 118/4712, doc. 38, vii. „Richtlinien zur Dorfverschönerungsaktion,” 1937, APK 1485 (Gmina Piekary Śląskie)/283, doc. 3ff.

monuments, as well as cementeries, etc., from waste and dirt. House, building, and shop owners and managers were called on to paint and renovate their property, particularly façades of buildings, as well as to clean up, and “green” its surroundings, including via planting trees or just flower beds.¹⁴² Even ordinary apartment inhabitants were pressured to do their share, including to clean up their common areas, and plant flower beds on their balconies, in addition to displaying the appropriate official paraphernalia of the Third Reich on their premises, particularly during official holidays.¹⁴³ All of this work was part and parcel of the larger mission to give the polluted, densely populated, and highly urbanized Industrial District a “cleaner,” “greener,” and “more orderly” appearance. In engaging ordinary locals in this campaign, the OHB hoped that they would be schooled in the values of Nazi-Germany, and become emotionally involved in the effort to “re-Germanize” this border society.¹⁴⁴

Indoctrinating the populace into the official conceptions of “Polish” and “German” landscapes marked the foundation of this mass-mobilization effort. For this purpose, the OHB helped curate two public exhibits, one called “Out With the Ugly and In with the Beautiful”,¹⁴⁵ and the second called “The Beautiful City”,¹⁴⁶ both of which travelled around the local areas of Gau O/S. In addition to these displays, in the summer

¹⁴² For the measures and goals of the campaign: i. „Richtlinien zur Dorfverschönerungsaktion“, 1937, APK 1485/283, doc. 5-7; ii. Schramm, „Gaukommunalamtsleiter;“ iii. *Der Oberschlesier* 2 (1941): 25-6; iv. Gauamtsleiter, To: G. Kate and Provinzialverwaltung, 1941, APK 118/4712, doc. 28; v. „Richtlinien für die Pflege und Erhaltung des Dorfbildes“, 1941, APK 646/2715, doc., 8-13; vi. Regierungsbaurat, „Richtlinien für die Pflege und Erhaltung des Dorfbildes“, n.d., APK 117/4713, doc. 1ff; vii. NSDAP Kreisamtsleiter für Kommunalpolitik, Pg. Lubczyk in Pless, 22 May 1941, APK-Oddz. Pszczyna 26/3449, doc. 3, and also, 5ff., 28ff. ; viii. „Landreis Kattowitz, Verschönerung des Ortsbildes,” KZ (27 Apr. 1940), n.p.

¹⁴³ „Kattowitz muss schöner,” n.p.

¹⁴⁴ This quite clear in Schramm, „Gaukommunalamtsleiter,” n.p.

¹⁴⁵ APK OP der Provinz Westfalen, TO: G. Kate, 26 May 1941, APK 118/4822, doc. 3; Ausstellung in Welfalten, same file, doc. 20. And note 138 above.

¹⁴⁶ Karl Herma, To: Dr. Wilhelm Förster, 12 Mar. 1941, APK 117/4714, doc 19; ii. Schlesische Bund für Heimatschutz, 1940, APK 646/2715, doc. 21-22. On similar exhibits in the Warthegau, see Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 252-3.

of 1941, the RKF sent around an all-national travelling exhibit to Kattowitz called “Planning and Construction in the East” (*Planung und Aufbau im Osten*).¹⁴⁷ This demonstration aimed to get the wider public excited about the new model “German” cities and villages the regime promised to build in the “recovered territories.” All of the reconstruction projects displayed in these exhibits were part of one vision on the part of the regime to create its bold new society based the notion of “recovering old-German territories” on the one hand, and “blood”—or the borderland peoples and the “re-settlers” (*Umsiedler*) from eastern Europe—on the other. This “constructive,” or officially “beautiful,” aspect of the Nazi utopian social engineering program served to cloud and distract public attention from the darker side of it, marked by violence, genocide, expulsion, uprooting, and government domination.

On a superficial level, the “Operation More Beautiful Silesia” concealed the fact that this was an effort to rally the public for participation in ethnic cleansing. In this heavily polluted and populated industrial district, an effort to clean up and beautify may not have immediately seemed to be an ideologized political campaign, but rather, could have easily appeared as a justifiable clean-up. However, apart from denoting clean, orderly, renovated, and decorated surroundings, “beautification” officially also meant their “cleansing” (*Sauberung*) from all traits of “Polish” and “Jewish” culture, including linguistic, national, and religious symbols. Although there is no evidence that the Nazi officials systematically searched the private quarters of those they recognized as “Volksdeutsche” (or potential members of this category), they did demand that ordinary residents remove inscriptions in Polish from common and public areas such as apartment

¹⁴⁷ This from: Görg Guntram, „Kattowitz im Jahre 1941,“ *Heimatkalender Kattowitz*, (1942): 45. Also: Espstein, *Model Nazi*, 254-7, and chapter 7.

buildings, places of work, bars and restaurants, Churches, shrines, sites of pilgrimage, etc.. Often the objects of removal were petty and tedious things, such as Polish writing of any sort in the elevators, on signs listing residents, and in the basements of apartment buildings, since the larger signs and symbols had already long been taken down by 1941. Moreover, very often administrators—including “Block Leaders” of the Nazi party who inspected common quarters and public facilities in local areas—were arbitrary about what constituted a token of “Polishness.” Nevertheless, if those in charge of the premises did not heed to their demands they faced fines, harassment, and even arrest.¹⁴⁸

Very few records have survived of how the “Operation More Beautiful Silesia” unfolded at the local level. Those that have demonstrate that locals found the effort intrusive and harassing. The detailed rules of maintaining “beautiful” premises, and the often arbitrary and unfriendly officials that had come to enforce them, all worked to raise public annoyance with this effort. As an example of how complicated these rules were, business owners were not merely allowed to haphazardly translate their Polish shop signs, as many often did, but had to have them translated into “proper German” and written in the “proper way.” This meant, for example, that the use of “foreign words,” such as “*Lokale*” (pub) and “*Restaurant*” were not permitted on German-language sign posts and awnings. The “proper Germanic” words, in this case “*Gaststätte*,” had to be written instead. Moreover, the owner/manager of the sign had to make sure that the official German *Sütterlin*-style (also called “Gothic”) letters were used instead of the

¹⁴⁸ All drawn from: „Anordnungen des Gauamtsleiters für Kommunalpolitik, Pg. Schramm: Verschönerung des Stadt- und Dorfbildes – Das Schöne Oberschlesien,” *Der Oberschlesien* Heft 2 (Dec. 1941): 24-5; ii. “Pflege und Verbesserung des Ortsbildes im Deutschen Osten,” BArch 8086/79, n.p.; iii. “Pflege und Verbesserung des Strassenbildes,” 17 Dec. 1940, APK 1483/283, doc. 49; iv. Gemeindeamt, “Entschandelung als Erziehungsaufgabe,” KZ 286 (17 Oct. 1941): n.p.; v. Amt für Kommunalpolitik, To: Oberbürgermeister Königshütte, Betr. „Polizeiverordnung über die Reinigung der öffentlichen Wege und Plätzen,” APK 149/174, doc. 40; “Deutsche Wort und Deutsche Schrift,” KZ (17 Oct. 1939): n.p.

ordinary style of Roman letters.¹⁴⁹ This regulation was particularly burdensome to locals—the younger generation raised in Polish school especially—who had a difficult time deciphering the differences of some of the letters in this style. Finally, there was a whole array of regulations about colors that sign posts and awnings could and could not exhibit so as to promote a “beautiful German” appearance that only further burdened store owners and clerks.¹⁵⁰

Next to these annoying regulations, this “Operation” gave Nazi party officials a pretext for meddling into the everyday ways of the region, which fueled conflicts between locals and the regime. Catholic religious symbols particularly in public spaces outside of churches were officially labeled as “unwanted kitsch” and designated for removal. Paintings and statuettes of the “Black Madonna,” which often appeared in small public shrines, were a particular target in this regard.¹⁵¹ Otherwise, officials also carried out these “cleansing” measures inside places of worship, where their demand for the removal of “Polish national icons” often bred conflicts with priests and fueled resentment from congregates. For example, in the late winter of 1940, local party trustees in Königshütte demanded that Father Gaida, head of the Church of St. Hedwig, remove a caricature of a white eagle painted on the stained main window of the building’s interior, since to them this was “the Polish eagle.” The priest disagreed that this image had any national or political meaning, and insisted that the eagle was a symbol from one of the tales in the Gospel of St. John. The caricature stood covered up while Nazi party agents pondered the issue before deciding that they were right and forcing its removal.¹⁵² All of

¹⁴⁹ „Deutsche Wort,” n.p.

¹⁵⁰ „Anordnungen des Gauamtsleiters für Kommunalpolitik...,” doc. 24-5.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 24-5.

¹⁵² An die Kreisleitung NSDAP KH, Spring 1940, APK 149/21, doc. 27-8.

this made it clear to locals that the “beautification” effort was just another way for regime officials to further persecute Catholic clerics and harass Church worshippers—which in the eyes of the party were the vanguard of “Polishness.”¹⁵³

The “Operation” certainly failed in accomplishing its fundamental task—to rally the locals’ psychological and physical support for the OHB’s effort to ethnically cleanse and Nazify the landscape. Even the NSDAP’s otherwise normally boastful and overtly optimistic regional daily, *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, complained of the limits of public compliance with this campaign to “beautify” the Heimat. One article reported that locals were hardly appreciative of having clean surroundings, and instead toss garbage and food onto the streets of Kattowitz not long after they had been cleaned.¹⁵⁴ Another claimed that private residents were in no rush to renovate and “beautify” the outside appearance of their quarters, even in terms of token efforts, such as putting out flowers on their balconies for state holidays.¹⁵⁵ Next to the press, internal official correspondence also made it clear that the campaign was not realizing its aspired successes.¹⁵⁶ Red tape, harassment from officials, and party meddling in long established local customs all very likely contributed to alienating locals from this “community building” program. Nevertheless, these shortcomings only fuelled the regime’s efforts to promote a wider program of “public enlightenment.” I turn next to examine this issue, starting with the ideology behind it, and ending with an examination of its fate.

¹⁵³ On Nazi persecutoin of clerics, Jerzy Myszor, *Stosunki*, 147-157.

¹⁵⁴ „Entschandelungs,” KZ 286 (17 Oct. 1941), n.p.

¹⁵⁵ „Ein Aufruf und sein Erfolg,” KZ 25 Feb. 1941, n.p.

¹⁵⁶ Regierungspräsident Springorum, “Abschrift Betr. Die Pflege und Verbesserung des Strassenbildes,” 17 Dec. 1940, APK 1483/283, doc. 49; ii. “Von der Amt. für Kommunalpolitik,” 9 Sept. 1941, APK 149/174, doc. 40; iii. OHB, To: DAF Abteilung Fremdenverkehr, 12 Apr. 1944, APK 370/38, doc. 16.

Conceptualizing the “German” Upper Silesian

Just as they were working on conceptualizing and engineering a “German landscape,” the Heimatkundler took to writing a narrative to serve as a basis of denoting and shaping a “German Upper Silesian person.” In this regard, the regime’s regional academic elites strove foremost to over-write the Polish nationalized myths of the region that officially dominated here during the interwar era. To this end, soon after the partition, scholars took to working on the history and ethnography of the Industrial District. The leading local archeologist, Franz Pfüntzenreiter and his team conducted various digs in the former Polish Voivodeship, including near Deutsche Piekar (Piekary Śląskie) as well as around the cities of Bendsburg (Będzin), and Sosnowitz (Sosnowiec) in the Dabrower Basin.¹⁵⁷ Published in popular scholarly works, travel guides, and the press, their “findings” of ancient “Germanic settlements” served as “evidence” for the notion that “the blood of the German founding masters lives and that of its successors [medieval ‘German’ settlers] are a powerful peoples. The firm footing of our German Reich on this land is [thus] uncontestable.”¹⁵⁸ In other words, just as they had done before the war, these archeologists worked to demonstrate the “age-old rootedness” of a “German Volk” in these territories as a way of legitimating the latter’s military takeover by the Third Reich.

The regional scholarly consortium used the term “Oberschlesische Mensch” (Upper Silesian Person) to denote the historical, psychological, and ethnographic identity of their model native resident of the Industrial District (and wider former Voivodeship

¹⁵⁷ Sappok, Patritz, & Weidhaas, et al., eds. *Oberschlesiens...*, 5. For archeology in the Warthegau, see: Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 249.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted from: „Zu den vorgeschichtlichen Gräberfunden in Ost-O/S: Was wissen wir von den Illyrern?” KZ 20 Jan 1940, n.p.

area). Far from mirroring the actual self-identity of native residents of this area and other parts of the borderland, this schema merely reflected the regime-endorsed mythical construct. It marked a Nazi-German counterpart to Grażyński's conception of the "Lud Śląski," which it sought to overwrite. It also marked a nationalist rival to the centrist myth of the "Oberschlesische Volk." Despite all the contrasts between the two narratives, there was also a key commonality: the idea that "Poles" were foreigners in this timelessly "German" region that was the product of "Kultur." Although the tone and inclination is much more radical in the second than the first, the general ethos of the centrist and Nazi narratives of "Polishness" in Upper Silesia were similar: in both narratives the role of "Poles" was limited to that of intruders, manipulative and lying agitators, armed invaders, and after 1922 in the ceded eastern part, colonizers who exploited a native "German" population and "ruined" the region.¹⁵⁹

Its depiction of Upper Silesia as land of permanent Germanic-Slavic struggle, or "Kampfland," clearly set the Nazi historical narrative apart from the centrist German counterpart. The notion of the "Oberschlesische Mensch" as both a victim and hardened endurer of a centuries-long "ethnic and cultural-political struggle" between the Germans, Czechs, and Poles, as well as of various divisions of the region between "foreign states," marked the core of this popular scholarly historical narrative. The subjection of various parts of the region to "foreign caprice" (*fremde Willkür*) during its history marked a fundamental aspect of this narrative of "tragedy."¹⁶⁰ The latter was even echoed by Fritz Bracht during his inaugural address as the premier Gauleiter of the new Gau O/S:

¹⁵⁹ See sources in the next note.

¹⁶⁰ Popular scholarly versions of Nazi official histories of Upper Silesia included: i. Alfons Perlick, „Eigenschaften und Leistungen des Oberschlesischen Menschen," *Mitteilungsblatt des NSLB Gauverwaltung O/S* 1 (Jan 1943): 8, and continued in 2 (Feb. 1943): 3; ii. Dr. Otto Ulitz, „1742-1942," *Heimatkalender*

During that time Upper Silesia was hit with frightening wounds: every inner binding was torn, and everything that belonged together in the national, economic, and cultural sense was divided by the at the time insurmountable borders.¹⁶¹

Apart from this history of “divisions” and “foreign rule,” the Heimatkundler also underscored the “O/S Mensch’s” “victimization” at the hands of late 19th century liberalism and “reckless industrialization”—even as they also boasted the latter as an “epitome of German intelligence and skill.”¹⁶² This narrative thus gave the Nazis a myth of a centuries-long period rather than only a decade-and-a-half-long “Polish (interwar) era” of Upper Silesian “suffering” and “valiant struggle.” In this sense, they had a historical myth of a victimized “O/S Mensch” that paralleled that of the “Lud Śląski,” at the heart of which was the notion of its plight through 600 years of “Prussian/German yoke.” Such a myth was important to its founders since it legitimated this “victimized population’s” “need” for “care-taking” by the state. In other words, the narratives of the “O/S Mensch” and the “Lud Śląski” served to justify the civilizing mission (nationalization) that Grażyński had wanted to promote, and that now the Nazis had not only the will but greater capability of carrying out.

The most extreme chapter of suffering and struggle in this epic tale of the “Oberschlesische Mensch” was the interwar era under “Polish tyranny.” Armed with a first-hand experience of interwar era politics, the Heimatkundler worked to use their

Kattowitz (1942): 90-7; iii. W. Majowski, „Das Werden des Oberschlesischen Menschen,” *Heimatkalender Katt* (1941): 131-33; iv. One article in KZ characterized the region as „ein Schnittpunkt blutmässiger Ströme und damit volks- und kulturpolitische Kampfand,” in: „Krankenanstalten im Aufbau“ KZ 239 (1 Aug.), n.p.; v. *O/S und Seine Beitrag zum Grossdeutschen Freiheitskampf*, (Kattowitz-Breslau: Schlesiensverlag, circa 1941): 6-40; vi. Sappok et. al., ed., *Oberschlesische Grossstaedte*, 5-95; vi. On a more scholarly version: Alfons Perlick, ed., *Landeskunde des ober-schlesischen Industriegebietes*, (Schlesiensverlag 1943)169-98.

¹⁶¹ Quoted from: „Deutsche Zukunftsland O/S,” KZ (25 Feb. 1941), n.p.

¹⁶² Quoted from: Sappok, Patritz, & Weidhaas, et al., eds. *Oberschlesiens*, 30 & 34; ii. *O/S und Seine Beitrag*, 5. ii. Perlick, ed., *Landeskunde*, 294; iii. Friedrich Lange, *Ostland kehrt Heim: Memel, Danzig, Westpreussen, Wartheland und Oberschlesien*, Bd. 5, (Berlin-Leipzig, 1940) 64.

experience to the regime's ideological advantage. One of their efforts in this regard was to misconstrue the conflict that had raged between local natives and the high-Polish newcomers into one of "Germans" versus "Poles." Moreover, to further tie themselves to Nazi ideological precepts, they now also promoted the notion that this was also one between "Germans" and "Eastern Jews" (*Ostjuden*). In the words of one article published in a scholarly journal edited by the former head of the Kulturbund, Victor Kauder:

Ostoberschlesien marked the wealthiest and most fruitful 'colony' that the new Polish state [of the interwar era] had received. Galicians, Poseners, and Ostjuden overflowed the 'Voivodeship Silesia' and occupied all the leading and lucrative positions on such mass that even native 'insurgents' thought this was too much and had to defend themselves against the regionally foreign element.¹⁶³

Only an expert of the former Voivodeship's internal affairs such as Kauder could know that, indeed, even a number of veteran insurgents had felt that the high-Polish elites were reducing them to second-class citizens.¹⁶⁴ His eyewitness testimony helped officialize the regime's myth of coming to "liberate" the "Oberschlesische Mensch" from the "foreign" Poles who had "intruded" into this borderland and treated it as their "colony." In other words, this master narrative designates a conceptual border between a "German" native population that belongs to the "Volksgemeinschaft" and the "Poles" and "Jews" that are outside of it, and thus designated for cleansing (including the latter group for murder).

Apart from this function, the narrative of the "Oberschlesische Mensch" marked the regime's official nationalization discourse for the borderland. Just as the myth of the "Lud Śląski" had done, the Nazi counterpart recognized only three groups in this borderland, "Germans," "Poles," and "Jews." In this sense, it depicted the widespread phenomena of multilingualism, "national indifference," and regionalism, as social-

¹⁶³ Erhard Boberski, „Der Gau Oberschlesien,” *Deutsche Monatshefte* 10-12 (1941/2): 391.

¹⁶⁴ On this see: Tomasz Fałęcki, „Regionalizm powstańców śląskich (do 1939 r.),” in Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, Ed., *Regionalizm a separatyzm - historia i współczesność* (Katowice 1995) 46-64.

psychological abnormalities on the part of the “German” native population that resulted from its history of being dominated by “foreigners.” One essay in the OHB’s 1941

“Heimat Almanac of Kattowitz” illustrated this point well:

Earlier one noteworthy trait in the character of the Upper Silesian was his political ambiguity. Due to the repeated shift of state belonging [Staatszugehörigkeit] he became indifferent to just who sat at the rudder [or who governed]. ... Because of the changing official languages [that accompanied the border changes] the Upper Silesian commonly held to his dialect [Mundart].¹⁶⁵

According to this logic, repeated border changes resulted in the development of a socio-psychological defense mechanism on the part of the “Oberschlesische Mensch” marked by indifference to the state he was a part of and also the development of his own local language. Others, such as the expert on the native inhabitants of the Industrial District, the ethnographer Alfons Perlick, also underscored that “hundreds of years of subservience” (*Untertänigkeit*) had given the regional native a “minority complex.” He also noted that the eradication of this socio-psychological nuance, which could be achieved through education and enlightenment, was the point of departure of the “Oberschlesische Mensch’s” “full integration with the Reich.”¹⁶⁶

All this exemplifies how the discourse of the “Oberschlesische Mensch” functioned as the public legitimating ideology of the regime’s goal to “raise” (*erziehen*) what in the official discourse was referred to as a “flawless German” (*einwandfreie Deutscher*)—or in other words a foremost nationally-conscious and pro-Nazi individual. Implicitly labeled as “abnormal,” this official schema of the native local called for his/her “care” by the NSDAP and the organizations of its formation, which would reshape

¹⁶⁵ Quoted from: Majowski, „Das Werden,” 132.

¹⁶⁶ Perlick, „Eigenschaften,” “Zur Würdigung,” and “Das Oberschlesische Kind,” *Der Oberschlesien*, Heft 3 (1942): 55-61. Also: „Rednerinformation anlässlich der Stossaktion von 18-21. Feb. 1943 in Gau O/S, APK 142/603, doc. 50ff.

him/her into a “new man.” Perlick and others thus called for all scholarship after the annexation to be geared towards studying the psychological nuances of the “Oberschlesische Mensch” and his Heimat as a point of departure of eradicating these so as to forge a reified German national individual.¹⁶⁷ In their view, the conceptualization of an inherent “border” between a “Polish” and “German” psyche was part of this process, and a prerequisite for realizing the goal of the regime’s official “raising work” (*Erziehungsarbeit*): making the ultimate psychological “clean break” from “Polishness.” Indeed, the Heimatkundler and all other regime cultural officials saw the full scope of their acculturation work as devoted to this project. In this sense, the representation of “German” landscapes” and the engagement of locals for their engineering that I discussed in the last section went hand-in-hand with “re-Germanization”-oriented public schooling that I turn to examine next. One press article echoed this point in the following phrase: „just as our cities and communes today shine in German cleanliness again, so too do we have to be clean on the inside.”¹⁶⁸

Drawing Psychological Borders

In the eyes of the regime, one of the most fundamental steps towards constructing this cultural border among individuals was to eradicate locals’ widespread use of “Polish” and “Polish tone”—or in other words, the Slavic-based dialects. Although many high ranking officials, including Gauleiter Bracht, were under the impression that soon after the Voivodeship had been annexed by the Third Reich “the Polish language” had subsided, local Nazi party reports demonstrated otherwise. They demonstrated that

¹⁶⁷ Perlick, „Eigenschaften,” “Zur Würdigung,” 52; and “Das Oberschlesische Kind,” 55-8.

¹⁶⁸ „Reinliche Scheidung“ KZ 186 (8 July 1940): n.p. Other evidence for the equation of „Polish” with the dialects includes official reference to the former as „Oberschlesische Polnisch,” in: NSDAP Gau O/S Gaupropagandaleiter, To: NSDAP Kreisleiter KH, Schneider, Betr. “Gebrauch der polnischen Sprache,” 24 Nov. 1941, APK 149/112, doc. 270. Kneip also makes this equation in *Die Deutsche*, 150.

among themselves, local residents continued to speak Polish, and most frequently, the local dialects, both of which sounded different from high German, particularly to the ear of newcomer administrators and officials. Despite admonitions from the party and other Nazi organizations, locals continued to use this officially so-called “Wasserpolsch” (water-Polish), “O/S Mischsprache” (Upper Silesian mish-language), “O/S Haussprache” (Upper Silesian domestic language), or “O/S Mundart/Umgangssprache” (Upper Silesian talk) in the work place, in school during recess, in church, as well as at home and on the streets. According to the reports of police agents, the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) of the SS and NSDAP trustees, even work place foremen, uniformed members of the party and other Nazi organizations, as well as Wehrmacht soldiers both on the front and at home on visit (the so-called “Urbлаuber”) spoke in Slavic-based dialects.¹⁶⁹ Local youth were particularly courageous in their use of Polish and “Wasserpolsch” in public. In their case, authorities recognized that this social group had been raised in Polish schools and were used to speaking and thinking in the language, and not in German, which was foreign to them.¹⁷⁰

The widespread prevalence of all this “Polish” irritated the Nazi party and regional governors. Consistent with its policy towards the local Slavic-based dialects in Upper Silesia before the war, the regime strove to eradicate their use and re-socialize the population into using high German. Particularly to newcomer officials, high Polish, the

¹⁶⁹ There are numerous local level Nazi party situational reports that make this clear, including: i. In factories: DAF Kreisleitung KH, Arbeits- und Lagebericht, APK 149/119, doc. 247ff.; ii. in church: NSDAP Kreisleitung Kattowitz, Politische Lagebericht für Februar 1940, APK 148/1, doc. 26; iii. in the bureaucracy: Regierungspräsident Springorum, To: Landräte, Oberbürgermeistern, Polizeipräsidenten, Betr. “die Gebrauch der polnischen Sprache im amtlichen und nichtamtlichen Verkehr,” 15 Feb. 1940, APK 119/3374, doc. 110; iv. Among Wehrmacht soldiers on leave of duty: NSDAP Kreisleitung Katt., Monatsbericht für April – Juli 1943, 1 August 1943, APK 148/20, doc. 168; and: Adam Dziurok, *Śląskie Rozrachunki: Władze Komunistyczne a byli członkowie organizacji nazistowskich* (Warszawa, 2000) 47-60.

¹⁷⁰ NSDAP Kreisleitung KH, To: Gauleiter, Betr. “Gebrauch der polnischen Sprache,” October 1941, APK 149/112, doc. 266ff.

“O/S Umgangssprache,” or even just high German spoken with a “hammering” Slavic accent or with the use of odd expressions and “foreign” words, were one and the same.¹⁷¹ Thus, in their reports, all of these were often given the label of “Polish,” the use of which was officially regarded as wrong, suspect, and to be done away with. Although Bracht spoke these words in late January of 1942, the latter marked the official view of, and policy towards, the locals’ languages since the beginning of the annexation. According to the Gauleiter,

behaviors [Erscheinungen] that one would be easily prone to classify as Polish in spirit ... [including those] which manifest themselves in language and other habits that a German cannot sport. The German-Polish mish-language, which one is so eager to call Oberschlesisch [Upper Silesian] must disappear from Oberschlesien. Upper Silesians have to kick this habit, which is only the result of superficial [influence] and neglect, and proudly embrace the German [language].”¹⁷²

Indeed, one side of Nazi propaganda stemming from the interwar era held the local dialects to have little relation to Polish, but rather remnants of how locals had heroically resisted “forceful Polonization.”¹⁷³ Bracht’s words above marked another side of the official discourse that overshadowed the first during the war era: namely, that the use of dialects was unworthy, and unacceptable of a “German,” and a marking of convenient laziness on the part of locals. Within half a year of the annexation, the regime thus launched a large-scale schooling and public pressure campaign to stamp out the use of this “Polish,” and to re-socialize the populace into speaking in high German. This effort

¹⁷¹ „Polnische Laute“ quoted from „Schluss mit der polnische Sprachschande,“ KZ 178 (30 June 1940): n.p.

¹⁷² Quoted from: „Gaul. Bracht sprach zur Volkstumsfragen,“ 26 Jan. 1942, NSG 166/42, APK (not filed).

¹⁷³ This from: „Deutsch unser Raum – deutsch unser Wort,“ KZ 27 (29 Jan. 1940), n.p.

marked the crux of the Nazi “public enlightenment” program aimed to ultimately forge the “new man” in this borderland.¹⁷⁴

Newcomer officials in particular were quick to underestimate the deep roots that local dialects had in the Industrial District. Indeed, the reports of local authorities often blamed their use on the work of the “Polish underground.” Labeling the use of “Polish language” and “Polish tone” (*polnische Laute* or the dialects) as enemy behavior, some officials proceeded to deal with it accordingly—by using force, terror, and repression. Thus, individuals who officials accused of speaking “Polish” risked all sorts of sanctions: including public defamation, discrimination on the employment market (particularly before 1941), the loss of job, rights to rationed material goods, and other state “benefits,” and also the imposition of fines, violence, arrest, interrogation and harassment, as well as expropriation and expulsion to the *Generalgouvernement*, other parts of Germany, and/or work camps.¹⁷⁵ Although the regime’s terror apparatus continued to impose these and other repressive means throughout the Nazi era, they neither affected most of the population, nor did they succeed in halting the widespread use of what officials deemed to be “Polish.”

High-ranking and local authorities were well aware of the futility of using punishment, force, and repression to this end. When urged to impose police sanctions and arrest on all “Polish speakers” in his municipality, the Oberbürgermeister (Major) of Tarnowitz (Tarnowskie Góry) straightforwardly replied in the following:

¹⁷⁴ One DAF report makes clear that the organization’s propaganda work, including the cultural and schooling work carried out by this organization, is aimed at: „die Menschen eben erst innerlich um(zu)stellen.“ From: DAF KrsI. KH, Arbeit- und Lagebericht für Juni 1940, APK 149/119, doc. 310ff.

¹⁷⁵ Punishments for being caught speaking Polish included being fired from one’s job: Ortsgruppe Süd, To: NSDAP KrsI. KH, Bericht, 30 Juli 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 38. See also: Kneip, „*Die deutsche*,“ 150-5, and Kaczmarek, *Górny*, 242-3.

it will be monstrously difficult to impose legal sanctions against all Polish speaking persons. As the area's head of police, I just don't have the resources for this. The imprisonment of Polish speaking persons is completely out of the question since there just wouldn't be enough prisons and detention centers.¹⁷⁶

Walther Springorum, governor of the "District of Kattowitz" (*Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz*)—which incorporated both sides of the formerly partitioned Industrial District—also noted something similar. Pressured by the regime to make the speaking of "the Polish language" entirely illegal, he replied that "[the officials] of local areas point out that this prohibition would be as difficult to enforce as had been imposing on Poles in some districts the duty of greeting [German officials]. If German authorities implemented such an unenforceable measure then it would only make the German Reich look weak."¹⁷⁷ Pleading against the "futile" imposition of fines, and other punishments, Springorum saw in "Volkstumsarbeit," or in other words in schooling the masses and re-aculturating society, the only hope with regard to putting an end to the use of "Polish." His opinion was shared by the wide range of cultural and administrative officials, including the Heimatkundler and Gauleiter Bracht.¹⁷⁸

The administration of German language courses were one fundamental pillar of this psychological "re-Germanization" effort. The "German Public Enlightenment Agency" (*Volksbildungswerk*, hereafter VBW), a subsection of the DAF's "Strength Through Joy" (KdF) bureau, was most active in the language teaching effort.¹⁷⁹ As part of the aim of re-assimilating locals into a "German" society, this agency started to offer

¹⁷⁶ Quoted from: Freie Bergstadt Tarnowitz, der Bürgermeister, To: Herr Landrat Tarnowitz, Geheim!, 8 Mar. 1940, APK 1441/3092, doc. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Abschrift, „Verbot der polnische Sprache in den Ostgebieten,“ (sometime in 1940), APK OPK 117/143, doc. 29-29V. See also: Epstein, *Model Nazi*, 199.

¹⁷⁸ Bracht made a strong call for „Volkstumsarbeit“ during his address to the teacher's union: „Gaul. Bracht vor den O/S Erzieher,“ in: *Mitteilungsblatt des NSLB Gauverwaltung O/S*, (2 Feb. 1943): 1-4.

¹⁷⁹ On the KdF, see: Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich*, (Cambridge 2004).

language courses to adults either for free or for relatively cheap prices from December of 1939 on. During the first six months, about 47,000 people took these courses in the whole of the former Voivodeship area. Workers formed the largest social group of participants, representing 36% of the total number according to statistics from the first five months of enrollment.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, no records on how many participated in these courses thereafter and until they were suspended in Spring of 1943 due to German's perilous war situation can be found. However, the internal records of the Volksbildungswerk demonstrate that its broader program of "Public Enlightenment" was generally well visited, with over 3.9 million individuals participating in the organization's wide range of schooling programs during April of 1942 and March of 1943 throughout the whole of Gau O/S.¹⁸¹ The whole range of other Nazi party groups, including the Teacher's Union (NSLB), Women's Union (NSF), Hitlerjugend, Union of German Girls (BDM), along with local party and BDO also worked to teach the German language to their members. School-aged children were given language instruction in so-called "re-schooling courses" (*Umschulungskurse*) during the school year and summer of 1940.¹⁸² Moreover, run by the DAF and KdF the work place marked an important site for "public enlightenment," including for language courses as well as lessons in official history and culture.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ DAF, To: OP, Betr. "Durchführung von Sprachkurse in Ostoberschlesien durch die DAF," 9 May 1940, APK OPK 117/143, doc. 25.

¹⁸¹ These statistics from internal records of DAF: „Übersicht über die von Deutsche Volksbildungswerk durchgeführte Vorträge, Vortragsreihen, usw. In den Gauen der NSDAP vom 1 Apr. 1942 – März 1943," BArch, NS 5 VI (DAF)/6292, doc. 30-35.

¹⁸² Also referred to as „Umschulungslehrgänge." In the city of Kattowitz in March of 1940 the total number of children schooled in these was 4,629. They were taught by 53 teachers, mostly "Reichsdeutsche." i. Oberbürgermeister Kattowitz, Lagebericht, 1 Apr. 1940, GStA PK, Nr. Ost 4 Reg., Katt. 13, doc. 25; ii. In the district of Beuthen-Tarnowitz, there were 12,144 pupils in these in February of 1940 (indeed, mainly from the Tarnowitz, or the formerly Polish part of this district) Lagebericht für March 1940, same file, Katt. 23, n.p.

¹⁸³ NSDAP/DAF Krsl. KH, Arbeits- und Lagebericht für Mai 1940, APK 149/119, doc. 247 and 259; ii. same author, Lagebericht für Juni 1940, same file, doc. 310ff; iii. Same author, Arbeits- u.

Just as the official policy of segregating “Germans” from “non-Germans” for the sake of levying Reich citizenship evolved over time, so too did that of schooling the public in language and other aspects of the “re-Germanization” curriculum. As specialists of formulating an apt program of re-assimilating borderland locals based on their essentialized “psyche,” the Heimatkundler circles led the effort of developing a pedagogical methodology for this schooling. The head of the regional NSLB, J. Bolick was the leading linguistic pedagogy theoretician in the annexed area, and by mid-1941 headed the OHB’s section for “speech training” (*Sprecherziehung*). His job was to train teachers of adults and children to teach language effectively. As the name of Bolick’s bureau within the OHB implies, in the eyes of government and cultural officials the teaching of a “proper” way to talk, and particularly of pronouncing words and formulating expressions, was to be the most important part of language training. In accordance with this ethos, in his treatise on children’s pedagogy in the borderland, Alfons Perlick took a firm stance against the teaching of German as a “foreign language” on the basis of grammar drills and lessons on fancy vocabulary.¹⁸⁴ Rather, as he and Bolick advocated, the ultimate goal of “speech training” was to reconstruct the native’s mother tongue by way of mirroring language teaching on everyday life and experiences, the basis of what they called the “wholesomeness method” (*Ganzheitsmethode*). Removing Slavic words from the students’ everyday vocabulary and disciplining away the “hammering” Slavic accent with which native locals naturally spoke German, apart from forcing them to strictly speak in this language, marked the priorities of this curriculum. As Bolick declared during the inaugural conference of the OHB,

Lagebericht für Feb. 1940, same file, doc. 68; iv. DAF, Arbeits- u. Lagebericht für Mar. 1941, APK 149/118, doc. 73.

¹⁸⁴ Perlick, „Das oberschlesische Kind“ 58.

“Oberschlesien will never attain a purely German face until the hardness of their speech disappears.”¹⁸⁵ In 1940 he published a language teaching methodology pamphlet for teachers that specifically addressed all the speech and pronunciation “errors” that borderland natives made and how to “correct” them.¹⁸⁶

Being in a position to dictate to the borderland peoples what “German” language and culture was gave the cultural-political agents profound opportunities to manipulate the content of these categories in favor of Nazi ideology. In June of 1941, pedagogists and curriculum planners held a major conference on the new education program in the Beskiden Mountains for 800 teachers from all over the annexed Upper Silesia. These specialists declared that apart from teaching the individual to speak properly, German language instruction was also to promote his/her feeling of subservience to the “Volksgemeinschaft,” or in other words, the regime and Nazi-Germany. To this end, ideological vocabulary was taught in language courses, including the official terms for the new Heimat, such as “recovered territories,” and the “German East.”¹⁸⁷ Next to this effort, Perlick and his colleagues continued their interwar era project of translating folk songs and sagas from the local dialects into high German.¹⁸⁸ In addition to this, the OHB also worked to standardize the professional jargon that workers used in the coal mines

¹⁸⁵ Quoted from: „Bericht über die erste öffentliche Arbeitstagung des OHB am 9 Aug. 1941 in Gleiwitz,” APK-Oddz. Gliwice, 1 (Akta Miasta Gliwice)/5746, doc. 8.

¹⁸⁶ J. Bolick, *Beiträge zur Sprecherziehung im Grenzland*, (Dortmund-Breslau: Verlag W. Crüwell, 1940).

¹⁸⁷ This in: „Schulungslager für Lehrer in Zwardon-Grenzhaus (Beskiden Mountains),“ 22-28 June 1941, APK 119, doc. 18-32. Here the topics of discussion were also general plans for the „Eindeutschung“ of the „wiedergewonnene“ parts of the Upper Silesian province, including the resettling of „Volksdeutsche“ from Eastern Europe. This thus demonstrates the inherent connection of all these factors, including the teaching of language.

¹⁸⁸ Perlick was at the head of this project of the „Volksliedausschuss“ of the OHB. i. Perlick, „Sitzung des Volksliedausschusses im Rahmen des OHB, 9 Jan 1942, APK 118/5736, doc. 2. ii. The OHB also worked in teaching folk songs and dances to local level communities, a project, like many of this organization’s work, that was carried out late into the war: „Jahresbericht des OHB,“ 1 Apr 1942 – 31 Mar. 1943, APK-Oddz. Gliwice, 1/5774, doc. 76. iii. A special volume of „German songs of Oberschlesien“ was to come out as a volume of *Der Oberschlesier* in 1943, but was never realized. APK 118/4606, doc. 10ff.

and metallurgy plants on the basis of “cleansing out” Polonisms and other “foreign” terms and using “proper” high German equivalents. Along with standardized songs and sagas, this technical language was given over to the party, the DAF, and its other Nazi organizations, so that these could be used as a basis of their mass schooling and re-socialization work.¹⁸⁹

Apart from promoting language courses and providing pedagogical material for them, officials also strove to rally the public to learn and use German, and stop speaking in “Polish.” Recognizing force to be futile in this endeavor, they turned to persuasion. By early 1940 local party cells started to draft and hang up posters in local areas striving to convince the public of the benefits that learning and using “good German” in everyday life would bring, and the negative consequences that speaking anything else carried. They specifically ordered that the message they promoted be crafted to “play on the Upper Silesians’ feelings,” foremost by “making him conscious that the Polish language is the source of this [the native locals’] inferiority complex.”¹⁹⁰ In other words, this propaganda aimed to exploit widespread feelings on the part of native residents of being socially disadvantaged vis-à-vis the newcomer high Germans, and blame this situation on the first group’s reluctance to fully conform to the new official cultural norms. The posters thus promoted slogans such as the following:

Who speaks Polish is only a half-German!
Comerade! Do you want to be a confident Oberschlesier? Then learn German!
Comerade! Do you always want to be disadvantaged [zurückgesetzt werden]?
Then speak Polish!

¹⁸⁹ *Der Oberschlesier* 2 (1942): 25; ii. „Jahresbericht des OHB...” doc. 76ff; iii. For work place as a place of „Volkbildung“ conducted by the DAF: NSDAP KrsI. KH, Arbeits- und Lagebericht für Mai 1940, APK 149/119, doc. 259.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted from: NSDAP Kreisl. KH, To: Gauleiter, Betr. “Gebrauch der polnischen Sprache,” Nov. 1941, APK 149/112, doc. 266ff.

Comerade! Do you want to be worse than and subordinate to your fellow national [Volksgenosse]? Then go on speaking Polish!
Comerade! Be proud! Speak German and stay away from the Polish-speaking weakling!¹⁹¹

Gauleiter Bracht also ordered all propaganda agents to make it clear to teenagers that learning German is important on account that “it is becoming more and more of a world language,” and that those who don’t “will only be mocked” by their peers.¹⁹²

As part of this propaganda campaign local party cells mobilized parades of their followers to march around the city with banners of “who speaks Polish is our enemy!” in addition to the slogans above. Local Nazi ruffians stopped pedestrians whose German was not “flawless” and pressured them to sign up for language courses. They also hung up the posters with the mentioned slogans and forced the workers and owners of businesses to do so inside their shops, bars, and restaurants (see image 4.5).. Moreover, they forced these to sign a petition committing themselves not to serve clients who spoke “Polish.” These party “storm troopers” (not SA), as they were called, later returned to spy on store clerks to make sure they were living up to the commitment they had been forced to make, and to make sure the posters were still hanging. Moreover, they walked the streets to harass and pressure anyone whose language or accent did not appeal to them.¹⁹³ This campaign was supported by the OHB’s publications in almanacs and the press. These referred to dialect words and expressions as “foreign” and “barbaric,” and referred to those who used them—and thus the vast majority of the population—as “dwarves.”¹⁹⁴ All of this propaganda and pressuring marked an effort to mobilize the public to learn

¹⁹¹ Quoted from: „Anregeln für die Plakatpropaganda,“ in: *ibid.*, doc. 269.

¹⁹² Der OP, Betr. „die Sprachefrage in Oberschlesien,“ 7 May 1940, APK 119/2274, doc. 22.

¹⁹³ This multifaceted agitation and pressuring for an end to „Polish“ based on existing documents of NSDAP Kreisleitung Königshütte (Stadtbezirk Laurahütte): „Bericht über die Propaganda Woche von 7-11 Febr. 1940,“ APK 149/104, doc. 46-48 & 51-56.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted from: Richard Maron „Deutscher, sprich deutsch!“ *Heimatkalender Katt.* (1941): 147ff.

high German, and in turn, to repel them from using their own local native tongue. As *Kattowitzer Zeitung* explicitly stated, doing so was part and parcel of drawing “a clean break from Polishness.”¹⁹⁵

Apart from teaching them high German, cultural officials also aimed to “re-Germanize” the populace via lessons on the “history” and “culture” of their Heimat, and its “German motherland.” In the early years of the annexation, working as part of the Nazi party, the BDO had the task of promoting Heimatkunde, in addition to high Nazi ideology, as part and parcel of its mission of raising “good Germans” and eventual NSDAP members. With over 170,000 members in its ranks by May of 1940, the party’s BDO was one of the main agents of “public enlightenment,” next to the VBW, the school system, and other party organizations. The local party and BDO cells promoted “public enlightenment” by way of “cell evenings,” “village evenings,” and similar regularly held assemblies. “Block Leaders” of these organizations worked to pressure the residents of individual residential blocks to attend these, black-listing those who refused to and thus threatening them with all kinds of social sanctions.¹⁹⁶ Just as in the case of the language courses, the main targets for this ideological schooling effort were the most valuable human resource material for the regime, namely youth and working age adults (male and female). Moreover, the party’s main goal was also to “win back for Germandom” the “politically” and “nationally indifferent” majority of this society, particularly the so-

¹⁹⁵ „Reinliche Scheidung,” KZ (3 July 1940), n.p.

¹⁹⁶ NSDAP Kreisleitung Kattowitz, Politische Lagebericht für März 1940, APK 148/1, doc. 22-3; ii. Der OP, Betr. „die Sprachefrage...,” doc. 22 iii. „Hundertausend besuchen,” KZ (27 Nov. 1940), n.p. iv. „In Ostoberschlesien schafft die DAF Fachkurse auf alle Gebieten,” *Der Angriff* 39 (15 Feb. 1940), v. On functions of local party cells and Blockleiter, NSDAP Krsl. Katt., 15 Nov. 1939, APK 148/7, doc. 7.

called “threes,” or the 60% of the population assigned to “category three” of the Deutsche Volksliste.¹⁹⁷

According to the general ethos of local party reports from all over the Industrial District, the rate of attendance at the party/BDO and events, like the language courses, satisfied officials up to 1941.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, for most of society this cooperation was not an indication of German national consciousness, and far from one of earnest regime support. Rather, the continually existing competition for jobs (which were favorably given to those that demonstrated that they were “flawless Germans”), the will to acquire the full rights and benefits of German citizens, and fear of being subject to social alienation and expulsion to the GG as “Poles,” were among the motives for these often empty gestures of loyalty.¹⁹⁹

Another magnet of participation was that not all the events were marked only by the windbag speeches of party hacks and monotonous lectures by local Heimatkundler. Just as they did before the war in the O/S Province, officials sought to indoctrinate in an entertaining manner, including via showing films, having local and region-wide choirs and folk-song and dance groups perform, among other forms that, as officials pointed out, had more success in drawing an audience than did dry lectures and speeches. Orchestrated in the tradition of border rallies like that of “Freedom Day,” but in a more popularly amusing character, the annual “Reden Festival” held in the municipal park of “Reden Hill” in Königshütte marked a good example of this more amusing kind of

¹⁹⁷ Polizeipräsident des Ostoberschlesische Industriegebiets in Katt, 31 Dez. 1939, GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 1ff.

¹⁹⁸ Polizei-Oberinspektor, 1-15 Jan. 1940, Lagebericht, GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 19ff; ii. Same author, Lagebericht June 1940, same file set., Nr. 23, doc. 80ff.

¹⁹⁹ On unemployment: GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 23, Lagebericht for May, June 1940, doc. 84.

indoctrination. Initially held on 7 July of 1940 by the party and the Heimakundler/Ostforscher consortium, this event marked the festive unveiling of the restored “Reden Statue” that had been demolished by Polish nationalists in July of 1939. Flanked by peasants in folk costumes, and coal miners in their ceremonial uniform, high-ranking regional officials first held their speeches, noting the official meaning of this “tradition” to be a “celebration” of “overcoming” of the “Polish” venture to “destroy everything German.” Then began the more high-spirited part of the event that most likely drew the large part of the tens of thousands (30,000 according to the press) who attended. The attractions included a singing contest for local worker choirs, a mini-amusement park with food and drink, games and prizes, and the main high-light—a soccer match held at the stadium that the Polish President, Mościcki, had unveiled during his visit in 1927. Propaganda bureau activists took photos of a crowd jubilantly cheering for their favorite team as that of the metallurgy workers defeated the dynamite factory workers three goals to two. Even if they did not succeed in actually getting these spectators to internalize the political ethos of this rally, regime propaganda agents were at least able to take photos of this vast and exited crowd and represent them in newspapers as “proof” that a “joyous” era of “freedom” in eastern Upper Silesia had set in.²⁰⁰

All of the propaganda that that I have analyzed thus far, including official conceptions of the “German landscape,” the “O/S Mensch,” as well as the polonophobic cultural racism inherent to these, marked the content of the regime’s local-level schooling

²⁰⁰ On the first Redenfest: 149/105, doc. 1, 2, 29; ii. 149/104, doc. 227, 250-1; iii. NSDAP Kreisleitung KH, Ortsgruppe Immelmann – Bismarckhütte, Monatsbericht, 15 Aug. 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 77; „Redens Vermächtnis führt O/S,” KZ (5 July 1940): n.p.; iv. “O/S Werkvolk ehrt Graf Reden,” and “30,000 in Froher Gemeinschaft,” *Oberschlesische Kurier*, (8 July 1940): n.p.

efforts. Apart from being one who “thinks, feels, and speaks in (high) German,”²⁰¹ the “new man” that the regime wanted to raise via this “public enlightenment” was to be foremost a hater of Poles and Catholicism, the two elements that the Nazis considered to be inherently entwined. Based on the scripts of regional history lessons that the Heimatkundler/Ostforscher consortium distributed to school teachers and party functionaries for their local propaganda assemblies, Catholicism was “at the head” of the “Polish military invasion” of (“German”) Upper Silesia after WWI, as well as the dominant force in the state’s propensity to “forcefully Polonize” the local population. Moreover, in accordance with Nazi propaganda from the Weimar era, this narrative branded the dominant German “Catholic People’s Party” (KVP) and its politics of moderation, tolerance, and peace, as responsible for the “loss of Ostoberschlesien.” Instead of tolerating “Polishness,” this regional knowledge, or Heimatkunde, content for public schooling argued that only the making of a “final clean break” between Poland and Germany would bring security and peace to the borderland.²⁰² In doing so, it served as the legitimating discourse for multilayered ethnic cleansing that the regime was carrying out in this borderland, manifested in the ethnic (“racial”) segregation of the population, in expulsion, and in re-acculturation.

Just as it did in its campaign against the “Wasserpölnisch” dialects, the regime accompanied that against Catholicism with a forceful program to stamp out this “trait of Polishness.” During the first half-year of the annexation authorities limited Polish language masses in the Industrial district, allowing even these few church services to take place only very early on Sunday morning in an effort to discourage participation. This

²⁰¹ Quoted from: „Deutsch unser Raum – Deutsch Unser Wort,” KZ 27 (29 January 1940): n.p.

²⁰² Maria Lowack, „Zum Volkstumskampf in O/S,” Aug. 1943, APK 149/103, doc. 174-185.

effort failed miserably, as despite the inconvenience, these masses were very heavily and enthusiastically visited, and thus functioned as a symbolic protest against the regime.²⁰³

This led officials to ban all Polish language masses by mid-1940. In reaction, attendees of these services now worshiped either in Latin, or in total silence, so as not to give into the regime's demand that if they were going to attend church at all, they had to do so only in German.²⁰⁴ Party agents tried to discourage attendance to any kind of masses by holding their "public enlightenment" rallies, including the "Freedom Day" and the "Reden Festival," on Sundays and prohibiting any religious services from taking place at the same time. Moreover, they continued to persecute clerics with house searches, arrests, and deportations to the GG. Although they could hardly put an end to religiosity, regional governors did completely ban religion from the school system. This measure enraged parents, causing some to shortchange their children's attendance in school in exchange for presence at church-run extracurricular religious instruction.²⁰⁵

These repressions went hand-in-hand with the "public enlightenment" program, which continued well into 1943. Having been working on it continually since the annexation, by 1942 authorities had standardized this schooling program, just as a year prior they had formed a regular policy on the administration of citizenship to borderland peoples by introducing the DVL. Indeed, the two policies ("public enlightenment" and the DVL) were inherently entwined. In mid-April of 1942, the Gauleiter Bracht, the head of the NSDAP's regional "Agency for Nationality Questions" (*Gauamt für Volkstumsfragen*), Fritz Arlt, and other members of the OHB consortium, formulated a

²⁰³ Polizei-Oberinspektor O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht for February, GStA PK, Reg. Katt. Nr. 7, doc. 21-22.

²⁰⁴ Polizeipr. 15 Oct. 1940, *ibid.*, doc. 113ff.

²⁰⁵ For Nazi policy towards Catholicism, see: Jerzy Myszor, *Stosunki Kościół - Państwo Okupacyjne w Diecezji Katowickiej* (Katowice 1992).

broadly rounded curricula for a “public enlightenment” program referred to as “re-Germanization measures” (*Rückdeutschungsmassnahmen*). It was aimed at all the “recovered peoples,” who—theoretically at least—had to participate before acquiring full and permanent German citizenship. The primary targets for this citizenship education were thus the “threes” (“Dreien”)—as individuals who had been assigned with DVL “category three” were called both by officials and ordinary individuals. Otherwise, the schooling was also administered to the smaller number of “resettlers” from Eastern Europe settled in Gau O/S. Continuously promoted by the public school system, the party and organizations belonging to its formation, primarily the VBW, this was a schooling effort with a broad subject base. In addition to language courses, and cultural-political schooling, it included homemaking courses, and instructions on the “German way” of maintaining household hygiene, raising a family, as well as familiarity with aspects of the official national-regionalism, including folk songs, tales, and other customs of the Heimat. All these subjects were to mark the basis for the shaping of a psychological border between “Germandom” and “Polishness,” and forcing the individual to make a “clean break” from the second nationality in this regard.²⁰⁶

Only in 1943 did the “Central Institute for Upper Silesian Regional Studies” (ZIOF) finish developing a standard content for this “re-Germanization” schooling. Edited by Alfons Perlick and entitled, *The Regional Studies (Landeskunde) of the Upper Silesian Industrial District*, this anthology marked the hallmark of this academic center’s work. It was meant to serve as a teacher’s reference guide, as well as textbook for the

²⁰⁶ Rademacher, Gauamtsleiter, NSDAP Gaul. O/S Amt für Erzieher, To: Bracht. Betr. “Nebentätigkeit für Beamten,” 16 Feb. 1942, RGVA, 1232/35, doc. 102; ii. OP, „Vermerk betr. Rückdeutschung,” 16 Apr. 1942, same file, doc. 109; iii. Bracht, Anordnungsblatt. Ausgabe K. folge 10/42, Gauleitung Kat., 17 Apr. 1942, same file, 112 ff.

training of new pedagogical cadres. In their appeals to the government in Berlin to allow this extensive work to be published at a time of severe paper shortage, regional authorities argued that doing so was in the regime's "eminent political interest" since this work would finally put to rest the "myth of the Polish industrial worker and miner"—or in other words, that of the "Lud Śląski"—that the Polish regional academic consortium had worked to develop.²⁰⁷ By way of narratives of the history, folk culture, literature, among other subjects, of the Industrial District, this anthology promoted an almost entirely secularized and nationally German picture of the region, relegating all nuances that complicated and distorted this homogenized image to the realm of the marginal, superficial, and unwanted.²⁰⁸ In this sense, the Heimatkundler symbolically constructed the "Oberschlesien" that the regime had been working on engineering in reality. I now turn to evaluate the outcome of some of the cultural "re-Germanization" efforts I examined thus far in the context of the wider policies of nationalization of which they were part.

The Limits of Re-Assimilation

It was not long after the implementation of the program to reshape the public's consciousness that officials began to notice the limits of their work's effects. In the early months there seemed to be enthusiasm, even for German language learning with the VBW and other party agents. But this did not last long, as Gauleiter Joseph Wagner noted:

I have received reports that at first there had been great excitement about participation in the courses. But this had subsided very quickly. The older people though that

²⁰⁷ „den Mythos von der polnischen Bergarbeiterbevölkerung in O/S,” quoted from: Arlt, to: Dr. Papritz, Leiter der Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem, 2 Oct. 1943, BArch 153/1092, n.p.

²⁰⁸ See: Alfons Perlick, *Landeskunde des Oberschlesischen Industriegebietes: ein Heimatwissenschaftliches Handbuch*, (Breslau: Schlesien Verlag, 1943) 252-99.

learning German would be easier. Moreover, we lack a whole array of learning aid material, including good textbooks for the learning of German at home, etc..²⁰⁹

The lack of teaching material and good teachers contributed to the 30-40% drop-out rate from the VBW language courses in 1939-1940. According to the reports of public school officials, the largely non-German speaking school-age youth, the group in which the regime place its largest hope with regard to the attainment of “full re-Germanization,” was picking up German quicker than other segments of society. But as the report of one teacher points out, this was not necessarily thanks to all the “pedagogical advances” made by the likes of the linguistic pedagogist, J. Bolick, but rather the result of the ordinary teacher’s own flexibility and pragmatism. This newcomer teacher teaching in what before the war had been the Polish border village of Brzeczkwice (Brzeczkwitz) found that the official pedagogical methods were not all that useful. In particular, he discovered that trying to get his pupils to stop speaking in the Slavic-based dialects, as authorities demanded, was hardly possible. Instead he opted to “improve” their local language by only gradually synthesizing it with high German words and phrases.²¹⁰

The deeply rooted local culture of the Industrial District, including religiosity, indifference to high nationalism, and multilingualism, was hardly possible for authorities to eradicate or uproot. Next to the various acculturation programs, officials thus tried another strategy of re-assimilating locals into high German ways: to send some off from the region to the more mainstream regions of Germany. Authorities promoted this strategy in the early months of the annexation, when unemployment was still a significant factor in eastern Upper Silesia, so that this would also serve as a way of alleviating it.

²⁰⁹ OP, Vermerk Betr. „Deutschen Sprachkurse in Regierungsbezirk Katt.,” 27 Mar. 1940, APK 119/1270, doc. 19.

²¹⁰ H.F., Schulamtsanwärter Beingow, Kreis Katt., „Bericht über meine Tätigkeit im Lehramte,” (circa 1942), APK 119/12570, doc. 177ff.

According to the few available statistics, over 5,500 individuals were shipped to Germany proper to work from the Tarnowitz area alone in early 1940.²¹¹ One thing that those shipped to the “Altreich” (the name of pre-1938 parts of Germany) from anywhere in eastern Upper Silesia had in common was the poor treatment and harassment they were subject to at the hands of their new bosses and colleagues. For regional authorities in the Industrial District, the major problem with this were the letters that these transferred individuals would send back to their family and friends. These underscored how despite being sent with official passports (identity cards) that identify them as German, the transferees were harassed as “Polacks,” “Polish pigs,” “dogs,” and the like.²¹² On a number of occasions, local officials complained that these letters from the Altreich were causing “great dismay among Volksdeutsche” (local native) circles, thereby undermining this society’s hopes of becoming recognized as citizens of equal statute to those of Germany proper—one of the main faiths that the whole politics of re-assimilation played on.²¹³ As a result, some party officials demanded an end to sending locals to the west, a program that eventually died on its own due to increased labor shortages in the Industrial District and the rising demand for military conscripts from this area.

Just as they encountered problems with sending locals for “re-Germanization” to the Altreich, regime agents did not fare that much better in their efforts to send them to the east (or in other words other annexed and occupied territories) either. In the eyes of regime authorities, the influence of the Upper Silesian religious and “Polish-speaking”

²¹¹ Landrat Beuthen-Tarnowitz, Lagerbericht für early Jan. 1940, GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt, 23, n.p.

²¹² Polizeipr. Ost-O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht Febr. 1940, GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 21.

²¹³ Landrat Katt., Lagebericht f. April 1940 and also June 1940, GStA PK, Ost 4 Reg. Katt, Nr. 18, n.p.

family home on school youth impeded their efforts to turn this part of society into the vanguard (Nazi-German) “new man.” One way of taking youngsters away from their parents—in a way that would not cause omnipresent social outrage, which the regime feared constantly—was to send them off to do volunteer work on the Reich’s utopian project of re-assimilating the “re-settlers” from eastern Europe on their new land plots—a service called “Landjahrdienst”—in the Dabrower Basin and the GG. Not only was this venture aimed to place their youth in an “all-German” linguistic setting, but also to get them excited about “recovering” “blood” and “territory” for “Germandom.” The problem with this project was that these largely Slavic/Polish-based dialect-speaking youth had a tendency to socialize with the rest of the Polish society of these areas, thus defying the official purpose of their excursion. The propensity of eastern Upper Silesian society to make friends with Poles from the east, including those sent by the regime to work in the industry, was part of a larger “problem” that authorities faced and were never really able to resolve. To return to the HJ issue, one report of an excursion of youth to Blachstadt (Zawiercie) in the Dabrower Basin to help “transferees” from the Bukovia region (in Romania) with farming in October of 1942 underscored that these “Polish-speaking” youngsters were “unfit culturally, linguistically, and ethnically/racially (*Volkstum*)” to work at this task. The report also complained that over the weekend their parents arrived to visit from the Tarnowitz area, spoke “Polish” to them and took them to church on Sunday—and even worse—to Polish language mass.²¹⁴ All of this exemplifies the difficulties faced by officials to re-assimilate youth, or any other part of the population, into their secular and linguistic notion of “flawless German.”

²¹⁴ Dr. Faust, Regierungspr. Oppeln, to: OP, 16 Oct. 1942, APK 117/426, doc. 2; ii. Landrat Becker, Abschr. Blachtstadt, Betr. „Mängenl an Landienstläger,” 7 Oct. 1942, same file, doc. 3.

Waging terror against, imposing restrictions, and harassing, non-compliers not only brought limited results, but also created new problems for authorities. Even when high-ranking officials recognized the futility of this effort, they nevertheless dispatched the police, local party “shock troops,” and selected favorites from the HJ into bars, busses and trams, parks, work places, and other points of public assembly, to admonish “Polish” speakers, including with slogans such as “he/she who speaks Polish is our enemy.” A number of reports made it very clear that in the Industrial District such agitators were confronted with serious hostility from the public. Those they bothered, and occasionally, also the latter’s friends and bystanders, often bombarded these admonishers with aggressive profanity, and occasionally also lashed out at them with flying fists. This lack of patience with the official browbeating on the part of this physically tough working-class society only worsened with time. Towards the end of 1942, the Landrat of Kattowitz made the following statement: “there have been more and more incidences in which Germans have been beaten by the Polish-speaking Upper Silesians they had reproached, and none of the many passers by who noticed what was happening came to their aid.” In his report, this county administrator went on to underscore that such behavior was “typical for the current situation.”²¹⁵

The party was all the more helpless in the face of what seemed as an ever increasing wave of religiosity as the war progressed. Church services and processions remained well visited, while mass events organized by the party and organizations of its formation became increasingly less so with time. To resist the authorities’ restrictions with regard to religious events, worshipers proudly sported the colors of the Vatican—

²¹⁵ All quoted from: Abschrift, Lagebericht des Landrats Katt., Sept.-Dec. 1942, RGVA, 1232/26, doc. 61ff.

rather than those of the Polish flag, which were outlawed—during the important Corpus Christi processions.²¹⁶ Moreover, hardly anything dismayed authorities more than to see among a large crowd of local civilians also several hundred Wehrmacht soldiers and officers—many from outside Upper Silesia—taking part in a Catholic pilgrimage to Poland’s most important site for this ritual at the Shrine of Jasna Góra (Bright Mount) in Tschestochau (Częstochowa) in May of 1941 and to pray before the NSDAP’s epitomal “Polish national symbol,” the famous portrait of the Black Madonna there.²¹⁷

Pilgrimages also continued to the favorite site for them in the Industrial District, Deutsche Piekar (Piekary Śląskie), where dialect and Polish language use was so blatant that—in the words of one official—“Germans feel like a minority” and “think they are in the GG.”²¹⁸ Moreover, to escape the regime’s ban on Polish-language mass, worshippers would illegally cross the “Police Line,” the regime’s border separating the territories of Germany from those of occupied Poland, to attend mass for Poles in the GG.²¹⁹ All of this not only demonstrates how dismal of a failure the regime’s effort to secularize the region was, but also another point: that Catholic rituals, pilgrimages in particular, served as a forum for cross-ethnic integration, thus working as a thinner to any Nazi efforts to create cultural or bureaucratic borders within the population of the region. Indeed, this is a subject that warrants a much greater examination than there is place for in the study at hand.

²¹⁶ Polizeipr. Ost-O/S Ind.gebiet., Lagerbericht für May 1940, GStA PK, Ost 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 67-8.

²¹⁷ NSDAP Kreisleitung Zawiercie Blachownia, To: Gaulleiter Bracht, Betr. „Militärische Gottesdients in Tschentochau,“ APK 142 (NSDAP Gauleitung)/207, doc. 140-1.

²¹⁸ Sicherheitdienst, „Gebrauch der polnischen Sprache in Gau O/S,“ Kreis Tarnowitz, 22 Dec. 1942, APK 140 (SD)/10, doc. 30.

²¹⁹ Polizeipr. Ost-O/S Industriegebiet, Lagebericht for July 1940, GStA PK, Ost. 4, Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 99.

Even as party officials were for the most part initially satisfied with local participation in their “re-Germanization” events, they became increasingly less so, particularly from 1941 on. Although it marked one of the most populous rallies of the war era, the second “Freedom Day” festival of 1 September 1940 already exhibited this public alienation from the authorities. Skillfully mobilized by the regime’s organizational apparatus, a crowd of over 60,000 stood at the “Katowice Forum” to listen to Joseph Goebbels, the guest of honor. Hardly making even a gesture of interest in regional affairs, the Propaganda Minister focused on demanding popular sacrifice for the building of the “Greater German Reich,” exalting Oberschlesien only as the “Reich’s basement air raid shelter” (*Luftschutzkeller*). Police agents noted that this speech and the event as a whole were widely discussed by locals in the days following. During this time this populace increasingly criticized it as “a celebration without meat in the pot.” This referred to the very unpopular existing shortages of food stuffs, which only became more severe as the war situation became increasingly drastic. Moreover, it was a reflection of how increasingly clear it became to the public that the Third Reich would not make good on the social improvements its leaders promised. Furthermore, police reports noted that word went around criticizing the regime’s officials at the event for having made too little reference to Upper Silesia, given too little credit to, and hardly showed any gratitude for, the service of the region’s populace to Germany. This opinion reflected the widespread conflict between the native locals of the territory and the high Germans, particularly newcomer NSDAP and administration authorities, whereby the first group felt itself colonized and treated as second-class citizens by the second in their own homeland. As a show of this alienation and also a rapidly escalating public war weariness, locals turned

the one “honorary” remark that Goebbels had made about their Heimat into a humorous comment mocking the Third Reich and difficult war situation its leaders got it into: Oberschlesien, “the Reich’s basement air raid shelter” – “yeah, it sure won’t be long before it [literally] comes to that !”²²⁰ In this sense, the locals expressed their fear that soon their own cities would be bombed just like Berlin, Breslau, and other German parts. These were not the only signs of popular resistance to the attempt by authorities to impose the official ethos on them that the rally marked. On the eve of the event, anonymous flyers were distributed to the general public via post urging them to boycott this event. As ordinary party yes-men unfamiliar with the affairs of this borderland often did, officials used these incidences as a basis for suspecting an active ongoing “Polish conspiracy.”²²¹ But in fact, the reactive gestures to this, what turned out to be the last, “Freedom Day” rally were very typical, and only grew graver and more pronounced with time.

Even as they signed up for organizations, and showed up for rallies and schoolings, in the eyes of regime officials, native locals did so out of “opportunism” alone. According to official reports, material gain was a strongly given motive driving locals to join organizations. According to one party report, „among our comrades (*Volksgenosse*), who have been recognized as Germans, even as political leaders, there are those who take advantage of their belonging to the German Volksgemeinschaft for personal gain, including the attainment of a better position, apartment, etc..²²² Fickleness with regard to loyalty, and a lack of true patriotism, as well as concern and engagement in

²²⁰ Quoted from: Polizeipr. O/S Ind.gebiet, Lagebericht, 15 Oct. 1940, GStA PK, Ost. 4, Reg. Katt., Nr. 7, doc. 114.

²²¹ Ibid., doc. 114.

²²² Quoted from: Kreisleitung KH, 13 March 1941, APK 149/79, doc. 295.

national and political affairs, was another common charge that German newcomers often launched at native Upper Silesians. In the district of Pless, the propaganda bureau reported that the 80% of the population that constitutes the “layer in between [nationalities] here are trying to demonstrate that they are ‘Germans,’ just as after 1922 they had portrayed themselves as ‘Poles.’”²²³ These and similar suspicions of the true “Germanness” of the population were held by the officials and administrators, even as NSDAP organs propagated the official mythology of the native local as an “Oberschlesische Mensch,” unrelentingly committed to fighting for his/her “Germandom.” Indeed, the strong regional/local ethos of the population and its weaker psychological ties to the nation, including outright “national indifference,” were an important source of these suspicions. A deeply rooted and historically developed characteristic of this centuries-old borderland region, this strong identification with the region and locality, or “Upper Silesian particularism,” as officials referred to it, was something that authorities never succeeded in eradicating.

Suspicious on the part of regime officials about the sincerity of natives’ loyalty to Germany, even as so many signed up for party organizations, marked one of the factors behind the introduction of the “German Volksliste” in 1941.²²⁴ The latter marked a more scrutinous and invasive method of segregating “Pole” from “German” in a society that was nationally borderless at the local level. In introducing this system, the SS backstabbed the OHB’s official mythology of the “Oberschlesische Mensch,” according to which all “nationally ambiguous” locals were “Germans,” and implicitly, would be treated like any other Bavarian or Brandenburgian of this kind. Instead the “Volksliste”

²²³ Bericht auf den Fragebogen von 15. Dez. 1939, APK 122 (RPA)/8, doc. 1.

²²⁴ „Richlinien f. die Ausfüllung der Ermittlungsboden,” (1941), APK 149/18, doc. 111.

proceeded in segregating the circa 80% of the population that authorities noted to be “Germanizable” into categories of officially “better” and “worse” German nationals. Although a number of factors served to alienate locals from the regime before the DVL was introduced, including increased material austerity measures, and being disadvantaged vis-à-vis newcomers, hardly anything caused as much of a social uproar than this new way of categorizing and labeling the population. Being placed into “category three” signified to the majority of the population that the government regarded them to be “inferior” to the rest of German society.²²⁵ The negative consequences this carried for the regime’s hope of “winning back German blood” were particularly well articulated by this uniquely critical statement of the Landrat of Kattowitz from 1942:

He who in September of 1939 thought that bringing peace to this land that had seen centuries of borderland war [Grenzlandkampf] should be the highest principle that the party and state should strive for ... has to recognize the following today: that despite—and unfortunately as a result of—the three years worth of effort on the part of the various agents of the party and state, such a peace has not yet been attained. Instead, just in the last months a crisis of trust has arisen of the kind that the more mature and honest of Upper Silesians don’t recall there ever having been when Polonization work was taking place here before the war [WWII]... Nothing has ever stirred so much rage, and prompted so many conflicts that have engulfed just about every family, as the DVL, even though the latter’s proponents had expected to be able to separate Polish from German ethnicity so as to facilitate reconstruction work in all areas of public life.²²⁶

Feeling dissatisfied that they were denied permanent German citizenship, while their “Polish” neighbors were placed in a higher DVL category, locals felt enraged and discriminated against. Many outright threatened to boycott participating in language courses, party events, and “public enlightenment” organizations, if their official social status (DVL category) was not upgraded to at least “category two.” However, authorities

²²⁵ Protests of being an „inferior subject“ on the part of „threes“ vis-à-vis the „twos“ and „ones,“ who were also accused by the first group of being undeserving of this category, are noted in: Schlageterschule, To: Schulrat KH, Lagebericht, 8 Nov. 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 236.

²²⁶ OP, „Vermerk Betr. Rückdeutschung,“ 16 Apr. 1942, *ibid.*, doc. 109ff.

did not have an appropriately large bureaucratic apparatus to accommodate the plethora of appeals to category assignments on the national lists that the population of “threes,” and also “fours,” had made. Alienation and discontent fired up throughout the Industrial District and its surroundings as a result, and “re-Germanization” work was its first prime victim. From mid-1941 on, party reports almost everywhere reflected a declining participation rate at their events. The local NSDAP cell of Königshütte reported a 20-30% drop in this at the end of the fall of that year.²²⁷ The severity of the crisis was reflected by the term officials called it by, namely, “*the Volksdeutsche resistance movement*.” Exacerbated by an increasingly costly war effort that drew on the region’s resources, particularly the male population for military conscription, the populace withdrew all the more from public life, turning to what authorities referred to as a psychological state of “waiting out” (*Abwartung*).²²⁸ By mid-1943, the effort to “re-Germanize” the population and to give eastern Upper Silesia a “German” face had all but come to a halt.

Conclusion

The Third Reich’s military invasion of eastern Upper Silesia and the increasingly intensive Second World War by no means prevented the regime from trying to convince locals and German society of its „recovery” of this once „stolen province.” In this sense, 1939-45 marked the continued evolution of the Polish-German culture of representing

²²⁷ Ortsgruppe Immelmann - Bismarckhütte, Monatsbericht, 15 Aug. 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 77; ii. NSDAP Kreisleitung KH, Stimmungsberichte für Nov. 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 250-1; iii. N.S. Frauenschaft Gauleitung O/S, Vertrauliche Bericht – Auszug aus Berichten unserer Kreisfrauenschaftsleiterinnen, 17 Apr. 1942, APK 142/208, doc. 39-42; iv. RFSS-SD Leitabschnitt Kattowitz, 9 Mar. 1943, APK 140/10, doc. 80; v. OP, „Vermerk...“, doc. 109ff.

²²⁸ Emphasis mine. Ibid., doc. 109. ff; ii. NSDAP Kreisl. KH., Ortsgruppe K. West., 4 July 1941, APK 149/72, doc. 12; iii. SD des RF SS, Betr. “Stimmung und Verhalten der polnischen Volksgruppe,” 8 Dec. 1942, APK 140/10, 178; iv. NSDAP Kreisl. Katt., Ortsgruppe 5, “Lage und Stimmungsbericht für das 2. Vierteljahr 1943,” 15 July 1943, APK, 148/20, doc. 150. On failure of the DVL, see also: Erhlich, „Between,” 90. and chapter 1.

contested borderlands as historical, and eternal, national territories. Well schooled in the revanchist politics of public representation, the regime's agents, including the local level Heimatkundler and borderland activists from both sides of the once divided region, worked to promote the myth that this militarily captured borderland province was not being colonized but merely "returned" to its age-old "motherland." Reflected in the speeches of high ranking officials, including Hitler himself, I have argued that this discourse of winning back lost "peoples" and "territories" formed one of the idealistic justifications behind the Third Reich's occupation of Poland and the initiation of its genocidal population politics. To represent this myth in annexed eastern Upper Silesia, the Reich's regional cultural political agents drew on an interwar era tradition of revanchist ideology, popular scholarship, border rallies, mass schoolings, and other familiar forms of representational culture. Indeed, the invention of national-regional traditions and their promotion to the public remained a core aspect of the Third Reich's revisionist politics in the annexed borderland.

The no holds barred scenario that the cultural-political agents, who had been schooled during the "cold war" of the interwar period and now worked for the Nazis, gave their work an unprecedented social engineering character, and made it the ideological, and acculturation, aspect of the Third Reich's ethnic cleansing policies. I have argued that cultural politics worked to re-nationalize this borderland by promoting a scenario of international turned intra-regional war between "Poles" and "Germans." Cultural agents worked to revise local cultures and social identities on a national basis by promoting the idea of making a "clean break" between "Polishness" and "Germanness." In this regard they worked to construct polar opposite concepts, or in other words, a

conceptual border between national landscapes and national minds as a point of departure of reengineering and reshaping these spheres on the basis of their ideological precepts. Radically imposing essential characteristics on the population, and refusing to recognize the autonomy of regional and local ways, the regime's intellectuals and social engineers did not get far in their utopian program of "winning back" German blood. Their own treatment of this society as a colony for stringent ideologically-based reordering and reshaping, and the shortages they were faced with by the Third Reich's increasingly perilous war situation, put to final rest the project of "recovering Ostoberschlesien." All that remained was a legacy of social engineering in borderlands that the next revanchist regime that came to govern this territory was quick to notice and utilize for its own attempt in this direction. In now turn to this topic in the final chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 5:

Territorial Re-Appropriation and the “Saddling of the Cow,” 1945-53

“We are not coming as foreign arrivals to colonize the country here, but rather are returning to the land of our ancestors [ojcowizna] in order to restore to it its true face, but also taking into account the changes that civilization has undergone, including all that which has brought us progress in the last centuries.” –Wacław Barcikowski ¹

“The following is already an established basic principle: don’t waste a single drop of Polish blood. However one will not recover blood immediately in its entirety. It has to regenerate and cleanse itself [as well as] go through the Polish heart and attain a Polish pulse. This is not a task for one year, but rather for one generation... The Polish nation has won the territorial war, it also has to win the nationality war.” –Edmund Męclewski ²

The end of WWII marked the incorporation of both the eastern and western parts of interwar Upper Silesia into a territorially reconstructed Polish nation-state. Postwar Poland’s cadre of experts of “West Research (western affairs)” treated the area of the former Province O/S, or western Upper Silesia, as part and parcel of the larger formerly German provinces to the east of the Oder-Neisse Line, which I refer to as the Northern and Western Territories (hereafter NWT). Officially ceded to Poland upon the consent of the Allied Powers, the latter also gave the Polish communist government a mandate to ethnically cleanse these areas through massive expulsions, re-settlements, and—the main focus of this chapter—*acculturation*. This massive project of integrating these officially called “Recovered Territories” (Ziemie Odzyskane)³ gave reinvigorated status to the

¹ “Saddling the Cow” in the title refers to Stalin’s famous remark that “imposing communism on Poland is like putting a saddle on a cow.” Scholars have used the phrase “Saddling of the Cow” to refer to the establishment of communism in Poland, including the very strange path it took in light of Marxist-Leninist prescriptions.

Quoted from: Wacław Barcikowski, „Słowo Wstępne,” in: *Odzyskane Ziemie—Odzyskani Ludzie: z współczesnych zagadnień Ziem Odzyskanych*, (Poznań: Wyd. Zach., 1946) 7.

² Edmund Męclewski, „Ziemie Odzyskane i Odzyskani Ludzie,” in: *Odzyskane*, 82.

³ In addition to “Ziemie Odzyskane,” these lands were also referred to as “Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne” (Northern and Western Territories), as well as the “ziemie poniemieckie” or post-German lands.

activists, scholars, and professionals of Polish-German borderlands, who had staffed the ranks of the interwar era Polish Western Union (PZZ) and other “western research” institutes, and thus served as Polish counterparts to the German consortium of geopolitical specialists, or Heimatkundler, Heimatforscher and Ostforscher. Their career-long devotion to “recovering” these “ancient Piast Lands of Poland” was strong enough to outweigh their otherwise virulent opposition towards Soviet Communism, which stemmed from their same Dmowskian nationalist ideological creed. In 1945, the restored PZZ and its “western research” cohort became the Polish Communist Party’s main nationalist aid for the forging of “People’s Poland.”⁴ Because influential members of this elite were in the National Council (Krajowa Rada Narodowa, KRN), the Ministry of the Recovered Territories (MZO), and the PPR, they were part and parcel of the regime governing postwar Poland. I therefore refer to them as well as the PPR and its coalition when I use this word “regime” in the space that follows. Sharing a common goal of using a domineering state to engineer a bold new social order via ethnic cleansing, resettlement, and acculturation, during the first five years of postwar Poland, the party and PZZ placed their hopes in rebuilding a “new Poland” on the NWT.

Just as the last one did so with regard to the Nazi “Recovered East,” this chapter examines the role of acculturation in the process of ethnic cleansing in postwar Poland’s “Recovered West.” My main geographical focus here is not so much on the formerly

Throughout the chapter I will use the second and third terms to refer to these areas, including the abbreviation of NWT. These terms refer to the provinces just to the west of the Oder-Neisse Line, which had been a part of Germany before September 1939, including Warmia and Mazuria, Eastern Pomerania (Pomorze Zachodnie), Eastern Brandenburg (Ziemia Lubuska), Lower Silesia, and Upper Silesia.

⁴ See: T. David Curp, “‘Roman Dmowski Understood’: Ethnic Cleansing as Permanent Revolution,” *European History Quarterly*, 3 (2005): 405-27, and his *A Clean Sweep? The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960* (Rochester 2006) 5-6.

eastern Upper Silesia, but now the interwar German parts of this borderland, particularly the industrial cities of Bytom (Beuthen) and Gliwice (Gleiwitz), their surrounding countrysides, as well as the area to their immediate west, the agrarian county of Strzelce Opolskie (Gross Strehlitz), home of the regional landmark, the Mount of St. Anne. Working as the communist regime-dominated government's bureau for western borderland affairs, the PZZ helped to segregate "Poles" from "Germans," as well as to carry out a massive expulsion and resettlement effort in the NWT. As I argue here, in working foremost to segregate the "German" from the "Polish," acculturation operated in the service of the larger politics of ethnic cleansing. Whereas population politics aimed at expelling "Germans"—a process that again in this epoch was rather limited in comparison to other regions of the NWT—cultural politics functioned to re-label physical and cultural landscapes and to shape former German citizens into "Poles." Thus, in similar respects to the war period, acculturation policy aimed to make a permanent "clean break" between the "German" and "Polish" in the region, a process that first required the conceptualization of the characteristics of these categories.

Rallies, culturally racist discourses, and a "public enlightenment" program that significantly resembled the Nazi counterpart marked core aspects of cultural politics, and some of the main factors that I focus on here. Socioeconomic and political instability during the first five years postwar years allowed for hardly any significant urban planning projects to be carried out as part of the acculturation program, at least not until the Stalinist years (1950-1956) when the building of "socialism" now thoroughly replaced the "re-Polonization" agenda of the earlier years. I now proceed to first provide a general overview of the socio-political circumstances of the era under study, and then turn to

address the ideological preconceptions and content of this mass reshaping effort. In the last section, I examine the role of repressive measures.

From “Wild West” to Re-Engineered Society

It is hardly possible to understand the cultural politics of Poland’s postwar appropriation of the western borderlands without a grasp of the surrounding socio-political circumstances, particularly the population-political side of ethnic cleansing. This is all the more the case in a region such as Upper Silesia, where, just as during the war era, most of population was left in place to be re-nationalized. In similar respects to the interwar and war era, the bulk of the new elites of the postwar society of this region migrated from outside the region. By March of 1945 a Soviet-backed government led by the Peperowce (leaders of the Polish Worker’s, or Communist, Party, hereafter PPR) took over the administration of Poland’s new NWT, including the former interwar O/S Province, appointing the long devoted communist, Aleksander Zawadzki to the seat of Voivode.⁵ It also joined this area with the industrial Dabrower Basin to form the Silesian-Dabrower Voivodeship (Województwo Śląsko-Dąbrowskie). This was only the first marker of how the Peperowce realized the desires of those they considered to be their core Polish enemies, the Grażyński and the Sanacja regime.⁶

Whereas Soviet officials treated the native population of the western part of the region as “German,” the new authorities considered the general part of this population to be inherently “Polish.” “Polish autochthons” (*Polacy Autochtoni*) was the official term for this population, a counterpart to “Volksdeutsche” during the war era, and “Lud

⁵ Since the interwar era, the official Polish name for the territory that was “German Upper Silesia” or the “Provinz O/S (O/S Province)” between 1922 and 1939 was “Śląsk Opolski” and “Opolszczyzna” (literally Opolian Silesia/ Opolian land, after Opole/Oppeln, the political center of this part of the region).

⁶ Bernard Linek, *Polityka antyniemiecka na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1950*, (Opole, 2000) 58-63.

Śląski” or “Ślązacy” during the Grażyński era. Underscoring their “rootedness” in the territory, this term symbolically turned the native population of this society into “proof” that both the land and the people tied to it “belong to Poland.” To PZZ activists, the native locals were particularly important as “diplomatic capital” for the final international post-WWII peace conference. Although this event never took place, for a long time, these cadres expected it to, and thus prepared for having to justify Poland’s “rights” to eastern Upper Silesia and the rest of the NWT to the world. To the Peperowce this population was all the more important as a mostly plebian mass for the new “worker’s” and “farmer’s” postwar state. For these reasons, these government agents sought to take the native locals under the state’s “special care” so as to win their support for the communist government, as well as the appropriation of their homeland by Poland.⁷

They got off to quite a bad start in this regard. The takeover of these areas first by the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1945, and by the Polish government by the spring marked an unprecedented hell-on-earth scenario for residents. Pillage, expropriation, violence, and shortages in all walks of life were the order of the day particularly during the first postwar year. Women, the numeric majority of this society, were also the main target of this caprice, lawlessness, and anarchy. Red Army soldiers raped, robbed, battered, and occasionally even murdered, as part of the wave of vengeful violence that they unleashed on “Germans” all over their occupied areas of the conquered Third

⁷ See: Bernard Linek, „Mit Ziem Odzyskanych w powojennej Polsce na przykładzie Górnego Śląska (wybrane aspekty),” in Bernard & Kai Struve Linek, ed., *Nacjonalizm a tożsamość narodowa w Europie Środko-Wschodniej w XIX i XX w., Nationalismus und nationale Identität in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jhd.* (Opole 2000) 241-244. „Special care” quoted from: Edmund Męclewski, „Repolonizacja – programem politycznym i realizacyjnym,” in: *Odzyskane*, 15. Also: Gregor Strauchold, *Autochtoni Polscy, Niemiec, czy... Od Nacjonalizmu do Komunizmu (1945-9)* (Toruń, 2001) 95-146.

Reich.⁸ This industrial society became a state-organized pillaging ground for the Soviets, who dismantled and collected industrial plants, machinery, coal and other resources, and shipped them back to the USSR. This war booty also included about 90,000 slave laborers from Upper Silesia, of which about 25,000 were coal miners, who were haphazardly captured and shipped to labor camps in the Soviet Union, with at least half never returning.⁹

Even as the official discourse dictated the contrary, Polish government functionaries and coercive organs treated this society as Nazi-German. They thus quickly initiated a campaign of weeding out suspected NSDAP agents and incarcerating thousands in various forced labor camps for “Germans” established in the Industrial District.¹⁰ Insecure about how the Allies would draw the new borders, they launched an arbitrary and haphazard “wild expulsion” of 150,000-250,000 Upper Silesians (220,000 from the western part of the region) in the summer months of 1945.¹¹ Meanwhile, migrants and expellees from east of the Curzon Line—the so-called “pioneers”—started to pour into this society, mobilized by the Polish government’s rallying cries of “Go

⁸ The classic study on this topic is Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet Zone of occupation, 1945-1949*, (Cambridge, 1995).

⁹ Still in the summer of 1947, there were 10,000 Polish citizens in slave labor in the USSR. See: Kazimierz Miroszewski, “Armia Czerwona na terenie śląsko-dąbrowskiego,” in: Andrzej Topol, ed., *Rok 1945 w Województwie Śląsko-Dąbrowskim*, (Katowice, 2004) 10-31; Andrzej Topol „Przemysł ciężki w województwie śląsko-dąbrowskim,” in: same collection, 170-1; Gregor Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt, Breslau 1945* (Berlin, 2003) 171-210; Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen, 1945-56* (Göttingen, 1998), 146. Tomasz Kamusella, “Ethnic Cleansing in Upper Silesia, 1944-1951,” in: T. Hunt Tooley Béla Várdy, Agnes Huszár Várdy, ed., *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York 2003) 296.

¹⁰ As of 1 August 1945 the largest camps were in Świętochłowice (3,233 inmates), Mysłowice (4,902 inmates), and Jaworzno (2,179 inmates). See: Adam Dziurok, “Problemy narodowościowe w województwie śląskim i sposoby ich rozwiązania,” in: Adam Dziurok & Ryszard Kaczmarek, eds., *Województwo Śląskie, 1945-50: zarys dziejów politycznych*, (Katowice: WUŚL, 2007) 578-81; Adam Dziurok, *Śląskie Rozrachunki: Władze Komunistyczne a byli członkowie organizacji nazistowskich* (Warszawa, 2000) 61-143.

¹¹ Bernard Linek, „Weryfikacja narodowościowa i akcja osadnicza na Śląsku Opolskim,” in: Dziurok and Kaczmarek, eds., *Województwo*, 612.

West!” to find prosperity. To the end of 1945, they numbered almost 160,000 in western Upper Silesia,¹² and 59,444 in its eastern parts.¹³ Next to these Polish migrants, by January of 1946, 12,887 Jewish Holocaust survivors also returned to the region, most to Katowice, Sosnowiec, and the tri-city area.¹⁴ With its ultimate fate unknown, this “foreign land” became a massive pillaging ground for the impoverished, displaced, and expelled mass of ordinary newcomers.¹⁵ On a popular level, this prospect of being able to make one’s own personal “recovery” by evicting a “German” out of her/his apartment, and taking her/his personal belongings marked one of the few attractive features of everyday life in this dismally war-ruined new nation.¹⁶

In Upper Silesia, native locals, including formerly Polish citizens were the main victims of this pillage and resettlement, particularly as newcomer officials favored “their own” high Poles over the natives. This initial clash between property-hungry newcomers and an already morally crushed population of natives marked a new chapter of social strife between Upper Silesians and high nationals in the region. Just as had its interwar and war era counterparts, this conflict catalyzed the first groups’ alienation from Poland and Polishness, strengthened their regional consciousness, and, particularly once a new oppressive totalitarian dictatorship entrenched itself in the region, turned vast parts of Upper Silesians towards Germany. This fear and discontent was already visible by October of 1946, when the Voivode noted a “massive withholding” of interest for

¹² Ibid., 620.

¹³ Dziurok, “Problemy,” 596.

¹⁴ Dziurok & Kaczmarek, *Województwo*, 522.

¹⁵ See: Tomasz Kamusella, “Ethnic Cleansing in Upper Silesia, 1944-1951,” in Tooley, Várdy, Huszár Várdy, eds., *Ethnic Cleansing*, 300-302; Thum, *Die Fremde*, 171-210; Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, 1997) 137-47; Bernard Linek, “‘De-Germanization’ and ‘Repolonization’ in Upper Silesia, 1945-50,” in: Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1945-8*, (New York, 2001) 126-8. Ther, *Deutsche*, 306-23.

¹⁶ For this point I am grateful to my friend, Piotr Przybyła, author of an upcoming dissertation & monograph on sites of memory and the “Recovered Territories Myth” in Upper and Lower Silesia.

petitioning for Polish citizenship in Western Upper Silesia.¹⁷ In the postwar era the newcomer versus native clash of cultures, material and socioeconomic interests, and power, was much graver, violent, and long-lasting, than the interwar counterpart. The population of newcomers was much larger, numbering 353,000 in the western part of the region,¹⁸ and 83,394 in the eastern one,¹⁹ by the end of 1948 and July of 1949 respectively, and thus forming over 40% of the new society. As popular discursive products of this new episode of border redrawing old pejorative stereotypes of the natives as “Swabians (schwaby),” and “Germanians (germany),” were now joined by the new terms of “Nazis” and “fascists.” Those of the newcomers, including “Polacks” (*Poloki*), and “Gorole,” were joined by those of “chadziaje” or “hadziaje” (for the expellees from east of the Curzon Line), and “free eaters” (*darmojady*), referring to the stereotyped “laziness” of all newcomers, to name just a few.²⁰

Headed by the long-devoted communist Voivode, Aleksander Zawadzki, by 1946, the regional government initiated an organized and legalized campaign of “recovering” the territory and peoples of western Upper Silesia for Poland. The new authorities aimed to repeat the Nazis ultimate mission of drawing a “clear-cut” break between ethnicities. One famous operating slogan for this was the “separation of the wheat from the chaff, or in other words Poles from Germans.”²¹ And so, natives were now subject to a new

¹⁷ Quoted from: Sprawozdania Wojewody, October 1945, APK, 185 (UWŚl.-Og.)/1/49, doc. 157ff.

¹⁸ Linek, “Weryfikacja,” 620.

¹⁹ Dziurok, “Problemy,” 573.

²⁰ Marek, Starosta Powiatowy (StP) Tarnowskich Gór, sprawozdanie sytuacyjne, April 1948, Archiwum Państwowe Katowice (hereafter, APK), 1430 (StP Tarnowskie Góry)/5, doc. 10 ff.. See also: Ther, *Deutsche...*, 320.

²¹ “Oddzielenie plew od ziarna, to jest Niemców od Polaków.” Quoted from: Eugeniusz Pauksza, “O właściwą structure społeczną,” *Strażnica Zachodnia*, 3 (Mar. 1946): 79. Another famous phrase, the one most often cited by scholars, was “nie chcemy ani jednego Niemca, nie oddamy żadnej duszy polskiej [we don’t want one single German, we won’t give up a single Polish soul.” See: Adam Ehrlich, “Between

national selection process—indeed, for some two million of them, only two to three years after they had gone through the Nazi one. Like the latter, this one was based on the screening of personal backgrounds. Even as almost three decades had passed, the side one had been on during the conflict of 1919-21, in addition to one's political/cultural activism during the interwar era, and—most importantly—the extent to which one took part in the official life of the Third Reich, all constituted part of the criteria based on which officials labeled one as “Pole” or “German.”²² In the area of the interwar Voivodeship, during the first two postwar years one's Deutsche Volksliste (DVL) formed the core basis of judgment for this selection. Indeed, Polish officials trusted their worst enemy's judgment well enough to label “ones” and “twos” as “German” and the rest as “Pole.”²³ Those labeled with the latter were thus “rehabilitated” with full Polish citizenship. Locals of western Upper Silesia who received this label were “verified,” receiving only temporary—and revocable—Polish citizenship.²⁴ In this sense, like the “threes” and “fours” in Gau O/S, former German citizens received an official label of second-class citizens in comparison to their high national neighbors and “rehabilitated” regional natives.²⁵

Germany and Poland: ethnic cleansing and the politicization of ethnicity in Upper Silesia under National Socialism and communism,” (Unpublished Dissertation: University of Indiana-Bloomington, 2006) 156; Michael Esch, *Gesunde Verhältnisse: deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa, 1939-1950*, (Marburg 1998) 266. Indeed, the Nazis coined very similar slogans to describe their segregation process, as these scholars point out: for example, “Not a single drop of German blood shall be lost or given up to the benefit of another nation.” Quoted from Ehrlich, “Between,” 156.

²² Numerous archival records demonstrate this. For example, StP Strzelce, To: Zawadzki, 28 Apr. 1947, APK 273 (ZWPŚI)/31, doc. 25. See also: Ehrlich, “Between...,” 157.

²³ See: Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in twentieth-century Europe* (Cambridge, 2001) 130-1.

²⁴ The national segregation process of the postwar era in Upper Silesia and other Polish-German borderlands is a well researched topic. Some of the more extensive studies include: Ehrlich, “Between...;” Esch, *Gesunde*; Linek, *Polityka*, Strauchold, *Polska*.

²⁵ Kamusella, “Ethnic,” 300.

Social turmoil and massive discontent were as much a cause of this episode of national selection as they had been of the previous one. Corruption, desire for property, and arbitrariness riddled the “verification” and “rehabilitation” process. The fueling of the native versus newcomer conflict was one core result. One common situation was the haphazard expropriation of natives as “Germans” in 1945 and early 1946, and then “verification”/“rehabilitation” as “Poles” subsequently, as the selection process got more inclusive with time. Very often the result was that this newly recognized “Pole” now went to reclaim his/her property and thereby evict a disgruntled newcomer from what now was the latter’s home and/or land. One fundamentally similar outcome of the two ventures to make a “clean break” between nationalities in this nationally borderless region was that most of the native society remained sedentary. The total number of expelled from eastern Upper Silesia numbered 54,841 between 1945-50.²⁶ From the western part the expellees to Germany totaled 160,000 to January of 1947.²⁷ This number is small in comparison to the former interwar German citizens who were now legally turned into “Poles,” or 851,454,²⁸ and 1.33 million natives²⁹ of the pre-war Polish Silesia who remained in their homeland. Unlike any other parts of the NWT close to 58% of the native inhabitants of Upper Silesia remained in place.³⁰ As former German citizens, the first group did so as “recovered peoples (autochthons).” Turning these individuals, particularly residents of the interwar German parts of the region, into “Poles” marked a

²⁶ Ibid., 573.

²⁷ Linek, “Weryfikacja,” 628.

²⁸ Jan Misztal, *Weryfikacja narodowościowa na Śląsku Opolskim, 1945-1960*, (Opole: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Śląskiego, 1964) 159; Kamusella, „Ethnic,” 618. Norman Naimark rightfully points out that demand for industrial laborers, not just ideology, was behind the retainment of such a large amount of this population. See his *Fires*, 134-135.

²⁹ This statistic refers to the state of the population by 1 July 1949. Dziurok, “Problemy,” 598.

³⁰ For exact population statistics from 1950, see: Michał Lis, *Ludność Rodzima na Śląsku Opolskim Po II Wojnie Światowej (1945-1993)*, (Opole 1993) 31.

utopian fantasy that brought together two of the strangest of bedfellows, the Peperowce and the once strongly anti-communist western territories specialists. I now turn to address this issue.

Revanchism and the “National Road to Communism”

The cultural politics of the postwar appropriation of the NWT was authored by societies and agents that were schooled during the interwar Polish-German “cold war” over the borderlands. In this section I examine their postwar ideological creed and terms of cooperation with the communist regime. Hardly any nationalist elite (of Sanacja or Endecja conviction) who survived the war and remained within Poland’s borders after it could overlook the fact that their country had hardly come out of the war as a sovereign nation. Ultimately it was now under the control of Stalin, the same imperialist government that had invaded shortly after Hitler, and carried out a campaign of systematic extermination against the Polish intelligentsia. From near the end of the war, the Soviet semi-puppet communist regime, the PPR, in part pursued the continuation of his policy through a politics of indoctrination, cooption, denouncement, chicanery, and the arbitrary use of terror and coercion.³¹ In its endeavors the Peperowce not only faced widespread societal opposition but also had a *de facto* civil war to fight against armed underground bands, who had the support of the independent Polish government in exile in London (the so-called London Poles).³²

³¹ According to Paczkowski, the PPR knew what they were aiming for early on and had an apparatus of terror, control, and coercion to do it, foremost, domination over the media. See: Andrzej Paczkowski, *The Spring will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom*, (University Park 2005) 158-60.

³² See: Anita Prazmowska, *Civil War in Poland, 1942-1948* (New York 2004). The armed opposition was much less active in Upper Silesia than in other parts of Poland, particularly since they found less support among the German and regionally oriented populace. See: Adam Dziuba, “Organizacje podziemnej konspiracji,” in: Dziurok & Kaczmarek, ed. *Województwo*, 363-4.

Rather than taking an open stance against the regime, many longstanding western territories experts decided to focus on what seemed to be only a limited few blooming flowers in an otherwise garden of ashes: first, the opportunity to now *finally* “recover” the lands that on account of their history, and inherent folk-level identity, “had been and were Polish,” and second, to once and for all square it with those they imagined to be their archenemies, “the Germans.”³³ These two prospects of once and for all settling the Polish-German territorial question, as well as attaining vengeance for Nazi crimes during the Second World War, marked the one political silver lining in a national society that was otherwise physically and demographically devastated by war, territorially truncated, and also politically dominated from without. In this sense, the dreams of these geopolitical professionals of 1945-7 were construed in a very different socio-political environment and context than those of their Ostforschung counterparts of 1939-41, an era when the Third Reich was at the height of its imperial size and power.

During the first four postwar years, Stalin and his Polish quasi-puppets found use for conditionally allowing these elites to realize their longstanding cause to annex and resettle the post-German territories. Indeed, part of the society of western territories experts that came to work with the regime had already been cultivating plans for this re-appropriation project as part of the “Western Bureau” of the “Delegatura” (Polish

³³ Here I deliberately avoid using the term *Endek* since some of these activists were also Grażyńskiites (followers of the Silesian Sanacja). Polish historiography refers to them as the “western thought” circle, and German historiography as that of “Westforschung” (western researchers) to point out that these were the counterparts to the Ostforschung tradition. The literature on the Endo-Komuna cooperation is extensive. Some of the major works include: Curp, *A Clean*, which makes this point here on pages 40-8. ; Grzegorz Strauchold, *Myśl Zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945-1947* (Toruń, 2003); Markus Kroska, *Für ein Polen an Oder und Ostsee: Zygmunt Wojciechowski als Historiker und Publizist* (Osnabrück, 2003).

underground government) during the war.³⁴ One of the uses that the PPR had for these anti-communist nationalists was that unlike the Nazis, the Peperowce were in need of a nationally-rooted intelligentsia that supported their ideological cause. Indeed, the large bulk of the surviving ranks of interwar Polish elites world-wide were opponents of communism and Stalin. To win over the Germanophobic elite cadres of the interwar Sanacja and Endecja camps, the communist regime portrayed itself as a harbinger of the longstanding Polish national cause of retaking the “ancient Piast lands” of the west from Germany and turning these areas, and the nation in general, into a formidable bulwark against any future invasion from the German neighbor. And this exploitation of national interests on the part of the communist party in large part served its purpose. The western territories experts opted to engage in a new sort of “organic work” of the postwar era, thus following the footsteps of the forefather of many of them, Roman Dmowski, who advocated this practice while Poland’s lands were under the partition of the German, Austrian, and Russian monarchies during the 19th century. In other words, rather than engage in futile armed resistance against Poland’s new hegemon (the PPR and USSR), these elites sought to make the best out of a perilous situation, and at least secure cultural “Polishness” of lands “long under German yoke,” rather than risk losing even the prospect of doing this “good for the nation.”³⁵

Top-ranking Polish western territories activists joined with the regime to reestablish the PZZ and its numerous affiliates within the first two years after the war. Whereas this core organization had been formally reopened even before WWII was officially at an end in Europe, in 1946, the nationalist and communist elites established

³⁴ See: Strauchold, *Mysł*, 38-51; Esch, *Gesunde*, 166-275.

³⁵ For studies on this Endo-Komuna collaboration, see: Curp, “Roman,” 7-8; Curp, *A Clean*, chapters 1-4; and Strauchold, *Mysł*, chapters 1-3.

the main government organ devoted to the appropriation of the NWT, the “Ministry of the Recovered Territories” (*Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych*, thereafter MZO). Not only did doing so reflect their interest in making this a project engineered from the center by longstanding geopolitical experts, but also one inherently led by the Communist Party. Indeed, this is why the MZO was headed by the party leader, Władysław Gomułka, the main proponent of the “Polish national road to communism”—or one free of rigid standardization according to the Stalinist model. Next to the PZZ and its “western activists,” the Ministry also had at its disposal this circle’s network of academic institutes devoted to geopolitics. Located in Poznań (Posen), the heart of the Endecja and “western activist” scene after the war, the leading of these was the “Western Institute” (Instytut Zachodni) directed by Roman Dmowski’s right-hand man, the medievalist historian, Zygmunt Wojciechowski.³⁶ Other elite figures of this society of PZZ activists included the organization’s head, Wacław Barcikowski, Edward Serwański, and, in new Upper Silesia, Grażyński’s former academic right hand, Roman Lutman. The latter led the revival of the main Upper Silesian institutions of Grażyński’s “regionalism,” including the regional section of the “Polish Western Union” as well as the “Silesian Institute,” both having opened in the early spring of 1945 in Katowice (Kattowitz). This city became the administrative capital of a new Voivodeship Silesia-Dabrowa (Województwo Śląsko-Dąbrowskie) established by the regime in March of 1945 after the official revocation of interwar Polish Silesia’s “autonomy” status. Governed by Aleksander Zawadzki, this region comprised all the territories that made up the interwar Voivodeship Silesia as of September of 1938, in addition to those of the O/S Province and the Dabrower Basin. The re-establishment of the institutions of Grażyński’s

³⁶ See: Kroska, *Für ein Polen*.

“regionalism” to continue serving their old calling, namely to “Polonize” the region, turned Katowice into a regional cultural-political capital, and the second most important center of “western research” and territorial appropriation-oriented cultural politics after Poznań.³⁷

The re-establishment of the PZZ was not just a way for communist leaders to secure the collaboration of cadres of secular intellectuals and professionals. This was part of the PPR’s broader strategy of trying to downplay the main factors of its unpopularity, namely servitude to Stalin, and the Soviet communist plank, and instead, to adopt an alternative identity: that of the head of a broad all-national coalition of “Polish interests.” To this end, the Peperowce gave their actual Soviet-modeled revolutionary plank the deceptive pseudonym of “democracy,” and initially called the postwar nation (next to “People’s Poland”) “democratic Poland.” Although the PPR’s local agitators did not hesitate to also harp on “the end of big landownership and capitalism” and underscore “land reform,” they also spent a lot of energy trying to outright deny that they were communist. The speeches of two grass-roots agitators working to win the public over for the party, the first from the county of Strzelce Opolskie and the second from that of Pszczyna (Pless) provide good examples of this. In the words of one:

Our enemies are spreading propaganda that our government is communist and that we [Poland] will become the seventeenth Soviet Republic. But this is false, since neither Stalin, nor our government, nor our populace, wants this. Poland is independent and sovereign.³⁸

³⁷ See: Mirosław Fazan, „Wkład katowickiego środowiska naukowego i literackiego w kulturalną integrację Ziemi Zachodnich,” *Rocznik Katowicki*, XIII (1987): 100 ff.; and: Strauchold, *Mysł*, 123-5.

³⁸ Quoted from: StP Pszczyna, Protokół z odpawy, 11 Jan 1947, APK Oddział Pszczyna, doc. 42.

Another example is given in the answer of one agitator to an important question raised by one of the locals he was addressing—namely that of “what is this ‘democracy’, since the people here call it communism?” He answered with the following:

The establishment of a democratic society rebuilds destroyed churches, and returns land ... to peasants as private property. On the other hand, communism is something that Hitler was introducing, since he was taking down crosses from schools, and was turning churches into weapons storage facilities.³⁹

Addressing people who had lived under the Third Reich for twelve years, these agitators thus tried to convince them that the PPR was not merely the browns now dressed in red—an equation that, as the last section here will demonstrate, some locals were making. Indeed, the responses to the agitators’ questions show that the public was aware of their government’s true colors. By getting the regional Church to at least demonstratively support their mission of appropriating the NWT and by heading projects of rebuilding war-destroyed churches, the regime thus hoped to acquire public support on the basis of temporarily hiding its true demeanor.⁴⁰

In its embrace of the revanchist project, the Communist Party grounded its legitimacy on the nationalists’ longstanding fantasies of “recovering” “Polish” territories and peoples from Germany. In 1946, the leading activists of the all-Polish PZZ published its programmatic statement on the appropriation of the NWT, a pamphlet-size anthology entitled *Recovered Lands and Recovered People*. The brochure represented the NWT as a sociologically and economically more advanced society than the lost eastern territories, and one that was “Polish” at the grass-roots—or in other words, by virtue of the proletarian “Polish autochthons.” Applauding the shirking of the “foreign eastern Slavic”

³⁹ Quoted from: Referent PUBP Strzelce, Jaryszów, raport do szefa urzędu PUBP Strzelce, 10 Dec. 1946, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej oddział we Wrocławiu (hereafter: IPN Wr.), 07/3/1, doc. 54.

⁴⁰ On the function of the rebuilding of Churches in the NWT, or what he calls “the sacralization of the Gothic,” see: Thum, *Die Fremde...*, 434-61.

lands that had been the play-pens of “Polish latifundian settlers,” these western territories specialists embraced the “Piaśt lands” as a cradle where a “bold new Poland” would be raised.⁴¹ Although not based on a biologically racist creed, their fantasies otherwise hardly differed from those of the Ostforschers and BDO (the Nazi *Bund der Deutschen Osten*) activists: they envisioned the NWT as a settlement ground for “Poles” not only from all over Poland, but also abroad, which would be a raising ground for an avant-garde “new type of Pole.”⁴² Moreover, ethnic cleansing and re-acculturation was to be the backbone of this social engineering project: with the expulsion of the Germans, the destruction of all political factions except “the Polish party” (namely the PPR & PZZ) and the eradication of all “foreign ways,” an ethnically, culturally, and politically homogenous society was to arise.⁴³ Although the communist party leaders were not committed to making the politically insecure Oder-Neisse territories the main heartland of their “People’s Poland,” there was much in the western affairs specialists’ discourse that supported their overall political ethos: including the prospect of a state-planned and engineered society, a one-party political system, and a long-term ideology-based “national” mission marked by uprooting and homogenizing.⁴⁴

These similarities between utopian plans for the German-Polish borderlands of the PZZ and BDO were not merely coincidental. The two societies of geopolitical-oriented specialists had long shared an ideal of constructing ethnic and national-based cultural homogeneity in the borderlands as a way of permanently securing these contested territories for their nation. Working in the “Western Bureau” of the “Delegatura” during

⁴¹ Edward Serwański, „Polska na starym dziejowym szlaku,” in: *Odzyskane*, 20-32.

⁴² Serwański, „O Społeczeństwo Polskie na Ziemiach Odzyskanych,” in: *Odzyskane*, 94-6.

⁴³ Ibid., 98-103.

⁴⁴ Edmund Męclewski, „Repolonizacja: programem politycznym i realizacyjnym,” in: *Odzyskane*,

the war, western territories experts continued to observe their German rivals during the Nazi occupation of Poland. After war's end they were quick to analyze Nazi policies from documents the regime had left behind. They were quite open about the need to learn from the "positive" and "negative" features of Nazi "Volkstumspolitik," population policy in particular. In the PZZ programmatic statement, Edmund Męclewski underscored the need for central planning to guide all policies in the NWT, stating that the MZO, the main organization representing this order should, "if not take advantage of, then at least consider in its work the strong German experience (nationalization policy, technical organization), so as to prevent errors from being made."⁴⁵ In the organization's Upper Silesian venue, *The Western Guardian* (*Strażnica Zachodnia*), one activist, Roman Łyczywek explicitly advocated imitating the politics of the BDO in how the latter had carried out a merciless "final showdown" between Poland and Germany (but to the former's advantage). In his words:

while fighting against one another both sides [Germans and Poles] learn ... We realize that to a large extent the Germans understood many key moments of the Polish-German showdown. Moreover, to a significant extent they knew how to promote a proper politics.⁴⁶

Indeed, not only were the western territories specialists learning from the Ostforschung agents of the Nazi regime, but they were also taking advantage of the latter's wartime work to realize their fantasy of an ethnically homogenous NWT. As other scholars have pointed out, the Nazis' politics of genocide and expulsion not only legitimated postwar

⁴⁵ Quoted from: Męclewski, „Repolonizacja...,” 14. See also: Edmund Męclewski, „Volkstumskampf”: szkic analizy polityki niemieckiej na ziemiach wcielonych do Rzeszy w latach 1939-45,” in: *Strażnica Zachodnia*, 4 (Apr. 1946): 147-8.

⁴⁶ Quoted from: R. Ł. (most likely Roman Łyczywek), „Praca na zachodzie,” *Sprawy Zachodnie* 2 (15 July 1945): 5-8. Here he was referring to one of the BDO's programatic articles on how to „re-Germanize” the Ostgebiete from 1939, and advocated that the PZZ should merely replace the word „Pole” with that of „German.” In other words, he found the Nazis plans so competent that he wanted to now use them against Germans and in the service of „recovering” Poland's western territories.

ethnic cleansing in Poland. In light of destroying Jewish communities and uprooting society in general, the Nazi's ventures gave the western territories experts' longstanding dreams of engineering a homogenous western Polish society a character of logistical feasibility.⁴⁷

The postwar PZZ was not just established to be a society of elitist professionals and scholars, but also a grass-roots mass organization of “non-partisan” and “all-Polish” political guise. Like the BDO, it had the goal of winning the local society of the annexed territories over for the regime by way of playing up regional concerns on a seemingly ideologically and politically neutral basis. Also in similar respects to the role this Nazi organization played in the annexed “Ostoberschlesien,” the PZZ in “Śląsk Opolski” was to function as the middle man between the regime and society. Trying to rally the masses into its ranks under seemingly politically neutral slogans such as “Every Pole a Member of the PZZ,” the latter—again like the BDO—was the premier vessel for re-nationalizing locals. (See **image 5.1**) It did so both in terms of confirming their Polish nationality, and raising them into “good Poles,” or in other words activists of pro-communist socio-political life.⁴⁸ Whereas the BDO had 54,629 members in its ranks in March of 1940, the regional section of the PZZ had only 25,000 in its membership pool by the Fall of 1947, and over 32,000 in the early winter of 1949, not long before the organization was shut down.⁴⁹ This suggests that as a result of the violence, abuses, and lawlessness they

⁴⁷ See: Esch, *Gesunde*, 102 (also 175-225), and also his: „'Ethische Säuberungen' zwischen Deutschland und Polen 1939 bis 1950: Überlegungen zu ihrer Genese und Einordnung,” in: Micheal G. Esch, Ulf Brunnbauer, Holm Sundhaussen, eds., *Definitionsmacht, Utopie, Vergeltung: "Ethische Säuberungen" im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin 2006) 107-24. And: Curp, *A Clean?* 25-34.

⁴⁸ Posiedzenie Komitetu Org. PZZ na Woj. Śląskim, 22 Feb. 1945, APK 271 (PZZ Okręg Śląski)/2, doc. 3ff.

⁴⁹ Norbert Kołomejczyk, 'Polski Związek Zachodni (okręg śląski) w latach 1945-1950', *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Śląska*, VI (1964): 351.

suffered during the first postwar year, locals were reluctant to cooperate with the new authorities from the beginning, even by merely passively posing as Poles by signing up to this organization. But despite this limited success the Upper Silesian PZZ had more members in its ranks than any other regional section fared in this regard.⁵⁰ Although its Bytomian records demonstrate that a number of locals signed on as members, the core of this organization was made up of newcomers, just as it had been during the interwar era.⁵¹

Working hand-in-hand with the regional PZZ was its old partner from the interwar era, the Insurgent Union. Although the highest rank of leadership of this former Grażyńskiite organization, such as Rudolf Kornke, was excluded from this new group, former lower-ranking notables and rank and file members were allowed to join again. While the regime denounced Grażyński and any other Sanacja elite as a Nazi-German collaborator (on account of the Piłsudski-Hitler Pact of 1934), and a causer of Poland's fall in 1939, for a few years, they rehabilitated his main rival, Wojciech Korfanty (d. August 1939), and thereby also allowed the Korfantiite insurgents to join the new organization. Grounded at the end of April 1945, the latter was officially named "the Veteran's Union of Silesian Insurgents" (*Związek Weteranów Powstańców Śląskich*, or ZWPŚl.) but still popularly called by its former name (the Insurgent Union). In its 25-member coordinating committee, there were seven members who had been notable

⁵⁰ See: Linek, *Polityka*, 82.

⁵¹ The archived sign-up petitions of the Bytomian circle of the PZZ demonstrate that close to 200 Upper Silesians tried to signed up to the organization. APK 659 (PZZ-Bytom)/7 (Deklaracje członków kół), not dated. According Philipp Ther, in general the communist and nationalist functionaries were from outside the region. Although this may be correct (he provides no actually study of social bases), it is also important to note that key figures, such as Żiętek and Bożek, who themselves were leading directors of the organization, were Upper Silesians. See: Ther, „Schlesisch, deutsch oder polnisch? Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien, 1921-1956,” in Kai Struve & Philipp Ther, ed., *Die Grenzen der Nationen: Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit* (Marburg, 2002) 196.

activists of Grażyński's Insurgent Union. Moreover, the 22,888 members that the organization had by 1947 came largely from the ChD and Sanacja societies of insurgents, as well as former Polish camp plebiscite activists and members of the western Upper Silesian Union of Poles in Germany (interwar Polish minority). To lure these individuals to join this officially pro-regime establishment, Zawadzki gave members of the new Insurgent Union a range of privileges, including benefits for their families, almost guaranteed job security, and auspicious chances for social advancement. Regional communists appointed one of their main yes-men, Jerzy Ziętek to the head of this society and also to the post of regional Vice-Voivode (vice-governor/wicevoivoda). The fact that he was a native of Gleiwitz, and thus officially a "Polish autochthon," was so important to the Peperowce that they forgave his less appealing interwar past as a Grażyńskiite local administrator. Although he had played no distinguished role during his supposed participation in the third insurgency, the party and its nationalist aides constructed a legendary heroic past for him, and gave him the military rank of corporal. Next to Ziętek, the former leader of the (interwar) Union of Poles in the O/S Province, and now another Vice-Voivode, Arka Bożek, a native of Ratibor (Raciborz) and long-term activist of Opole (Oppeln), was also one of this society's official celebrities.⁵² By way of their reputation as longstanding "frontier fighters" and also their Upper Silesian backgrounds, the party hoped to use these figures and the society to make inroads into the native population.⁵³

⁵² On the ZWPŚl., see: Linek, *Polityka*, 85-7; Jan Walczak, *Jerzy Ziętek: Biografia Ślązaka (1901-1985)* (Katowice 2002) 156-8, 215; Henryk Rechowicz, *Związek Weteranów Powstań Śląskich*, (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy, 1966) 19.

⁵³ See: Jerzy Ziętek, *Powstańczy Szlak: Rozważania Powstańcze*, (Nakładem ZWPŚl., 1946) 32.

In similar respects to how the Nazi regime represented the cohorts of Volksbund activists and Selbstschutz fighters as its own ideological “fore-fighters,” the Communist government publicly represented these veteran “frontier fighters” as the “avant-garde of Democratic Poland.” What made them so appealing to communist leaders was their embodiment of all the symbolism that made up the party’s early postwar “nationalist communist” identity—namely, Germanophobic-based Polish patriotism as well as proletarian class, and “autochthon” ethnic, character. Whereas during the interwar era, Grażyński’s organization was not just a propaganda and ceremonial group, but also the Voivode’s personal street army, in the postwar era the function of the insurgent society was limited to the first two. At the grass roots these “autochthon” and “proletarian” “fighters for the Polishness of Upper Silesia against Germandom” worked as missionaries of sorts to raise support and activism for the forging of a “Democratic Poland” on the one hand, and a “homogenous nation-state” on the other—two projects that were inherently interwoven. They also worked closely with the PZZ, including in segregating “Poles” from “Germans” and “rehabilitating” former Volksliste holders. Along with other elites that the party created, local veteran insurgents served as new regime’s prototype of “the new man (new Pole),” or in other words a western borderlands Pole of plebeian stock, and a Germanophobic “border fighter” that supported the PPR. Their main mission was to teach the displaced newcomers, and also the local former German citizens, who the re-nationalization of their homeland turned into de facto immigrants, about this “new western Poland,” and how to be “good Poles” based on the PPR’s definition.⁵⁴ Reflected

⁵⁴ Ibid., 23-40; „Statut ZWPŚL,” APK 273/1, doc. 10. According to Juliane Haubold-Stolle, the myth (political memory) of the insurgencies functioned to provide the nation and region with “positive heroes,” and worked to promote integration. See her *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen, 1919-1956* (Osnabrück, 2008) 314-5, 341.

by one of their operative slogans, “the battle against regionalism/localism” (“*walka przeciwko dzielnicowości*”), these officials agitated and pressured for all (newcomers and natives) to forget their native cultures and identify foremost with Poland, with the NWT, and the postwar official Upper Silesian „regionalism,” which was strongly connected to the second element. Along with the PZZ, and the regime’s plethora of other social activist groups, they were an important agent of the forced assimilation process.

Just as they rewrote the personal past of Ziętek in an effort to turn him into the party’s legend,⁵⁵ so too did regime agents also rewrite—or rather, just readjust—the mythologized history of the “Lud Śląski” and its annex, the “tradycja powstańcza” (a mythologized history of a Polish Silesian people and that of the post-WWI Polish Silesian Insurgencies respectively). On the one hand, this was meant to give new elite status to the Veteran Insurgents, and on the other, to make them living historical figures of a regional historical narrative that valorized the PPR and legitimized the current sociopolitical and territorial order. Whereas once these narratives were framed to legitimate the border dictatorship of Grażyński, now they were reframed to do that of the PPR across Poland. In the service of PPR ideology, these narratives now underlined the plebeian character of these “Polish autochthons” and their eternal struggle against the “German” upper class echelons—including colonists in the middle ages, and later, big landowners and capitalists. Although the Peperowce refused to admit this, it was the interwar Voivode’s myth of the “Silesian” as Poland’s avant-garde worker and (in part) fighter for social liberation that gave the PPR-serving narrative some familiarity. Of course, the postwar *tradycja powstańcza* radicalized the social revolutionary ethos of the insurgencies, and emphasized that these received no help for the “pro-German

⁵⁵ Walczak, *Biografia*, 156-8.

Sanacja.”⁵⁶ More importantly, it supported the new party-legitimizing thesis that both in a social and national revolutionary sense, the insurgencies strove for the kind of Poland that the PPR, in alliance with the Soviet Union, ultimately delivered: a nation free of Germans (and ethnically all-Polish), extending to the Oder & Lusatian Neisse Rivers, and founded for and by the proletariat. Just as its interwar counterpart had marked that of Grażyński’s “regionalism,” this new *tradycja powstańcza*, along with a largely unchanged narrative of the *Lud Śląski*, now served as a core ideological feature of the new PPR-serving national-regionalism, which inherently tied Upper Silesia with the NWT. As a core aspect of the postwar “Western Territories Myth” (*Mit Ziem Zachodnich*), the regime’s agents quickly turned this official history into the main narrative of People’s Poland. The latter legitimized the new state foremost by flaunting the PPR’s all-national “achievements,” ethnic cleansing, and the “recovery” of the NWT, promoting these as the historical will of the *proletarian* “Polish autochthons.”⁵⁷

Just as these official narratives did not change radically from the interwar era, neither did the cadres promoting the new official regional tradition tying the region to the new nation—and ruling regime. To a large extent, the postwar work in this direction was facilitated by the existence of a cultivated cadre of artists, scholars, and literati devoted to revanchism from the Grażyński era. The rank and file of the region’s postwar Polish

⁵⁶ See: Ziętek, *Powstańczy*, 5, 12-22, 33-40.

⁵⁷ For the interwar official narratives, see chapter 1. For the function and contents of the postwar “*tradycja powstańcza*,” see: Kai Struve, “Geschichte und Gedächtnis in Oberschlesien. die polnischen Aufstände nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg,” in Kai Struve, ed., *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Erinnerung* (Marburg 2003) 4; Bernard Linek, „Mit Ziem Odzyskanych w powojennej Polsce na przykładzie Górnego Śląska (wybrane aspekty),” in Bernard Linek & Kai Struve, eds., *Nacjonalizm a tożsamość narodowa w Europie Środko-Wschodniej w XIX i XX w.*, (Opole 2000) 234-252. The most comprehensive work on this subject is Haubold-Stolle’s *Mythos*, which, based largely of the speeches of the 19 May 1946 atop the Mount of St. Anne, promotes an in-depth analysis of the various elements of the PPR’s memory of the insurgencies, emphasizing that these were tailored to support the party’s social revolutionary ideology, to legitimize the expulsion of the Germans, to paint a west-versus-east polarized picture of Europe, and to depict the communists as the deliverers of an end to the struggle started in 1919-21. See her *Mythos*, 340-353.

elites were schooled in the era of the Sanacja's "regionalism," and the work of this tradition. The names included the prize-winning novelist, Gustav Morcinek, the historian Franciszek Popiołek, the literati and radio speakers, Stanisław Ligoń, Zdzisław Hierowski, and Wilhelm Szewczyk, the head of the interwar era "Union of Silesian Singing Societies" (choirs and folk song groups), Jan Fojc, and the leading figure of this society, Roman Lutman—to name just some of the more well-known figures. The institutions that these and similar figures worked for included, the regional government's "Voivodeship Cultural Council (Wojewódzka Rada Kultury)," the PPR's main propaganda agency, "The Section of Information and Propaganda," the re-established "Polish Radio Katowice," the "Silesian Institute," and the "(Polish) Silesian Museum," which was reopened in the building of the German "Landes/Grenzmuseum" in Bytom (Beuthen). Fundamentally, these figures and institutions were agents and organs of the PZZ, the main coordinator of all political "regionalisms" in the NWT, and also those of the ZWPŚl., which had its own "cultural section."⁵⁸

By no means were all these elites of "regionalism" from the Grażyński era eager to work with the Peperowce. One of the best documented examples of dissidence on the part of the nationalist cultural elites was between the regime and the restored Polish Radio Katowice. In addition to demonstrating that there was in fact dissidence between the nationalists and the regime, this conflict also shows how the regime used these official elites to promote its worldview and also how by co-opting them, it tried to indoctrinate them with party propaganda (Marxist-Leninism) to turn them into full-fledged communists. The main figures of the re-established radio station were some of

⁵⁸ See: Mirosław Fazan, „Wkład katowickiego,” 100 ff.; Maciej Fic, *Wilhelm Szewczyk: Śląski polityk i działacz społeczny (1916-1991)*, (Katowice, 2007) 51-117.

the star performers of Polskie Radio Katowice from the Grażyński era, who were also currently active in PZZ/ZWPŚl. circles. Apart from Hierowski and Szewczyk, they included the interwar era Grażyńskiite vice-director, and now director, of this radio station, Edmund Odorkiewicz, as well as new people, such as the Silesian Institute scholar and PZZ notable, Eryk Skowron, and the literary critic, Aleksander Baumgarten.⁵⁹ The PPR had these figures removed from their posts already in August of 1946 for airing “anti-democratic” (or in other words, unacceptable to the PPR) transmissions. These included, those promoting folk songs from interwar Poland’s eastern territories, which after the drawing of the Curzon Line, were officially relegated to be forgotten, along with the rest of the culture and identity of these regions. These announcers of the re-established radio stations also promoted the “wrong” memory of September 1939, as well as the border war of 1919-21—according to party auspices. In this regard, they talked about Poland’s downfall in 1939 without blaming it entirely on the Germans and the Sanacja. Indeed, in its plight to erase the memory of Stalin’s invasion, along with the Katyn Forest massacre (which the communists blamed on the Nazis), the PPR found such an omission to be inexcusable. In this same respect, even though the title of the program, “The Participation of Workers in the Second Insurgency” lived up to the party’s demands of now stressing the proletarian backgrounds of these “heroes,” the content did not. Instead of underscoring that these “workers” acted completely on the basis of their own “proletarian-minded” volition, these former Grażyńskiites valorized their connection with the Sanacja regime, which, based on party demands, was now to be demonized without exception. The party’s additional opinion of

⁵⁹ Marian Niewiaroski, Vice-Dyrektor Rozgłośni Polskiego Radia (PR) Katowice, To: Wojewódzki Komitet PPR (KW PPR), 27 October 1945, APK 1718 (KW PPR Kat.)/243, doc. 85ff.

the failure of these figures to interest themselves with Marxist-Leninist ideology marked another ground for their removal from their functions by the PPR in August of 1946.⁶⁰

In having been co-opted by the party the PZZ and ZWPŚl. functioned not only to draw the public to the party via nationalism, but also to make their members positively predisposed to “democracy.” The minutes of the meetings of local cells of the Polish Western Union point out that some from this society were bothered by the close cooperation between the organization and the party, and particularly by their duty to “spread democracy” among locals. Instead, they called for the PZZ to merely focus on strict “all-Polish” issues, and not PPR-ideological ones.⁶¹ Still others complained that the party’s ideology was interfering with their “de-Germanization” propensity, including that there were “Germans” within the Communist Party’s ranks.⁶² In response to this discontent with the PZZ’s blind conformity, Czesław Pilichowski, one of its leaders used the organization’s interwar precedence of cooperating with Grażyński’s Sanacja even though the Polish Western Union had belonged to the opposing Endecja camp. In his words:

If before the war the PZZ maintained a proper relationship to authorities, even if the politics of the Sanacja interfered with our goals on a number of occasions, then it would be against our principles to stand in negation then when the official politics of Poland is now actually in conformity with our interests.⁶³

In the end, all members were required to be positively predisposed to the regime, as possessing a PZZ membership identification card was supposed to be “the best proof of

⁶⁰ Marian Niewiarowski, Vice-Dyrektor Rozgłośni Polskiego Radia (PR) Katowice, To: KW PPR, 27 October 1945, APK 1718/243, doc. 85ff; ii. Marian Niewiarowski, To: KW PPR, 25 Oct. 1945, same file, doc. 102-9; iii. KW PPR, dot. Postanowienie, 27 August 1946, same file, doc. 113-5. See also: Fic, *Wilhelm*, 51-84.

⁶¹ Protokół odprawy prezesa obwodów i kół miejscowych PZZ, 25 Aug. 1946, APK 185/4 (UWŚl. Społ-Pol)/35, doc. 16.

⁶² *Ibid.*, doc. 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, doc. 16ff.

one's Polishness," which was synonymous to a sincere "democratic worldview."⁶⁴ In the same respect, the Insurgent Union's first "organizational goal" was to "raise its members according to the democratic principles of the newly reborn Polish nation-state."⁶⁵ Like PZZ activists, veteran insurgents used local meetings as forums to voice their own complaints of the new order, but were likewise instructed to conform to it by their superiors. Even as these nationalist groups were fulfilling their assignment of shaping their activists according to party precepts, they were constantly under the suspicious watch of PPR agents, who considered them to be "reactionaries" due to their indifference to communism and critical stance towards the regime and its politics.⁶⁶

Just as the communists distrusted the individuals of these nationalist societies, they also did so the national-regionalist traditions that they cultivated. Although to a large extent the party allowed the western territories specialists to produce ideologically ethnic/nationalist driven narratives extenuating the peculiarities of the "Piast lands," this was likewise an object of the communists' suspicion. The Katowice circle of these nationalists was all the more distrusted since their work—and Grażyński's "regionalism"—was associated with the official "autonomous" legal status of the interwar Voivodeship Silesia as a regional district of Poland. Since such a status was in strong opposition to the PPR's principle of centralism, the establishment of the "Województwo Śląsko-Dąbrowskie (Voivodeship Silesia-Dabrowa)" in March of 1945 was accompanied by the explicit revocation of "Silesian autonomy."⁶⁷ In the postwar

⁶⁴ Quoted from: Uwagi na temat wstępnych prac organizacyjnych okr. Śl. PZZ, n.d. (circa June 1945), APK 185/4/22, doc. 76.

⁶⁵ Quoted from: „Statut ZWPŚl.,” APK 273/1, doc. 10.

⁶⁶ This evident from PPR reports on PZZ: “Zadania PPR-PZZ-towe,” 8 June 1946, APK 1718/250, doc. 30.

⁶⁷ See: Linek, *Polityka*, 58-63.

period, the regime-endorsed official regionalism observed the following principle, stated by a leading PZZ activist, Eugeniusz Paukšta: “regionalism can be cultivated to the extent that it does not interfere with the aims to raise a homogenous Polish society on the basis of common psychological features.”⁶⁸ In other words, this “regionalism” was hardly different from the official ones that prior regimes and governments had cultivated, in some respects even that of the German Catholic center. What they all had in common was a discourse that symbolically homogenized the local culture by erasing all association with the unwanted other (Germany/Poland). The Nazi and postwar Communist-nationalist official regionalism marked the most radicalized versions of the discourses of their predecessors (Grażyński and the KVP) in this respect, which now outright served to represent and legitimate the ethnically cleansed societies that they were engineering. Having discussed the agents, circumstances and goals of postwar acculturation politics, I now turn to examine its workings, starting with the revival of the border rallies.

The Postwar Tradition of Border Rallies

Hardly any of the national governments that I have studied thus far placed so much of a political symbolic value on Upper Silesia as the Polish communists in the immediate postwar era. This was because the borderland had a two-pronged legend: on the one hand, it was a long-standing Polish-German battlefield and object of contestation, and on the other, it was also an industrial working-class heartland. These symbols of social class and national struggle were exactly those that the party wanted to sport during its effort to represent itself as a “Polish movement” but without completely betraying its core Marxist-Leninist principles. Moreover, the Industrial District suffered relatively

⁶⁸ Quoted from: Eugeniusz Paukšta, „O właściwą strukturę społeczną,” *Strażnica Zachodnia* 3 (1946): 82.

little damage in comparison to other parts of Poland. Most of the now historic grounds of ceremony and political symbolism around the Industrial District and its surroundings came out of the war virtually unscathed.

It was thus at the “Silesian Forum” in Katowice that the regime opened its marathon of revanchist rallies in 1946, serving as campaigns to rally support for the party and its policies from across the nation for the two important political contests at hand: the so-called “People’s Referendum” at the end of June and the Sejm elections in mid-February of the following year. Terror and propaganda were the regime’s weapons against widespread public opposition, an armed underground resistance, and competition against a party that most Poles supported, Stanisław Mikołajczyk’s “Polish Peasant League” (PSL). The revival of the border rallies marked a vital part of the regime’s bid for support and war against opposition. In order to avoid staging an election that they knew they would lose, the Peperowce first organized a referendum that asked people to consent to their policies of eliminating representational institutions, of promoting land reform, and of appropriating the NWT. Understanding that only the third question was the one that Poles across political spectrum supported, party leaders played this issue up in their plight for popularity.⁶⁹ Thus they staged three large nation-wide border rallies in Upper Silesia in 1946: the first at the “Katowice Forum” on 1-3 May, the second atop the Mount of St. Anne on 19 May, and the last on 15 September in Opole (Oppeln). All three events were not only presided over by the high-ranking PPR leaders and their nationalist

⁶⁹ During the so-called “People’s Referendum,” Question 1 asked for consent to the abolition of the Senate; Question 2 asked for consent to the agricultural reform; Question 3 asked for consent to the Oder-Neisse Line—and ipso facto, the Curzon Line. See: Paczkowski, *The Spring*, 179.

supporters, but also amassed between one and two hundred thousand spectators from all over the country.

One of the features common to all these events was that unlike the Nazi rallies, those serving to ultimately legitimate the communists—ironically—were not entirely secular. On the contrary, each event began with a mass held by some of the highest ranking clerics in the region. During the first two postwar years at least, clerics and the party-state cooperated. The Peperowce's will to promote longstanding Polish holidays such as the Third of May—even as they also observed Mayday (1st of May)—and coordination of the territorial project, marked an important basis of this cooperation (**see image 5.3**). In this respect, the PZZ, which had clerics in its ranks, as well as Ziętek and his group of natives, represented the most important intermediaries between the communists and the clergy (both high-ranking and low ranking). These nationalists underscored the fundamental role that the Church had to play in “re-Polonizing” the NWT, and thus also, as an agent of ethnic cleansing. Having once given spiritual endorsement to Grażyński, the highest ranking regional diocese leaders, the Bishops Bienek and Stanisław Adamski, now out of patriotic conviction returned to ceremonial politics to—albeit unintentionally—endorse the PPR. They were joined by another important cleric in this regard, Boresław Kominek, the head of the Opole Diocese and a native Upper Silesian.⁷⁰

At the PZZ's behest, the Church also generally cooperated with ethnic cleansing policies. It even allowed its Upper Silesian organ, *The Sunday Guest* (*Gość Niedzielny*),

⁷⁰ On the nationalists' mediary role between Church and regime, see: Walczak, *Jerzy*, 149, 153, 158-9, 172-3, 190; Wanatowicz, *Od Indyferentnej Ludności do Śląskiej Narodowości? Postawy narodowe ludności autochtonicznej Górnego Śląska w latach 1945-2003 w świadomości społecznej*, (Katowice, 2004) 36-7.

to be used as a venue to rally the populace to vote “yes” to the third question of the “People’s Referendum,” referring to the latter as “the Plebiscite of the nation,” and thus tying it to the events of 1921.⁷¹ This venue, which, according to the reports of the regime’s propaganda bureau, was the most widely read newspaper in the region,⁷² also called on the populace to remove all traits of “Germandom” from their private quarters and surroundings and also to change/modify their “German-sounding” names to “Polish-sounding” ones. This went hand-in-hand with the Church’s general cooperation with the authorities’ demands that it “de-Germanize” religious services, church buildings and chapels—or in other words remove all relics of the German language and icons associated with “Germandom.”⁷³ Indeed, the Church’s compliance with these measures stemmed not so much out of its own initiative but out of pressure from the regime and its nationalist aides, as well as the general fear that if the NWT were not “de-Germanized,” Poland would lose them and thus eventually cease to exist as a self-standing nation.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, there were also fundamental limits to this short-lived cooperation. The most important one was the essential clash of interests that the two institutions had in the promotion of “re-Polonization.” Whereas the regime sought to use the latter as an instrument of re-socializing the region in its self-serving—and fundamentally secular and materialist—ideology and policies, the Church wanted to make sure that religiosity

⁷¹ Quoted from: “Plebiscyt Narodu Polskiego,” *Gość Niedzielny* 15 (14 Apr. 1946): 120. The third question asked the populace whether they wanted to maintain the Oder-Neisse Line as Poland’s western border.

⁷² Source: Wojewódzki Urząd Informacji i Propagandy (WUIP), Wyszukanie Inf. Prasowej, To: Ministerstwo Informacji i Propagandy w Warszawie, undated (before 1947), APK 187 (WUIP)/1, doc. 7.

⁷³ One of its article stated: “in accordance with the slogan ‘up to the anniversary of the Silesian Insurgency all the last traits of Germandom [niemczyzna] will disappear.’ The article called on everyone to remove such traits from their surroundings, not to give newborns “names that sound German,” and to “correct” or change their “deformed names” (in other words, those that had been Germanized over decades). Quoted from: “Usuwanie śladów okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *Gość Niedzielny* 13 (31 Mar 1946): 101.

⁷⁴ On the church’s attitude towards ethnic cleansing, see: Linek, *Polityka*, 110-136; and: Andrzej Grajewski, *Wygnanie: Diecezja katowicka w czasach stalinowskich* (Katowice 2002), 25-7 (and 10-66).

remains a fundamental aspect of postwar Polish consciousness. Thus, in one respect, clerics heeded the call to ethnic cleansing not because of Germanophobia, but in fact to prevent the communists from using this social engineering project as an occasion to cripple religious life. Their policy in this regard to a large extent marked a continuation of that of the interwar period: during this era, even as it gave symbolic support to Grażyński's "Polonization" efforts, the Church also posed a barrier against his effort to disrupt long-rooted religious traditions in this multilingual region via prohibiting the use of German during Church services, vehemently opposing his policies of secularizing the school system, and defending local regionally-oriented priests who became the targets of Grażyński's nationalism.⁷⁵ Run by some of the same upper echelons, the regional Church took the same actions against this now masked atheistic and radical regime, which, unlike their predecessors, was in large part free to do what it wanted in this *de facto* colonial land (western Upper Silesia). In this sense, Adamski and, particularly, the native Upper Silesian Bolesław Kominek worked to prevent the state from using its mandate to "cleanse" the region to persecute uncooperative priests, disrupt religious practices, and weaken the Catholic base of the regional culture under the pretext of "de-Germanization." Their opposition to the PPR's struggle to stamp religion, and religious symbols, out of schools, and as well as effort to "re-Polonize" by reinvigorating religiosity, marked some of the main grounds for why the period of cooperation between

⁷⁵ Wanatowicz calls refers to the policies of Adamski as a continuation of the Korfantiite faction's politics during the interwar era, and those of the PPR as that of the Grażyńskiites. See: *Od Indyferentnej*, 38-9. And: Grajewski, *Wygnanie*, 33-4.

the two institutions in this region permanently ended for the rest of the communist era by mid-1947.⁷⁶

Although on the one hand, the presence of clerics and the celebration of mass at these rallies served to legitimate the fundamentally pro-PPR discourse that these events promoted, on the other hand, on some occasions high-ranking priests did not just let themselves be used as puppets for this purpose. A good example of this was Kominek's handling of himself as guest of honor at the "Harvest Festival" (Dożynki) of 15 September in Opole. This event aimed to popularize this age-old "Polish autochthonic" custom, and unite Upper Silesians with their "Polish brothers," including newcomers and high-Polish visitors.⁷⁷ As an "autochthon" himself, he was being used for the same purpose that the PPR made use of the veteran insurgents and plebiscite activists, namely to posit the role of a model "good Pole"—marked foremost by cooperation with the new authorities. In reaction, Kominek made sure not to sell out completely. During the mass he held before a crowd of circa 150,000, he used his homily as an occasion to underscore the Church's interests in this cooperation with the PPR, namely to preserve religiosity in the new Polish society that was being engineered. In his words:

We are carrying the fruits of our harvest as Poles, but at the same time as people with a deep [religious] faith. And this is what unites us in this land, and what should unite us, no matter from where we come from, into one harmonious society. [This unity will enable us] to settle and root ourselves here so deeply that nothing will ever manage to tear us away from here.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ On the regime's war against the church under the pretext of "de-Germanization," as well as effort to promote religion as part of "re-Polonization," see: Linek, *Polityka*, 125-8. See also: Grajewski, *Wygnanie*, 40-50.

⁷⁷ According to Zawadzki's situational reports, 200,000 attended. Wojewoda Śląsko-Dąbrowski, *Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne* nr. 19, Sept. 1946, APK 185/4/36, 29. The secular newspapers boasted only that only 150,000 did (see the *Ogniwa* entry ahead). *Gość Niedzielny* on the other hand proudly announced 300,000 came out to hear its Apostolic Leader, Kominek, speak. i. Witold Dobrowolski, "Płon Ziemi Śląskiej," *Gość Niedzielny* 39 (29 Września 1946): 328; ii. *Ogniwa*, (29 Sept. 1946): 1-2.

⁷⁸ Quoted from: "Ziemia i wiara złączy stary i nowy lud opolski: przemówienie Arcypasterza Opolskiego na dożynkach 15-go września br.," *Gość Niedzielny* 39 (29 Września 1946): 3.

In this sense, Kominek took advantage of his forum to underline something that—by virtue of the fact that all its press venues ignored it—the PPR did not appreciate: namely, the notion of religiosity as the foundation of this bold new society. In this regard Church’s regional organ, *The Sunday Guest*, also did not hesitate to underline when they published this homily, it is not just “the soil” but also “faith” that “will unite the old and the new people of Opolian Silesia [Lud Opolski].”⁷⁹

Just as high-ranking clerics were willing to hold public prayers at regime events, so too were agents of reified communist leaders of the party willing to attend these and other religious festivities. At the “Harvest Festival” in Opole, the Stalinist Bolesław Bierut—the face of atheism in Poland during the 1948-56 era—sat along side of Gomułka and other top regime leaders during prayers.⁸⁰ He even expressed this mask of piety out loud by finishing his statement of vowing to “defend Polish Silesia to the last drop of blood” with a shout of “so help me God!”⁸¹ As a way of trying to win popular support for the party, Bierut sat in on a prayer service during the “Feast of St. Barbara” (the patron saint of coal miners), one of the most important festivities for workers in the Industrial District, and let the press publish a picture of him doing so (see image 5.4).

In a number of ways, the postwar era marked a continuity of the German-Polish culture of revanchist border rallies with regard to the discourse and symbolism expressed by these. Just as they had been in the previous eras, sites of the other’s national-regional identity were appropriated by the territorial annexer and used for this same purpose. The takeover and refashioning of the amphitheater atop the Mount of St. Anne (also known as

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰ “Idea Powstańcza Zrealizowana,” *Głos Ludu* 137 (19 May 1946): 1ff. And: Walczak, *Jerzy*, 145.

⁸¹ Dobrowolski, “Płon,” 1-2.

Chelm Mount/Góra Chelmska) by Polish officials after the war marked a key example in this regard. In the mid-1930s, Joseph Goebbels could hardly have known that, ironically, in building this ceremonial ground and site of national memory, his government was actually constructing what would become one of the Third Reich's most price-worthy gifts to People's Poland. For Hitler's Germany this site hosted mass events that rallied hardly more than 25,000 people, most of them from the region and in NSDAP uniform.⁸² Indeed, once the Reich had annexed eastern Upper Silesia, Kattowitz, and not the Mount of St. Anne, became the regional capital of Nazi representational spectacles. In contrast, just after the war, and also in the course of the mid-fifties, the sixties, and to lesser of an extent, the seventies, this site served as one of Poland's main centers of national memory and public political ceremony. A place where not only the anniversaries of the insurgencies, but also that of the Nazi attack on Poland, and other official occasions, were commemorated, the amphitheater atop of Mount of St. Anne was the center of ceremonies that rallied around close to 100,000 civilian participants across Poland every five to ten years up to 1971.⁸³ And ironically, except for erecting a monument "to the Insurgent Deed" here by 1955 to replace the mausoleum they destroyed ten years earlier, the Polish communist regime hardly made any other notable alterations to this site. Particularly during the first two postwar decades, next to the battlefield of Grunwald (Tannenberg, in the Mazuria region), this site became the most important symbol of Poland's centuries of struggle for, and final "recovery" of, not only western Upper Silesia

⁸² James Bjork and Robert Gerwarth, "The Annaberg as a German-Polish 'Lieu de Memoire,'" *German History*, 25 (2007): 387.

⁸³ In 1955, more than 100,000 participated in the unveiling ceremony of the "Monument of the Insurgent's Deed [Pomnik Czynu Powstańczego]." See: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 370-2. For example, between 100,000 and 170,000 rallied during the 40th anniversary of the third insurgency. *Trybuna Opolska* 3-4 (June 1961): 1; ii. The 50th anniversary in 1971 was just as large: "Apel Powstańczy na Górze Św. Anny," *Trybuna Robotnicza*, 107 (7 May 1971): 1ff; iii. Marian Szypowska-Andrzej Szypowski, *Góra św. Anny*, Series: *Piękno Polski*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sport i Turystyka, 1969).

but the entire NWT, from Germany. In this sense, the ceremonial site atop the Mount of St. Anne served a similar purpose than the appropriated “Forum Katowice” had served for the Nazis, but the first site carried much more official symbolic weight for a regime that made the post-German lands a fundamental pillar of postwar Poland’s identity.⁸⁴

The event of 19 May 1946 marked the premier of this postwar tradition of revanchist rallies. During the official Harvest Festival celebration (16 Sept) one year prior, regime agents festively destroyed the fortress-shaped mausoleum. According to one German speaking eyewitness, who described the event in dismay via a letter to a German friend in Berlin, the structure was detonated, the sarcophagi on the insides were torn apart and given over as raw materials to the local industry, and the powdered remains of the fallen Selbstschutz fighters were dumped in a hole at a local cemetery.⁸⁵ The rally commemorating the 25th anniversary of the third insurgency served to represent, among other things, the appropriation of the Mount by the Polish nation, and the communist regime. Two symbols underscored this function. The first was the forging of a Polish final resting area for insurgents and national fighters alike. To this end, state officials filled 23 urns with soil from the battlefields of 1919-21 and also the at the time very recent Warsaw Uprising. After these urns were displayed in front of the VGB in the days prior to the rally, a military unit of motorcyclists rode them up to the site and ceremoniously gave them over to regime authorities. This display of a secular national pilgrimage recalled that of bicyclists who had brought the soil from the areas near the

⁸⁴ On the history of the political use of the Mount of St. Anne, see: Juliane Haubold, „Der Gipfel der Symbolik: der Sankt Annaberg als Verkörperung Oberschlesiens,“ in: Christian Pletzing, Tomas Serrier, Peter Oliver Loew, eds., *Wiedergewonnene Geschichte: Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas*, (Wiesbaden 2006) 358-63; Bjork and Gerwarth, “The Annaberg” 389-400.

⁸⁵ This is based on a letter from a woman living in the Gmina Góra św. Anny to a friend in Berlin that officials intercepted. Zarząd Gminy Góry św. Anny, przewod komisji nr. 15, 11 July 1946, Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (hereafter: APO), 179 (StP Strzelce Op.)/82, doc. 21.

Black Sea (the “Corridor”) to Katowice for the 1931 Third of May rally. These urns then became an object of religious and political consecration before their contents became a permanent part of the landscape of the Mount of St. Anne.⁸⁶ The second token of the symbolic national appropriation of this site was marked by the placement of a stone plaque at the site where the Nazi mausoleum had stood, marking the founding stone of a monument to the insurgents that was to be built—which was not completed until 1955. The plaque emphasized that Bolesław Bierut had laid this stone “in the name of the Poles” (see **images 5.5, 5.6, 5.7**). Along with the religious and secular ritual that was staged at this rally, all this symbolism represented the official re-mythologizing of the Mount of St. Anne from a site of German victory over Poles to one of Polish victory over the Germans. More importantly, it demonstrated how the regime wrote itself into the leading role of the one narrative and symbolism that in the postwar era was capable of uniting most of the nation—that of revanchist Germanophobia.⁸⁷

The “Harvest Festival” in Opole marked the epitomic example of how Polish state leaders politicized a long-standing rural tradition for the sake of nationalist, revanchist, and pro-regime nation-wide representational purposes. The two-pronged symbolism of this event again worked well with the party’s “national-communist” image: namely, that of a peasant (“proletarian”) folk-festival on the one hand, and a prime show-case of how cheerful postwar Poland’s “recovered peoples” (the “autochthons”) were to be “reunited with their motherland.” To demonstrate this unity, officials mobilized a *selected subset*

⁸⁶ The bicyclists refers to chapter 2. This motorcyclist unit also recalled the detachment for motorcyclists that the insurgents had in 1931, and their motorcycle rides across Upper Silesia during the anniversary of the first and second insurgents (the so-called “Marches on the Oder River”). Source: “Urny z ziemią mogił powstańczych symbole bohaterstwa ludu śląskiego,” *Dziennik Zachodni* (19 May 1946): 4.

⁸⁷ For an extensive analysis of the discourse at this event see: Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 340-353, and her, “Der Gipfel,” 359-61.

folk costume wearing groups from mainstream parts of Poland, including Cracowians, and Mountaineers from the Zakopane area. Indeed, neither the press nor any documents mentioned that representatives of the formerly eastern parts of Poland were part of this group, a scenario that only accorded with the regime's policy of forcefully assimilating these expelled groups into a "westernized Poland." The costume wearers from other parts of Poland were joined by those representing the "Polish autochthons," namely groups from the local areas of the Industrial District, including from Piekary Śląskie (Deutsche Piekary), Rozbark (Rossberg) and outskirts of Bytom (Beuthen), the countryside of Raciborz (Ratibor), and from other parts of the western parts of Upper Silesia. Not only did these groups parade among, and give over samples of the fruits of the harvest, to the top regime leaders, but they also entertained the gathered huge crowd of several tens of thousands.⁸⁸ This "folk festival" included song and dance performances by 50 choirs, numbering 2,000 people, and 25 orchestras numbering another 1,000. One of the event's main goals was to mobilize the participation of ordinary individuals, particularly those of the so-called "politically/nationally apathetic countryside."⁸⁹ In this regard, cultural-political functionaries used the thousands of community and cultural centers (świątlice, domy kultury) they had established since war's end as part of the effort to "re-Polonize" local places to rally their visitors to sew and wear folk costumes and to perform songs and dances.⁹⁰ The final event of this festivity was a kayak race along the Oder River—indeed, meant to promote this microcosmic symbol of the new border.⁹¹ The main

⁸⁸ Dobrowolski, "Płon," 1-2.

⁸⁹ Source: "Dożynki Śląskie w Opolu," *Gość Niedzielny* 36 (8 Sept. 1946): 303.

⁹⁰ According to the Voivode's report, by Apr. of 1946 there were 1,146 of these and "Domy Kultury" in the whole region, including 350 in the western part. Source: UWŚl., Sprawozdanie Wojewody, Apr. 1946, APK, 185/1 (UWŚl.-Ogólny)/50: 63ff.

⁹¹ Dobrowolski, "Płon," 1-2.

purpose of all these activities was best phrased by the Catholic press, *The Sunday Guest*, which took great strivings to advertise it to the region:

The Silesian Harvest Festival will manifest before the world our feelings [of love] for the Recovered Territories, our efforts and achievements, and our eternal yearning and effort to unite ourselves with the ancient Piast territories near the Oder and the Neisse.⁹²

In this sense, the wearers of folk costumes symbolized what they had in all other border rallies of this sort, including the Nazi “Reich Singing Festival” of 1936: the consent of the rooted populous for the territorial appropriation project, and in this case, ipso facto—even if the Church did not desire this—also the PPR authorities coordinating it.

Like the Polish-German Upper Silesian revanchist rallies of the previous epochs, those of 1946 were carefully planned, orchestrated, and publicized so as to achieve maximally large audiences and resonances. In this regard, the propaganda bureau mobilized not only photographers and journalists, but also its radio agents and film crews to broadcast these events to the rest of the nation, including via public volume speakers, which state officials were posting in places of public assembly all over the country. Since the purpose of these rallies was not just to promote post-war Poland’s new identity to the rest of the nation, but also the world, officials invited delegates of the Allied governments, including of Great Britain, France, the United States, in addition to Red Army officers and other Soviet agents—who, as “government advisors” hardly needed any invitation.⁹³ To the end of facilitating a large turnout, the government invested in a speedy building and renovating of communication lines. Its preparations for the Mount of St. Anne spectacle included the leveling of five thousand quadratic meters of nearby

⁹² Quoted from: “Dożynki Śląskie w Opolu,” *Gość Niedzielny* 36 (8 Sept. 1946): 303.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 303; ii. Dobrowolski, “Płon,” 1-2; iii. “Idea Powstańcza Zrealizowana,” *Głos Ludu* 137 (19 May 1946): 1ff; iv. “Wielki dzień Śląska: Góra św. Anny symbol czynu powstańczego,” *Dziennik Zachodni* 137 (20 May 1946): 1.

forest so as to lay new tracks to bring spectators from all over the country as close to the site as possible. The PPR did not hesitate to make this venture a part of its early “socialist realist” propaganda: in this regard its press boasted that “the building of a railway juncture (800 meters of railway) was carried out in record tempo of just two weeks.”⁹⁴

As large as the crowds, and as well-publicized as these events, were, they nevertheless did not achieve the party’s ultimate interest: the winning of majority nationwide support for its government and policies. In fact, the PPR’s unpopularity was already visible at some of these rallies. Kominek’s homily underlining the role of Catholicism in “re-Polonization” at the “Harvest Festival” marked only one example of dissidence. Another was exemplified by loud voices of protests against the regime during the Third of May festival, not just in Katowice, but all over the Industrial District, the Dabrower Basin, and as far as Cracow. Discovering that its plans to stage this event for the sake of using it as a self-legitimizing instrument had failed, the Peperowce dispatched their Ubek agents to silence these voices of dissent.⁹⁵ Three weeks later, the regime was not able to orchestrate the impression of omnipresent support either, as its opponents detonated one of the railroad tracks it had built to transport spectators to the site.⁹⁶ Although there is no indication that this act truly hampered the turnout, at the very least, it served as a public reminder of the PPR’s unpopularity. And the latter was finally made very clear to party officials based on the results of the two political contests for which they had campaigned in all three rallies of 1946. Despite trying to create an atmosphere of pressure, terror, and chicanery, to play in its favor, the PPR failed in both of them, and

⁹⁴ Quoted from: i. “Wielkie uroczystości na Górze św. Anny w 25. lecia rocznicy 3-go powstania Śląskiego,” *Głos Ludu* (19 May 1946): 1; ii. “Wielki dzień Śląska,” 1.

⁹⁵ Jerzy Ziętek, *Sprawozdanie Wojewody za Mai*, 13 June 1946, APK, 185/1 (UWŚl.-Ogólny)/50, doc. 86. Also: Walczak, *Jerzy*, 193.

⁹⁶ Jerzy Ziętek, *Sprawozdanie Wojewody za Mai...*, doc. 86ff.

ultimately posited its legitimacy before the eyes of the world by crudely forging and manipulating the results of the referendum and election.

Although the rallies failed to mobilize support for the PPR per se, they certainly were not a waste with regard to promoting publicity for the territorial appropriation project. The regime's strategy of appropriating the annexation of the NWT as part of its plank made sense in light of the positive results of question of three of the "People's Referendum." Over 68% of voters nation-wide had answered "yes" to this question, thus ultimately giving the PPR at least some basis for representing itself as a "Polish party."⁹⁷ Knowing full well of the popularity of the territorial project, party leaders, and their nationalist agents, tapped into the discourse of revanchism at these events. Foremost, the three rallies marked an occasion for regime officials to instrumentally underline the Polish *revanchist trinity*, or the core national myth of the contested territories. According to Zawadzki speaking atop the Mount of St. Anne, "by way of this manifestation [rally] we have once again documented before all of Poland and all of the world that these territories *were Polish, are Polish, and will remain Polish for eternity.*"⁹⁸ The point of such statements was not just to preach the gospel of "re-Polonization," but to give the PPR the ultimate credit for this territorial "recovery." In this sense, the Peperowce wrote themselves and their "pan-Slavic alliance" with the USSR into Polish history as the champions of the Dmowskiite geopolitical tradition, even as they formally denounced Dmowski's National Democracy.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ This statistic from: Andrzej Paczkowski, *Referendum z 30 Czerwca 1946 r.: Przebieg i wyniki* (Warszawa, 1993) 97. The full data of the referendum's results are not available.

⁹⁸ Emphasis mine. Quoted from: "Wielki dzień," 1.

⁹⁹ For how PPR leaders wrote themselves into Polish history by taking credit for the insurgencies, see Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos*, 344-7.

In addition to taking credit for the annexation, the party also used the rallies to promote ethnic-cleansing and the engineering of a bold new society. At the Mount of St. Anne event Gomułka thus publicly declared the need “to wipe out from the Silesian lands all traits of Germandom [niemczyzna] and remove [all] Germans.” In his mind, this was part and parcel of the social reconstruction, which the party leader represented here not as a socialist project but as a nationalist one. To do so, he tapped into the longstanding ideals of the “western researchers,” that of “recovering” a “lost Polish peoples” for the nation: in his words, “we cannot render to Germandom a single Pole, and not a single inhabitant of this land, who regards Poland as his paternal homeland and can prove this.” He also echoed their main postwar dream of melting expellees from the east, migrants from central Poland, and the local natives, into a bold society of “harmonious coexistence of all Poles with one another.”¹⁰⁰

While the party’s chief spoke in the discourse of nationalism, the PPR’s main nationalist mouth piece in Upper Silesia represented the social engineering project in a language that underlined the regime’s ideological interests. In the city center of Katowice, where Grażyński used to hold the annual “insurgents’ bivouac” on the midnight between 2-3 May, Ziętek presided over the revival of this event in 1946. His address to the Insurgents Union underlined that ethnic cleansing and the building of the PPR’s new order (or “democracy”) were two sides of the same coin. In his words, “I call on you insurgents ... to engage in intensive citizen work to strengthen and better Polish democracy and to a grass-roots war against Germandom [niemczyzna].” In this same respect, Ziętek also echoed the new narrative of the “tradycja powstańcza” based partly on nationalist and partly on Marxist-Leninist motifs. The central premise of this new

¹⁰⁰ All quoted from: “Wielki Dzień,” 1.

myth of 1921 was that the insurgents had fought not just for the national “liberation” of the region but also its social “liberation” from the “*German*” industrialists and landowners. In this regard, according to Ziętek, the party’s “model Polish autochthon,” “on the third of May [1921] the nation began its struggle for democracy in Poland ...,” an effort that ended only in 1945, when “state authority was taken away from the hands of capital and big landowners and transferred into those of the nation, [and now] all of Silesia and the Piast lands have been liberated from Prussian yoke.”¹⁰¹ The PPR thus used its “national heroes” as living witnesses of a new regional historical fable: the equation of “the struggle against Germanism” and that against capitalists and land-owners. In this sense, party leaders offered this patriotic-minded early postwar Polish nation the prospect of a Germanophobic road communism.

Whereas in the interwar era, the German-Polish tradition of border rallies in the Upper Silesian borderland promoted the mere representations of national homogeneity and the boastings of “national achievements” in the forms of building and acculturation projects, during the war and postwar period these became the heralds of real policies of ethnic cleansing, forced population movement, and forced assimilation. The Polish communist regime’s rallies of 1946 were a basic forum for the promotion of the territorial appropriation project, marked by the ethnic cleansing-based reconstruction of society in western Upper Silesia and other post-German areas. I now turn to address how the high-handed speeches delivered in Upper Silesia’s new places of national-regional identity transferred into an operative discourse of social engineering and the political instrumentalization of the latter by the PPR. I begin with the discourse of de-construction.

¹⁰¹ All quoted from: “W rocznicy Konstytucji Majowej i III. Powstania Śląskiego: podniosłe uroczystości na Śląsku, odsłonięcie pomnika Kościuszki w Katowicach,” *Dziennik Zachodni* 121 (4 May 1946): 1.

Eternal “Germandom” or the discourse of socio-cultural de-construction

Norman Naimark refers to modern “racialist nationalism” as a “necessary” condition for ethnic cleansing. He makes explicit reference to Dmowski’s nationalism in this regard, and demonstrates that this was at the backdrop of the postwar Upper Silesian case.¹⁰² The Nazis had promoted the discourse of “polnische Wirtschaft” and “Polish anti-German war of destruction” as a cultural counterpart to their otherwise biologically “racial” politics of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Atop the Mount of St. Anne in May of 1946, Gomułka officialized a postwar Polish term, which with regard to its function was at least comparable to the Nazi Polonophobic concepts—that of “Niemczyzna” (Germandom).¹⁰³ Used already before the war by nationalists, the term became the basic culturally racist Germanophobic concept after 1945. It collectively demonized German individuals and all cultural traits, relics, and behaviors associated with them, depicting anyone or anything labeled under this category—without exception—as an object that had to be removed from Polish society.¹⁰⁴ With “Germanophobia” (*antyniemieckość*) as the first “fundamental principle” of its operative creed, the PZZ was the main organization developing and broadcasting this postwar anti-German discourse.¹⁰⁵ The following statement demonstrates how these western territories experts equated “niemczyzna” with “everything German”:

¹⁰² Quoted from: Norman Naimark, *Fires*, 7. See also his analysis of the Upper Silesian case on pages 134-6.

¹⁰³ This is not to imply that other concepts have not been used. Among them were: Germanian (German), Teuton/Teutonic Knight (*teutoń/krzyżak*), and Germandom (*niemieckość*). To my knowledge no recent extensive study of the pejorative terms for Germans and German culture and nationality in the immediate period exists, but the classic work on widespread Germanophobia in early postwar Polish society is: Edmund Dmitrow, *Niemcy i Okupacja Hitlerowska w oczach Polaków* (Warsawa, 1987).

¹⁰⁴ Bernard Linek expresses this view in his unpublished conference paper, “‘Walka z niemczyzną’ na Górnym Śląsku w 1945 r.” Cited with author’s permission.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted from: “trzy zasadnicze linie wytyczne PZZ,” n.d. (circa June 1945), APK 1718/250, doc. 10.

Anti-Germandom: [the PZZ is to] construct and maintain the hatred of the Polish nation towards *niemczyzna*. Organize an anti-German predisposition, and on the basis of this *hatred of everything that is German* unite people of diverse worldviews within the ranks of the PZZ.¹⁰⁶

Utilizing the concept of “*niemczyzna*” for its main societal mission, ridding the NWT of “everything German,” the PZZ referred to this campaign as “de-Germanization” (“*odniemczanie*,” or literally, “removal of ‘*niemczyzna*’”)—again marking a term that also stemmed from the interwar era. Another favorite term that the PZZ promoted in this regard was the “war/struggle against *niemczyzna*” (“*walka z niemczyzną*”).¹⁰⁷

By no means was it always clear what “*niemczyzna*” actually constituted, particularly in the ethnically borderless Upper Silesian borderland. Indeed, the concept remained an abstract hateful discourse in the propaganda organs of the PPR and its nationalist aides. It only took on a concrete form in the arbitrary directives of regional and local level officials. To note some examples of these, in the same way as the Nazis had defined “Polish” as any speech with Slavic vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressions, so too did Polish officials often regard the locals’ use of the dialect that included Germanisms as “(high) German”—and thus an element of “*niemczyzna*.”¹⁰⁸ In this sense, officials of the Bytomian PZZ circle harassed Yiddish-speaking Polish Jews,

¹⁰⁶ Quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 10. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁷ Linek, “Walka.”

¹⁰⁸ Bernard Linek notes that every now and then officials called the local dialects “German” just because they had heard a German phrase, expression, pronunciation, or word. Sometimes the officials who made this reference did so subconsciously. He notes that it would have been hard to imagine that so many people who were punished for using “German” actually did so, since they were well aware of the consequences. On the former German side of the border, the dialect had been heavily influenced by German. See his *Odniemczanie*, 97. My own evidence supporting Linek’s claim is of an episode of a group of local women interned in a barrack housing complex on the outskirts of Katowice/Kattowitz. These women had initially been labeled “Germans” and sent to internment camps to await expulsion. Not long after their incarceration, authorities changed their minds about their nationality, re-labelled them as “Poles” and transferred them to the internment area in these barracks. During one evening other individuals at this complex reported to authorities that these women were conversing in German among themselves and singing German songs. After an investigation, officials determined that this was not the case: the women were using a mix of Polish and the local dialect, but with occasional Germanisms. This from: *Używanie jęz. Niem. Wśród pracowników Huty Pokój*, 3 Nov. 1947, APK, 220/135, doc. 9.

demanding that they “once and for all stop using this German jargon and German language.”¹⁰⁹ This capricious bestowing of ethnic labels onto locals’ customs, and material objects, along with the official sanctions against the use of their common language (German), all worked to turn western Upper Silesians into second-class citizens. Although certainly not free from harassment for promoting the “localism/regionalism” of their own lost regional homeland, newcomers and Jews were not the prime targets as long as they did not have German backgrounds.

“We need fanatics of the idea of cleansing and de-Germanizing Silesia” marked the words of Nadolski, the PZZ leader in Upper Silesia, in one of his directives in the Spring of 1945.¹¹⁰ The phrase dictated the organization’s active role in promoting Germanophobia throughout Polish society. In one respect, this was to be done by way of academic research. In its main intellectual organ in this region, *The Western Guardian*, Edward Serwański underscored that Poland had to promote a politics of documenting the past (or in other words, of representing history) in a manner that realized the following goal:

[that made it] evident to the entire world that the deeds of Germans, more precisely, Prussian-German extermination, is one millennia old, and Hitlerism is only the culminating point and the most sincere expression of the Prussian-German worldview and a politics of aggression and never ending struggles for conquest that for the most part had not changed over the centuries.¹¹¹

This notion of “Germans always the same”—another one of the organization’s favorite slogans—marked its plight to master the meaning of the Third Reich’s attack on Poland

¹⁰⁹ Quoted from: Prezes Koła PZZ Bytom-Zachód, to: PZZ in Bytom, 28 Apr. 1946, APK 659/3, doc. 201. In January of 1946, there were around 4,040 Jews in Bytom. See: Dziurok & Kaczmarek, *Województwo*, 522.

¹¹⁰ Quoted from: “Jakich ludzi szuka PZZ?” –PZZ okr. Śląsko-Dąbrowski, circa June 1945, APK 185/4/22, doc. 71.

¹¹¹ Edward Serwański, “Założenia i zadania polskiej akcji dokumentacyjnej,” *Strażnica Zachodnia* 1-2 (Jan-Feb. 1946): 14.

and to instrumentalize it for the sake of constructing a timelessly demonic identity of “niemczyzna.”¹¹²

Just as the PZZ strove to erase distinction between the Third Reich and previous German governments, so too did it strive to do so with regard to Hitler and subsequent German leaders. The fall of Nazi Germany and formal end to the war against the latter posed to make one of the main principles justifying ethnic cleansing extinct—namely that of an enduring ever present German danger against Poland. It was thus not long before the organization started to propagate the “the re-insurgence of German imperialism.”¹¹³ The Peperowce gladly endorsed this propaganda since they too relied on a permanent state of emergency to take extraordinary measures against internal opponents and demand regime-conforming “national unity.” In this sense, like 1922 and 1939, 1945 in the official discourse of the victors was on the one hand to be a euphoric end to a chapter of the official eternal Polish-German struggle, as well as the latter’s continuation via different means. One phase of the new conflict over the borderlands was waged on the international arena. In his Fulton Address (“Iron Curtain Speech”) in early March of 1946, Winston Churchill criticized the lawlessness and chicanery of the “Russian controlled Polish government,” including the latter’s instrumentalization of the mandate to expel the Germans. Along with the PZZ, the PPR made these statements the basis of a nation-wide propaganda circus that depicted the western Allies as working in the interests of a still Nazified Germany.¹¹⁴ In early September of 1946, the U.S. Secretary of State,

¹¹² The Auschwitz complex was quickly turned into a memorial for this purpose (demonizing Germans), and not so much for commemorating the memory of the exterminated Jews. See: Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the politics of commemoration, 1945-1979* (Athens, 2003).

¹¹³ Quoted from: “Zadania PPR-PZZtowe...,” doc. 30.

¹¹⁴ For western support of revisionism and its political impact see: Debra J. Allen, *The Oder-Neisse Line: the United States, Poland, and Germany in the Cold War*, (Westport.: Praeger, 2003) 47-54

Robert Byrnes, made critical remarks against the Soviet Union, and at the same time, also underscored the mere provisional nature of Poland's western border in his famous Stuttgart speech. With the help of their nationalist aides, the Peperowce turned both the statements of the British Prime Minister and the American State Secretary into a prime means of legitimating the Soviet Union's anti-western turn, and also opposition to the London Poles, on the basis of Dmowskian geopolitical principles. In other words, the west, including the exile Poles, were besmirched as undermining Poland's "rights" to its "Piast lands" and thus ipso facto backing German anti-Polish aggression.¹¹⁵ In this respect, the PPR represented the "alliance" with the USSR, or the so-called "Slavic front," as the only guarantor of the Oder Neisse Line and the latter as "the border of peace for Poland and the world."¹¹⁶

Because it was made in early September, Byrnes' statement gave the Opole "Harvest Festival" rally its official spirit of a "united nation standing on guard at the Oder." It gave regime leaders, including Gomułka, Bierut, and Poland's Marshall, Michał Rola-Żymierski a legitimate means of representing themselves as benevolent protectors of the post-German lands against "international temptations." To do this they tapped into the interwar tradition of ritualized representations of what in previous chapters I have referred to as *fortress mentalities*—or in other words, conceptions of the border as a bulwark of security against a venomous enemy. This postwar concept of a territorial "fortress" exemplified a geopolitical means of legitimating the new rising Cold War European order. As Gomułka exclaimed in his address, "the Slavic nations which stand

¹¹⁵ On the diplomatic consequences of Byrnes' speech, see Allen, *The Oder-Neisse*, 50-7. On the internal effects, including instrumentalization by the communist regime, see: Curp, *A Clean*, 73-5.

¹¹⁶ "Inaguracja TZO: wielka manifestacja polskości w Gliwicach," *Dziennik Zachodni*, (4 May 1946) 2.

on guard at the Oder and Neisse border are more than 250 million large in population.” In this respect he underscored Poland’s new identity within this “pan-Slavic friendship”-based Soviet Block, that of “the front guard of Slavdom in the west.”¹¹⁷ Representing the local native population, folk costume wearers likewise declared a public vow to “loyally stand on guard at the recovered ancient Oder River ... after centuries of struggle to create and maintain a new Poland.” To top it all off, standing on the banks of this river (which runs through the city), the Stalinist Bierut tossed a bouquet of flowers into the water—a traditional practice of the “Harvest Festival”—vowing to “defend our holy river to the last drop of blood, so help me God!”¹¹⁸ This propaganda of a continued “pro-German” international threat was an inherent part of the official Germanophobic culturally racist discourse. Moreover, it laid the foundation of the regime’s self-legitimizing discourse of “(West) German revanchism” during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist era, when the incorporation of the “German Democratic Republic,” and other non-Slavic nations, into the Soviet Block illegitimated the party’s utilization of the Dmowskian Slav-versus-Teuton worldview.¹¹⁹

This official discourse of a continued external threat against “Germandom” (and its “western supporters”) functioned as part of the ideology legitimating the “removal” of the so-called internal threat—“niemczyzna.” As one of the high-ranking agents of the PZZ, Edmund Męclewski, emphasized in the organization’s 1946 programmatic statement regarding the appropriation of the NWT, “the Polish nation has won the

¹¹⁷ On the political function of the postwar so-called “Pan-Slavic Myth,” see: Tadeusz Marczak, „Mit Słowiański jako tworzywo koncepcji politycznych w latach 1944-7,” in Zofia Zmyk, ed., *Polskie Mity polityczne XIX i XX w.* (Wrocław, 1994) 215-226.

¹¹⁸ All quoted and drawn from: Dobrowolski, “Płom.”

¹¹⁹ See: Bernard Linek, „‘Rewizjonizm niemiecki’: skala, charakter, i polityka władz bezpieczeństwa,” in: Bernard Linek Adam Dziurok, Krzysztof Tarki eds., *Stalinizm i rok 1946 na Górnym Śląsku* (Katowice-Opole-Kraków, 2007) 213-232.

territorial war; it also has to win the nationality war.”¹²⁰ In similar respects to the Nazi O/S Heimatbund’s own “re-Germanization” effort, Polish officials represented their politics of internal “de-Germanization” as “the completion of [the insurgent] mission that began in 1919.”¹²¹ As Zawadzki underscored in his speech at the amphitheater atop the Mount of St. Anne, part of what the “heroic insurgents were being killed for” was a “valuable, agreeable, strong-in-spirit, *homogeneously Polish*, society.”¹²² In this sense, the new Insurgents Union, and their new official “tradycja powstańcza” served as the living icons and discourse romanticizing ethnic cleansing. As model “Polish autochthons” these longtime “border fighters” were to rally grass-roots society to the PPR-led social re-engineering effort. (See **image 5.2**)

Just as it constructed an external threat to the Oder-Neisse border, the regime also orchestrated an internal “German” threat. Its main pillar was the “Wehrwolf” (werewolf) scare—or in other words, the notion of a viable armed German underground resistance movement existing in Upper Silesia and other provinces.¹²³ In one of his earliest reports on this matter in September of 1945, Zawadzki wrote to the central government in Warsaw that in the former western part of the region German underground “Wehrwolf bands” were involved in a larger conspiracy coordinated from Germany proper. Their assignment was to get local “Germans” to penetrate Polish organizations as “Poles,” as well as to obtain “Polish citizenship” so as to avoid expulsion and also to sabotage Polish efforts to integrate these territories with their nation.¹²⁴ Eleven months later, the region’s

¹²⁰ Quoted from: Męclewski, “Ziemie,” 82.

¹²¹ Quoted from: “Powstańcy walczą przeciw dzielnicowości,” Płk. Ziętek przemawia w Sosnowcu, circa 9 Sept. 1945, APK 273/38, doc. 1.

¹²² Quoted from: “wywiad z woj. Śl-Dabr. A. Zawadzki,” TR 136 (19 May 1946): 3.

¹²³ On the “Wehrwolf” conspiracy theory, see: Dziurok, *Śląskie*, 228-31.

¹²⁴ Sprawozdania Wojewody, za Wrzesień 1945, APK, 185/1/49, 90ff.

governor wrote another lengthy report on this matter, stating that “these suspected elements ... have slid into and work in our factories, metallurgy plants, mines, and other institutions.”¹²⁵ Moreover, he claimed that among them were a number of those who “had made their way through the sieve of the verification and rehabilitation process”—or in other words had sworn loyalty to People’s Poland and obtained conditional certificates of citizenship. Among this group were also “Reichsdeutsche (individuals from Germany proper),” as well as veteran German soldiers, members of the Hitlerjugend, the SS, and other Nazi organizations. Zawadzki referred to these “Wehrwolves” as “the new fifth column,” claiming that they “receive their backing form the English and American zone of occupation [in Germany],” and that their work was “gaining strength in Silesia.”¹²⁶

Already in 1945, the regime’s security organs (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego* or UB/Ubety) had been instructed to foil the “Wehrwolf.” In the county of Strzelce Opolskie their reports point out how problematic official assertions of a domestic armed anti-Polish conspiracy, let alone one of international parameters, were. Faced with the danger of being incarcerated in hazardous conditions, some locals, particularly those with backgrounds in Nazi organization, did hide out in dense forests of these areas to escape the threat. They maintained contacts with family members and friends, and at night occasionally came out to steal crops from local farms in order to survive.¹²⁷ Local police authorities immediately suspected that these were “wolvers” conspiring to take away

¹²⁵ Quoted from: Sprawozdanie Wojewody, za Sierpień, APK 185/1/50, doc. 138.

¹²⁶ Ibid., doc. 138.

¹²⁷ Good examples of this come from UB reports form the county of Strzelce Opolskie: i. Sprawozdanie Dekadowe, 1-9 Sept. 1945, IPN-Wr., 07/39 (PUBP Strzelce Op.), doc. 20ff. ii. Spr. Dek., 20 Sept. 1945, same file, doc. 22. The last source notes the good possibility that the so-called “Wehrwolf bands” were really just local natives trying to defend themselves from being pillaged and denounced by property-hungry newcomer migrants.

western Upper Silesia from Poland and went after them only to realize the falsity of their assertions. According to one report:

In several cases doubts have arisen as to whether the assumed to be bands [of Wehrwolf] are in fact even bands. Rather, having returned from the west the German, or the local population, is driven to hide in the forest for fear of expulsion. Actually, they do not hide in the forest but in other villages, often changing locations to avoid being de-masked by local Poles cooperating with us [the Ubecy], and only hide in the forest while going from one village to the other. This can give one the impression that there they constitute some kind of a [conspiracy] band, but then after a few days there is hardly a trace of anything of this kind.¹²⁸

In another case in Gliwice, the suspected conspiracy turned out to be but a social group of locals.¹²⁹ To fuel their conspiracy theories and to create scapegoat for failing social and economic efforts, the Ubecy also made a number of arrests of so-called “Wehrwolf” bands. These included 14 members in October of 1945, two groups of “verified” locals in February of 1946, and one “Wehrwolf” organization in June of that year made up of twenty-year olds, who were given prison sentences of twenty years each.¹³⁰

Whether or not there was a true “enemy within” was not so much the issue as was the regime’s need to legitimate ethnic cleansing and also forge a self-serving state of emergency in Poland. The discourse of a world-wide as well as local “German threat” enabled the Peperowce to represent their Polish political opponents (including the armed underground and the legal PSL), the “Wehrwolf,” and the “international threat” against the Oder-Neisse Line, as part of one camp of “German/fascist reaction.” The following statement issued by a PPR committee working with the PZZ in the Fall of 1946 exemplifies how this was the official line of propaganda:

¹²⁸ Quoted from: Sprawozdanie Dekadowe PUBP Strzelce, 19 Oct. 1945, *ibid.*, doc. 31.

¹²⁹ Zarząd Miejski Gliwice, sprawozdanie syt., August 1947, APK-Oddz. Gliwice, 160 (ZM Gliwice)/31, doc. 31ff.

¹³⁰ Sprawozdanie Wojewody (Spr. Woj.), for Oct 1945, APK 185/1/49, doc. 157ff.; ii. Spr. Woj., for Jan 1945, APK 185/1/50 doc. 1ff; iii. Spr. Woj., for June 1946, same file as last, doc. 99ff.

The war against attempts to give rebirth to German imperialism marks the idea of a democratic society, and the idea of a Polish nation, an idea of all Slavic nations. We know very well that the entire international reaction will gather around Germany, and has as its goal the attainment of [Germany's] great war industry.¹³¹

This discourse of an all-around threat from “niemczyzna” played a key role in the regime's grass-root campaigns for the “People's Referendum” and Sejm elections. For example, with regard to the former, the party underscored that all three questions pertain to the Oder-Neisse line, and that the choice is between either “three times ‘yes’” or “dreimal ‘nein’”—in other words, one between a PPR or a Nazi-German governed Poland.¹³² The party also represented the choice in a different way: “what in German is ‘No’, in Polish is ‘Yes’!”¹³³ **(See images 5.8 & 5.9)**

The culturally racist discourse of a timeless, eternally threatening, and both internationally and locally present, “niemczyzna” thus served both as the collectivized demonizing prerequisite of ethnic cleansing and at the same time forged the PPR-serving “state of emergency.” Like the Nazi discourse of “polnische Wirtschaft/anti-German war of destruction” it served as the official language of social deconstruction, and in this sense as one side of a multifaceted social engineering effort. I now turn to address the other side, that of reconstruction.

The Avant-garde “New Pole” or the discourse of societal re-construction

The Allied sanctioned right to expel “Germans” from western Upper Silesia and other parts of the NWT that the Peperowce had also de facto translated into a right to re-

¹³¹ The statement goes on to mention “Churchill's opposition to dismantling factories in Germany.” Quoted from: “Zadania PPR-PZZtowie.”

¹³² See for example: Gomułka, “Walka toczy się o Polskę,” *Głos Ludu* 177 (29 June 1945): 3. On the instrumentalization of the territorial issue for the “People's Referendum” see also: T. David Curp, “The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing: the PPR, the PZZ, and Wielkopolska's Nationalist Revolution, 1944-46,” *Nationalities Papers*, 29 (2001): 575-603.

¹³³ Quoted from: “To co po niemiecku ‘Nie’ to po polsku ‘Tak’,” *Głos Ludu* 178 (30 June 1946): 8.

engineer the local cultures of these areas. To a totalitarian-minded government ultimately interested in the forming of a soviet-modeled “new man,” the territorial appropriation project presented a formidable opportunity to do this under an all-national façade. Just after the rally atop the Mount of St. Anne, Gomułka rushed to Wrocław (Breslau), a sort of capital of the “Recovered Territories,”¹³⁴ to celebrate this chance as well as to make a policy declaration in this regard. In his words:

One cannot seriously speak of fusing the Recovered Territories with the motherland [the Polish nation] if we don't fuse our culture, our national spirit with this period of history that gave us back these territories.¹³⁵

The statement's wording reflects the ideologically non-partisan language in which the party sought to make inroads into its ultimate aim of constructing a self-serving moral fabric for society.

During the first postwar years in the NWT, the Peperowce were not alone in this endeavor, but shared it with their experts of these territories, the agents of the PZZ—and by way of this organization, also the Church and other patriotic allies. These nationalists made their own fantasies of cultural reengineering explicit in the press and specialized NWT periodicals, including the Katowice-based *Odra*, which served as a main forum for the (Upper and Lower) Silesian national-regionalist community of scholars and writers. One member of this community described the “Recovered Territories” as “the theater of a great national experiment, aspiring to rebuild, and where necessary, transform, the national psyche.”¹³⁶ The crux of this experiment was the rearing of a “new type of Pole”—“new on the basis of morals, on the basis of consciousness of [his/her] rights and

¹³⁴ See: Gregor Thum, “Cleansed Memory: The New Polish Wrocław/Breslau, and the Expulsion of the Germans,” in: Tooley, Várdy, Huszár Várdy, ed., *Ethnic Cleansing*, 335.

¹³⁵ Quoted from: “Musimy odnowić kulturę polską: przemówienie wicepremiera i ministra Ziem Odzyskanych na akademii w teatrze miejskim we Wrocławiu,” *Głos Ludu* 158 (20 May 1946): 3.

¹³⁶ Quoted from: Kaźimierz Herz, “Duch Kresowości Zachodniej,” *Odra* (23 Feb. 1947): 1.

duties, tasks and [social] role...”¹³⁷ This avant-garde individual was to arise out of the culturally multifarious mix of displaced individuals in Poland’s new west, including the borderland population of “recovered peoples” and its newcomer neighbors. The nationalists saw in these territories not only an amassing ground for every “type of Pole” (the “autochthon” of the NWT as well as Pole of central and eastern Poland), but also “a school of national life and citizenship.”¹³⁸ Mobilizing not just local cells of the PZZ, but socio-political organizations and parties from all over Poland, the state was to “melt” and “fuse” these migrants—and in the case of “autochthons,” de facto migrants—into an ethno-culturally homogenous and politically united society.¹³⁹ These western territories experts justified this project of forced assimilation on the basis of a need to form a lasting “bulwark” against the threat to the new territories. One powerful statement in the organization’s main organ in mid-May of 1945 exemplifies this:

The PZZ has made the thorough cleansing and de-Germanization of the Western Territories its main goal... On these territories we will create a type of border Pole who will be sensitive to the threatening temptations of the today battered and destroyed Teutonic Knight [German], and will be ready to wage war against him, in case he will ever try to take revenge against his *pogrom*.¹⁴⁰

In other words, fear of revenge for the territorial annexation and expulsion loomed even as it was in turn also used to justify these actions.

To the PZZ the “Polish autochthon” was to be the core aspect of this shaping effort. In his programmatic statement on “re-Polonization,” the leading PZZ figure,

¹³⁷ Quoted from: Eugeniusz Paukšta, “Nowa Polska—nowe granice—nowi ludzie,” *Polska Zachodnia* (19 August 1945): 1.

¹³⁸ See: Serwański, “O społeczeństwo...” 97, quoted from, 101.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 95; and: Zygmunt Izdebski, “Przyszłość społeczna Śląska Opolskiego,” *Odra* 3:1 (11 Jan. 1948).

¹⁴⁰ Quoted from: „Trzeba Odniemczyć Ziemię Zachodnią, o nowy typ kresowego Polaka,” *Polska Zachodnia*, (20 May 1945): 3. Emphasis mine. Indeed, this demonstrates that some western territories experts regarded the ethnic cleansing against the Germans to be a (in their eyes, deserved) „*pogrom*” against Germany.

Edmund Męclewski, underscored that this term referred to “restoring Polishness” to these borderland people, in addition to doing so to their homeland. Indeed, to the PZZ both elements constituted two sides of the same coin since the native locals proved to be, in Męclewski’s words, “great political capital” in the sense that they legitimated Poland’s claims to the post-German lands before the international community. In light of this importance, in his radio address during the Third of May (“Weeks of the Western Territories”) rally in Gliwice in 1946, the PZZ chief, Waław Barcikowski underscored that the region’s native locals “have to be placed under the special care of the state.”¹⁴¹ Męclewski echoed this statement in his treatise, elaborating that this was to include “political, cultural, and educational care, including ... the destruction of the remnants of centuries-old German slavery and influence of Nazism on their worldview.”¹⁴² In this sense, while “Germans” and “remnants of Germandom” were to be the object of physical removal, sedentary borderland natives were to be that of another aspect of this social engineering—an ethnic cleansing of the mind. Promoted in the form of a pedagogical program, this process was to be part and parcel of what Męclewski referred to as “re-Polonization,” of which the end result was “the manufacturing of a new and modern type of Pole.”¹⁴³

“Western researchers” primitivized the borderland peoples (Upper Silesians, Mazurians, Pommeranians) as a point of departure for the call to bring their culture “up to date” with that of the rest of the nation. The Slavic words and expressions of these people’s heavily Germanized local dialect marked one reason for why these scholars

¹⁴¹ Quoted from: “Inauguracja TZO: wielka manifestacja polskości w Gliwicach,” *Dziennik Zachodni*, (4 May 1946), 2.

¹⁴² Quoted from: Męclewski, “Repolonizacja,” 15.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19

harped on the “primitive and pure form of Polishness” of the locals.¹⁴⁴ True to their policy of doing so from the interwar era, they regarded any deviation from full Polish national consciousness, including regional/local-based identity (or “national indifference”), and cultural identification with Germany as a remnant of “centuries of Germanization,” and victimization at the hands of the Prussians/Germans. The Silesian Institute ethnographer, Joseph Ligęza, referred to this “national apathy” as part of the “psychological scars” left behind by the long experience of “self-alienation” and “de-nationalization.” In similar respects to his wartime counterpart in Katowice, the Heimatkundler, Alfons Perlick, Ligęza dismissed regional/local consciousness as a mere defense mechanism on the part of Upper Silesians against “Germanization.” In the same respect he also rationalized their “minority complex,” or shyness with regard to ambition for personal social elevation, in similar respects: while in Germany, to attain social advancement, locals were first required to conform to German nationalization policies, which as committed “Poles” they resisted at all cost. In other words, to Ligęza, regional/local orientation marked a *false consciousness* that was not to be recognized, but rather, to be eradicated.¹⁴⁵ In the words of a leading scholar and activist in Upper Silesia, Dr. Zygmunt Izdebski: “in Silesia the centuries-long German occupation made it impossible for the conquered populace to develop a rightful and uniform [Polish] national consciousness.”¹⁴⁶

Serving as official scholarly knowledge of the time, this rhetoric constituted the basis of plans to reshape borderland natives into full-fledged Poles—or what Ligęza

¹⁴⁴ Quoted from a speech by Eugeniusz Paukszta, “Kultura Polska a Ziemie Zachodnie,” *Tydzien Ziem Zachodnich*, 25 March 1947, *Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu* (hereafter, APP), 883 (PZZ)/725, doc. 46-7.

¹⁴⁵ All quoted from Jozef Ligęza, „Na Co Czeka Opolszczyzna,” *Odra* 1:4 (September 1945): 3.

¹⁴⁶ Izdebski, „Przyszłość,” 1.

described as their “return to normalcy.”¹⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, a “normal” Polish-speaking, or even just a nationally-conscious and patriotic Polish individual, was not what these intellectuals were interested in engineering. In his programmatic statement on this subject, Męclewski made it quite clear that pedagogical “re-Polonization” aimed not just to “manufacture a new and modern type of Pole” but a “Pole-Democrat” (in echo of the PPR’s pseudo-name for communism, “democracy”)¹⁴⁸ The Silesian Institute’s Director, Lutman, also pointed out the congruence of “re-Polonization” and the PPR’s own ideological endeavors at social engineering. He argued that free from the burden of Poland’s aristocratic (“*szlachta*”) and *Sanacja* past, the new lands were to be the breeding ground of a “democratic Poland – a Poland of the working people, who alone constitute the power and strength of the nation.”¹⁴⁹ In the opening article of the premier issue of *Odra* he defined the “new democracy” as a working-class-based society and culture marked by social justice, making clear that this is the term defining “the new Poland” for “the new type of Pole.” He juxtaposes it with “nineteenth-century democracy,” which in his opinion faltered due to economic inequality.¹⁵⁰ Thus, in accordance with its policy from the beginning, the PPR exerted significant ideological influence on this pedagogical re-acculturation program, since this after all was the perfect opportunity to get their socio-political principles into the minds of locals under the seemingly neutral guise of “re-Polonization.” I now turn to the pragmatic pedagogical efforts that followed from

¹⁴⁷ Ligeza, “Na co czeka,” 3.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted from Męclewski, “Repolonizacja,” 18.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted from: „‘Cele i zadania Polskiego Związku Zachodniego’ (z przemówienia prezesa okręgu śląskiego Dra Romana Lutmana wygłoszonego na I-szym Zjeździe PZZ w Bytomiu w dniu 19.8.1945),” *Sprawy Zachodnie*, 5-6 (Oct-Nov. 1945): 6.

¹⁵⁰ Roman Lutman, “Nowa Rzeczywistość,” *Odra* 1 (20 July 1945): 1.

these fantasies of social engineering—first to the contents of their program, followed by how they were carried out in practice.

Raising the “New Pole”

Almost from the onset of the postwar period, the PZZ, along with the state’s Ministry of Education,¹⁵¹ introduced a pedagogical program to teach former German citizens how to talk, think, and behave like “Poles.” Its most notable feature were the so-called “re-Polonization courses” (*kursy repolonizacyjne*), which included lessons on language, culture, and citizenship for borderland natives, youth and working age adults in particular.¹⁵² Advertised with the popular slogan, “Get To Know Poland, Its History and Culture,” they were an important part of the postwar all-Polish program of “public enlightenment” (*oświata dorosłych*/adult education, or the Polish counterpart to *Volksbildung*), running parallel to, and occasionally overlapping with, a concerted campaign to promote literacy among the 1/3 of the country’s illiterate population. Whereas the “re-Polonization courses” were meant mainly for out of school adults, children were taught much of the content of these as part of their public school curriculum.¹⁵³ Functioning as part of the broader campaign of cultural ethnic-cleansing, the courses aimed to “de-Germanize” the adult individual, or in other words to discredit and thereby dissolve his/her ties to “German” culture, language, and heritage. Next to inducing this suppression of native heritage, the courses aimed to “re-Polonize” the

¹⁵¹ The Ministry of Education (Ministerstwo Oświaty) had its own section devoted to NWT affairs that worked in cooperation with the Silesian Institute. See: Strauchold, *Polska Ludność Rodzima Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych: Opinie nie tylko publiczne, 1944-8*, (Olsztyn, 1995) 104.

¹⁵² On “kursy repolonizacyjne” see: Matthais Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache in den Jahren 1921-1998* (Dortmund, 1999) 192-4; Peter Polak-Springer, „The Upper Silesian ‘Dream’: Re-Assimilating the Native Population, 1945-50,” in: Dietrich Beyrau, Mathais Beer, Cornelia Rauh, eds., *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung: Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950*, (Essen, 2009) 241-60.

¹⁵³ Stefani Mazurek’s pedagogical papers on “re-Polonization” in: Archiwum Biblioteki Instytutu Śląskiego (BIŚ), A543, doc. 1ff.

individual, meaning to bond him/her with the “Polish” counterparts to these, which essentially legitimated regime prerogatives. A pragmatic follow-through from the social engineering dreams discussed above, according to the Ministry of Education’s programmatic statements, the courses were aimed to raise “a new type of Pole ... positively predisposed to today’s Polish reality.”¹⁵⁴

The regional section of the Ministry of Education, the Upper Silesian school district, and its renowned expert in pedagogical “re-Polonization” and also the Silesian Institute scholar and activist of the PZZ, Dr. Stefani Mazurek, left the most explicit records of how the pedagogical program was conceived and carried out. Working from the longstanding nationalist premise that Upper Silesia’s heterogeneous culture was an unnatural product of German cultural hegemony, all “German” cultural and behavioral expressions—including language and mentality—were considered to be just the “surface features” (*naloty*) of an essentially Polish core culture.¹⁵⁵ They were to be segregated from the latter and removed like everything else deemed to be a part of “niemczyzna.”¹⁵⁶ In the words of planners, the pedagogical program aimed at: “the severing of civilizational bonds that connect the Silesian element with the foreign [German] society.”¹⁵⁷ In other words, in similar respects to the Nazi “re-Germanization” pedagogical efforts this curriculum was geared to forging a psychological “clean cut” break with all cultural traits associated with the other (including regionalism/localism).

¹⁵⁴ Quoted from: „Praca na kursach repolonizacyjnych – jej znaczenie, cele, formy i metody,” 4 Nov 1947, APK, 186 (Kuratorium Okręgu Szkolnego Śląskiego w Katowicach)/450, doc. 159. Omitted: „nowe społeczeństwo.”

¹⁵⁵ Izdebski, „Przyszłość...,” 1.

¹⁵⁶ Bernard Linek, „Walka.”

¹⁵⁷ Quoted from: “Materiały do nauki na kursach repolonizacyjnych stopnia niższego i wyższego,” n.d. (circa 1950), APK, 186/450, doc. 61.

Pedagogical planners considered teaching Polish to be the most basic means of achieving this aim. It's important to emphasize that fluency in high Polish was not a common feature among inhabitants of Western Upper Silesia, who had after all until recently lived in a German society.¹⁵⁸ More common was the use of the Slavic-based local dialect. Nevertheless, in the formerly interwar German parts of the region, these dialects tended to be very strongly entwined with high German. The Nazi regime's terror campaign from the late thirties to the end of the war against the use of both Polish and Slavic-based speech in general did much to precipitate the decline of the natives' command of these, to promote more widespread use of German, and to heighten the influence of high German on the local dialect.¹⁵⁹ Just like the Nazis during the interwar and war periods, and the Polish officials in charge of segregating this population into "Germans" and "Poles" after 1945, the pedagogical planners of the "re-Polonization" program did not consider native language to be a basis of national identity. Accepting the nationalist assumption that most native Upper Silesians are inherently "ethnically Polish" regardless of what language they speak, they dismissed the complete lack of Polish in the natives' speech, or what they sometimes called "disfigured" Polish or the "Silesian dialect," as the imprints of "centuries of German hegemony" that had to be "undone" and corrected.¹⁶⁰ Here their goal was not just to give the natives an excellent command of the Polish language, but rather—in echo of the Nazis' program of language teaching—to reconstruct their *native tongue*. The "re-Polonization" language program that Mazurek

¹⁵⁸ Tomasz Kamusella, *Schlonska mowa: Język, Górny Śląsk i nacjonalizm*, vol. 1, (Zabrze, 2005) 20-1, 24; Matthais Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache*, 155, 160.

¹⁵⁹ See: T. Kamusella, „The Szlonzoks and Their Language: Between Germany, Poland and Szlonzokian Nationalism,” *EUI Working Papers*, 1 (2003): 16-17; Bogusław Wyderka, “Język, dialekt czy kreol?” in: Lech M. Nijakowski, ed., *Nadciągają Ślązacy: czy istnieje narodowość śląska?* (Warszawa, 2004) 199.

¹⁶⁰ See: BIŚ, A543, doc. 63.

and Maks Hasiński—the head of the Upper Silesian school district—constructed emphasized pronunciation, and called for the intensive drilling away of the natural German accent with which natives pronounced Polish words. The teachers carrying out this program of native language reconstruction were to be experts in the physiology of phonetics so as to have optimal control over how the natives pronounced Polish words. The teachers' own language was to be a pristine “proper” and “musical”-sounding Polish so as to provide an ideal example to their students.¹⁶¹

Turning German and dialect speakers into fluent (native-level) Polish speakers was hardly a realistically attainable goal in the near future. And so the pedagogical planners put their plans aside and focused on the “de-Germanization” component, since getting locals to stop speaking German and using German sounds and words was more urgent to them than anything else. This was all the more since from 1945 on, the regional government prohibited the use of the German language in both public and private life, and by mid-1946 imposed stiff punishments ranging from monetary fines to internment in forced labor camps, in addition to various other social sanctions, on German speakers.¹⁶² Very often, those reported to the public prosecutor for speaking German—either by law enforcement officials or by intolerant neighbors—had not been caught actually using fluent high-German but rather using Germanisms while speaking the local dialect or high Polish.¹⁶³ To urgently get locals to stop speaking “German,” pedagogical planners

¹⁶¹ Ibid., doc. 20-21, 60-1; and: Stefani Mazurek, Min. Wizytator Szkolny, Ministerstwo Oświaty, Biuro Ziem Odzyskanych, “Uwagi w sprawie położeniu polskiej młodzieży rodzimej na Śląsku Opolskim,” 19 XI 1946, APK, 186/450, doc. 33-37; Dr. Toraska Zofia, “Słownictwo na kurs języka Polskiego,” same file, doc. 95.

¹⁶² See: Linek, „*Odniemczanie*,” 26; Wanatowicz, *Od indyferentnej*, 32-33. The forced labor camps I am referring to were for Upper Silesians considered to be “German,” i.e. the concentration camp of Gleiwitz/Gliwice. These individuals were exploited for slave labor before they were expelled, if they managed to survive the horrendous conditions of internment.

¹⁶³ See note 108.

instructed language teachers in “re-Polonization” courses to focus on removing German words and sounds from the native’s everyday language. The latter were to be tolerated so long as they were spoken free of Germanisms. According to one official statement made by the coordinators of the Silesian school district:

Dialect (*gwara*) features give a regional-based color to the literary tongue without disturbing anyone. One can speak of an error in pronunciation only then when the latter denotes German influence.¹⁶⁴

The cleansing of the Upper Silesians’ everyday local language of Germanisms in “re-Polonization” courses marked a postwar grass-roots manifestation of the continued effort to construct *one* standard and high Polish-based “Upper Silesian *dialect*.” The latter continued to be referred to officially as the “Upper Silesian talk” (“*gwara Śląska*”). The effort was first endorsed by the region’s interwar governor, Dr. Michał Grażyński, as a core aspect of his “regionalism,” aimed to strengthen the linguistically diverse Eastern (interwar Polish) Upper Silesian borderland’s ties with the rest of Poland. Just as before the war, in the postwar period, the Silesian Institute continued to be the main agent in the effort to standardize the local regional dialects, a project that lasted to the last decade of the communist period.¹⁶⁵ This exemplifies how the “re-Polonization” curriculum on the one hand relied on the work of Grażyński’s national-regionalists, but on the other hand, also included postwar components, such as those geared towards rallying locals to identify with the whole NWT, not just Upper Silesia, and to take an active part in ethnic cleansing, and foremost, support the PPR.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted from “Nauka Języka Polskiego – Wymowa,” APK 186/450, doc. 71A.

¹⁶⁵ „Protokół z zebrania org. Klubu Pisarzy Powstańców,” 30 April 1946, APK, 273/30, doc. 13. On dialect standardization see: Eugeniusz Kopeć, „Z zagadnień integracji językowej śląskich kresów Rzeczypospolitej (1918-30),” in: Józef Chlebowczyk, ed., *Z problemów integracji i unifikacji II Rzeczypospolitej*, (Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1980) 7-48; Tomasz Kamusella, *Schlonszka mowa*, 20-1, 24.

These new elements of the postwar national-regionalism were inherent not to the linguistic but the cultural/political component of these tautologies. Lessons on history, politics as well as regional, NWT-wide, and nation-wide, culture were an inherent part of the “re-Polonization” courses since the ultimate goal was not just linguistic nationalization but, foremost, the raising of a “new Pole.” Unlike the Nazis who for years kept language and political schooling separated in their “public enlightenment” program, Polish nationalists incorporated the linguistic and cultural-political components into one standard course. But for both nationalizing regimes, one central aim of this second component was the same: to draw a clear-cut conceptual border between “Polishness” and “Germandom” and to school locals to hate everything associated with the national other. Polish pedagogical planners intended to “point out foremost the differences that exist in the essence of Polish and German cultures” so as to cultivate an abhorrence for the former and “emotional bond” for the latter.¹⁶⁶ On the one hand, the history curriculum was devoted to dispelling any notion that Upper Silesia or any other part of the NWT shares affinity with Germany and German culture. According to the literary and historical narratives found in course readers, Germans had always been transplants in these lands, while “Poles”—as the native population were timelessly labeled—were depicted as the area’s native and righteous inhabitants.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, the basis of these narratives was the myth of the “centuries-old Polish struggle against the Germanic flood” into “Polish territories.” The planners had a very clear-cut goal in this regard:

pointing out during history lessons all the injustices [and] injuries that Germans imposed on the populace of the lands along the Oder River, the Baltic Sea, and in

¹⁶⁶ Quoted from: BIŚ, A543, doc. 10.

¹⁶⁷ An entire section on history is devoted to promoting this myth in one standard “re-Polonization” course textbook: *Nie Rzucim Ziemi: Czytanka do Użytku na Kursach Dla Dorosłych na Ziemiach Odzyskanych*, (Warszawa, 1946) 7-66.

Prussia, the territory in which the autochthonous population is the direct descendant of the victims, is bound to awaken in the participants a loathing of the German past in the name of the basic human rights and all-human ideals that have been trampled upon in the course of the 1000-year period from Ceron to Hitler.¹⁶⁸

In constructing this polar image of timelessly “demonic Germans” versus “heroic and victimized Poles,” pedagogists intended history teaching to serve as a tool of mental ethnic cleansing aimed at the reconstruction of the native individuals’ collective identity. Like the linguistic component of “re-Polonization” courses, planners aimed to induce Upper Silesians (and borderland natives in general) to hate and purge their ties to all things German – not just the German language but also identification with the German past and tradition. Moreover, the “new Pole” of the NWT was to conceptualize Polish society, and therefore him/herself, in a state of permanent antagonism with all things considered “German.”¹⁶⁹ PZZ intellectuals intended the acceptance of this conception of reality to be fundamental for the construction of a “new Pole,” who, through indefatigable patriotism, loyalty to the current regime, and abhorrence of “everything German” (“niemczyzna”) was to be a “guardian of the western frontier.”¹⁷⁰

She/he was also to be an unquestioning supporter of the PPR [Communist Party]. Anxious to hide their unpopular dependency on the Soviet Union and to disguise their communist plank, party leaders wrote their regime’s legitimacy into the nationalist historical narratives on Upper Silesia and the NWT that were a staple part of the curriculum of the courses. In the course readers, the myth of the millennial struggle

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in both cases from: “Nauka Języka Polskiego – Wyniki ...” (rest of document heading illegible), APK, 186/450, doc. 80A.

¹⁶⁹ The magnum opus work promoting this myth in the postwar period was: Zygmunt Wojciechowski, *Polska-Niemcy: dziesięć wieków zmagania*, (Poznań: wyd. Instytutu Zachodniego, 1945). For a model PZZ statement of the continuity of the war against Germany after 1945, marked by the struggle to “de-Germanize” and protect the NWT, see: “PZZ wzywa, Polacy na Front!” *Sprawy Zachodnie* 2 (15 Lipca 1945): 1-3.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted from: „Trzeba Odniemczyć Ziemię Zachodnią, o nowy typ kresowego Polaka,” *Polska Zachodnia* (20 May 1945): 3.

against the NWT thus ended with the redemptive acquisition of these lands for Poland by a heroic Soviet Army. And the moral of the story was made clear: that only friendship with the Soviet Union guaranteed that the NWT would remain with Poland.¹⁷¹ The narratives made little mention to the price of the “recovery” of the western borderlands, namely the loss of the eastern provinces of interwar Poland, nor did they promote any positive memory of these areas. At best, they devalued the old eastern lands as “backwards” and “burdensome.”¹⁷² In accordance with PZZ ideology, the new Poland and “new Pole” were to be oriented towards a modern and industrial west.¹⁷³

This pro-regime narrative also extended beyond the nationalist geo-political discourse. The readers valorized the PPR for the redistribution of land and property in these areas to the proletarian masses, a principle that the populist nationalist ranks of the PZZ also firmly supported. Moreover, the “re-Polonization courses” served as a venue for the broadcasting of communist ideas under the label of building “a real democracy.”¹⁷⁴ According to one passage inside the reader, the meanings of this concept (“democracy”) include bringing culture to the masses, and the promotion of “social justice” through “a struggle against capitalism” and “popularization of commonality,” “as only then will a new, better Man be raised.” Certainly no mention is made that “democracy” is to give individuals the freedom to choose which political path they want to follow.¹⁷⁵ The transmission of these PPR principles without the explicit use of the unpopular “c”-word (communism) marked a prime example of how the regime instrumentalized the popular

¹⁷¹ *Nie Rzucim*, 223-224.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 123-46; and see another textbook: *Ku Lepszej Przyszłości: Czytanki Polskie dla Starszej Młodzieży Szkół Powszechnych i Kursów dla Dorosłych*, (Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1945) 195-273.

¹⁷³ See: “Trzeba odniemczyć,” 3.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted from: *Nie Rzucim*, 4.

¹⁷⁵ „Dyskusja o demokracji na zjeździe słuchaczy uniwersytetu ludowego (urywek z protokołu),” *ibid.*, 177-8.

national mission to “restore Polishness” to the “Recovered Peoples” (Western Upper Silesians). Rather than schooling them in a more politically neutral high Polish culture, the party-state used its ethnic cleansing mandate to engineer a communist “new man” on nationalist ideological footing.

Within the first five years of the postwar period, 93,065 native Upper Silesians had attended the “re-Polonization courses” organized by the Ministry of Enlightenment.¹⁷⁶ (See **image 5.10**) Whereas pedagogical planners had their own ideal conception of what these courses should teach, in practice things looked strikingly different—and often not to these pedagogists’ liking. Course participants often determined what they wanted to learn and what they did not. Supervisors of the Ministry of Enlightenment noted that locals maintained a pragmatic attitude towards the “re-Polonization” effort, paying attention to language instruction but little to the cultural-political part of the curriculum. Faced with becoming *déclassé*, and other punitive measures, for not knowing the Polish language, participants attended the courses strictly for this component, paying little attention to that which was specifically designed to shape them into “new Poles.”¹⁷⁷ According to one report: “very often students learn the Polish language but run away from history lessons, which is likewise proof of [the

¹⁷⁶ Kuratorium Okręgu Szkolnego Śląskiego (KOS-Śl.), To: Ministerstwo Departamentu Oświaty i Kultury Dorosłych, 15 May 1950, APK, 186/450, doc. 9.

¹⁷⁷ Punishments that those refusing to attend courses faced included fines, as well as not getting one’s education diplomas/certificates from German institutions recognized until one completed the „re-Polonization” program. „Sprawozdanie inspektoratu szkolnego z rozwoju oświaty dla dorosłych/sprawozdanie opisowe, kursy repolonizacyjne,” circa 1948, APO 224 (Prezydium Wojewódzkiej Rady Narodowej w Opolu)/4378, doc. 3; ii. KOS-Śl To: Ministerstwo Oświaty, 25 May 1950, APK, 186/450, doc. 12. See also: Linek, *Odniemczanie*, 99.

existence of German/”Wehrwolf”] propaganda and [their] attitude against People’s Poland.”¹⁷⁸

The teachers of the courses, most of whom were from the newcomer community, also determined the final shape of what was taught and how. There were cases when the teachers took the liberty to defy the fundamental principles of planners, even if only for the good of not alienating course participants. According to the report of one elementary school teacher from Gliwice, who also taught two such courses to adults, the racist Germanophobia that the PZZ wanted to feed to a borderland population that shared strong heritage and family ties with Germany only worked to alienate this group and thus defeated the ultimate purpose of the courses. In her words:

With regard to German Hitlerism and the fate of the Polish nation under German occupation one had to talk about these affairs tactfully and make it appropriately clear that the whole nation is not responsible for the atrocities. These are sensitive matters due to the fact that even though the listeners have Polish citizenship, their closest relatives, with whom they share blood bonds, including parents and siblings, live in Germany. And so the denunciation of the German nation is hurtful to them and can create conflicts between lecturer and listener and can outright awaken an aversion to Poles [on the second person’s part].¹⁷⁹

Her explicit choice of retaining the participant over trying to get him/her to hate the language and culture in which he/she was raised broke with the PZZ’s fundamental goal of using these courses to “cleanse” the locals’ minds of “everything German.” In this sense, she also refused to provide the regime with the service of raising Germanophobic “guardians of the western border” by entirely skipping—under the convenient pretext of

¹⁷⁸ See: KOS-Śl, To: Ministertwo Oświaty, APK 186/450, doc. 11-12; and: J. C., “Sprawozdanie z pracy na kursie repolonizacyjnym pszy szkole nr. 16 w Gliwicach i z kursy przy głównych warsztatach wagonowych PKP, n.d. (circa Nov. 1947), APK 186/450, 148ff.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted from: J. C., “Sprawozdanie z pracy na kursie repolonizacyjnym pszy szkole nr. 16 w Gliwicach..., 148ff.

time constraints—the part of the curriculum entitled “Will the Germans arise again and what our attitude should be to them?”¹⁸⁰

This Gliwice teacher showed the same kind of pragmatism and flexibility with regard to language teaching. Instead of following the official policy of drilling pronunciation with the aim of reconstructing the participants’ native tongue, she focused on removing Germanisms out of whatever Polish they knew so that authorities would not harass these individuals for “speaking German.”¹⁸¹ In this sense, her approach was similar to that of the German school teacher in Gau O/S, who likewise found the Nazi’s policy to reconstruct the locals’ mother tongue on the basis of high national language to be unrealistic. This Gliwice teacher’s tactful moderation most likely contributed to creating a scenario that other teachers desired but failed to create: namely, one in which the students willfully and eagerly came to the course, and showed an interest in her lessons on the Polish heritage of Upper Silesia, on “Pan-Slavic unity,” and even on “the history democratic Poland.” Nevertheless, she did reflect that even as they listened with “active interest,” they did so “out of pragmatic reasons” and not “because they felt themselves to be Poles”—an effect that even her tactfulness could not bring about.¹⁸² All of this exemplifies the amount of discretion that teachers had, and how they could use it to promote their own values independently of those of planners.

Still in 1947, when the cooperation between Church and state was permanently rupturing, both planners and teachers promoted Catholicism as part of the “re-Polonization” curriculum, even as they also taught communist ideology and sang “The

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., doc. 148ff.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., doc. 149ff.

¹⁸² All quoted and drawn from, *ibid.*, doc. 149-151. This teacher also stated that only once the Oder-Neisse border is deemed to be final will the students sincerely devote themselves to these courses. Moreover, she also blamed the half-heartedness on the part of her students on „German propaganda.”

Internationale.”¹⁸³ According to one bureaucrat of the “Silesian School District,” “a strong work ethic and religiosity” were the core features of the Upper Silesian “Polish autochthon,” which was to be the basis for “the rise of a new type of Pole” in this region.¹⁸⁴ Even as many teachers incorporated religion into the curriculum, this did not help to attract as many listeners as the Ministry of Enlightenment was hoping for. The 93,065 participants in its courses constituted less than an eighth of the total verified population of western Upper Silesia, and less than half of the target number of 200,000 that the Ministry wanted to mobilize for this schooling. Furthermore, from among the total number of course attendees, only 71,576 had finished either the basic or advanced level of these courses—the majority having quit once finishing the former.¹⁸⁵ It’s important to note that the Ministry was not the only agent of pedagogical “re-Polonization.” Various socio-political activist groups, including youth and women’s organizations, work places (coal mines and metallurgy plants), and community centers in urban and rural areas were also involved in the teaching of language, (national and national-regional) history, and politics.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ This evident from a report on the schooling of one of the most “prestigious” centers for pedagogical “re-Polonization,” the Państwowe Gimnazjum i Liceum Repolonizacyjne in Opole. Sprawozdanie z lustracji przeprowadzonej w Inspektoracie Szkolnej w Opolu KOS.-Śl. przez naczelnika wydziału Ministerstwa Oświaty, 19-21 Oct. 1948, AAN 283 (Ministerstwo Oświaty)/3397, doc. 27.

¹⁸⁴ “Pracowitość i religijność—to będzie ogół obraz Polaka Śląskiego” Quoted from: Kol. K. in Gliwice, “praca na kursach repolonizacyjnych i jej znaczenie, cele, formy, i metody,” APK 186/450, doc. 159ff.

¹⁸⁵ KOS-Śl., To: Ministerstwa Departamentu Oświaty i Kultury Dorosłych, APK, 186/450, doc. 9; and: BIŚ, A543, doc. 9, 11.

¹⁸⁶ On activism of the Liga Kobiet: Sprawozdanie Społ-Pol, circa Mar-Apr. 1949, 160 (Zarząd Miejski/MRN Gliwice)/35, doc. 74 ii. The report of the Gliwice teacher, who also taught a course at the PKP, notes that frequency at these courses was high but there was less enthusiasm and more passivity among participants in comparison to courses given outside of the work place. Quoted from: Janina Czaplicka, “Sprawozdanie z pracy na kursie repolonizacyjnym...,” APK 186/450, 148ff. iii. Domy Kultury (Houses of Culture) and Świetlice (Community Centers) were two very important agents of “re-polonization.” Like the Liga Kobiet and Scouts, they did not just teach Polish out of a book but via the teaching of folk dances, songs, and by taking participants on trips, among other such recreational methods. There were 1,146 Domy Kultury and Świetlice in all of the Voivodeship, 350 of which were in the western

The classroom was not the only place for ideological “re-Polonization.” Having reached the limits of their effort with regard to the re-assimilating of adults, officials also turned to the effort to trying to capture the hearts and minds of the younger generation. In the summer of 1946, the PZZ and the Ministry of Enlightenment set up youth camps (colonies and half-colonies) across the region that mobilized over 40,000 participants in June and double so many in August, of which 20,000 were members of the Polish Scouting Association (ZHP).¹⁸⁷ The effort was meant to foster the “melting” of the disparate heritage groups—not just refugees from other parts of Poland and former German citizens—but also the permanent residents of the Dabrower Basin, who now inhabited the Silesian-Dabrower Voivodeship into a “homogenously Polish” society. In this respect, one of the goals of the campaign was also to “awaken” the native population of the western part of the region to Polish national consciousness, particularly the most politically aloof segment, the rural population. The PZZ thus mobilized units of Polish Scouts to set up eighteen camps in this area, including nine in the county of Gliwice and nearby areas of the interwar Polish-German border, and the remainder the areas to the west and southwest of the Industrial District, including six in the county of Nysa (Neisse) and three in that of Krapkowice (Krapkowitz). In their quest to “recover” an “ancient Polish peoples” these scouts set up camps and strove to attract local residents (adults and children) to bonfire sing-alongs, story telling and other informative, entertaining, and integrative activities. One of their goals was to attract local youth to join these scouting colonies. Another was to “de-Germanize” the premises they were in, including by

part. Sprawozdanie Wojewody, for April 1946, APK, 185/150, doc. 63. See also: Strauchold, *Ludność*, 100-11, 126-46.

¹⁸⁷ Sprawozdanie Wojewody, For July 1946, APK, 185/150, doc. 113ff. See also: Walczak, *Jerzy*, 187-8.

removing all public German signs and inscriptions, and “correcting” those who used Germanisms in their speech.¹⁸⁸

The reaction of locals to these youths reflects how in the formers’ experience the border changes of the last six years took on a collective form. Most of the scout leaders reported the native residents’ hesitation to join them, and of allowing their children to do so. In the areas of the former Polish-German border, mothers outright refused to allow sons and daughters to join the Scouting camps, fearing that the these uniformed youths had come to ship them to the USSR, just as only a year ago Soviet troops had done to their husbands.¹⁸⁹ Other locals quickly noticed the parallels between the activities of these Scouts and those of the Hitlerjugend during war, who likewise had been dispatched to win the “Volksdeutsche” over for the Third Reich. This too made them hesitant to join the Scouts, as, in light of a still very insecure border settlement, they remembered the social consequences the Nazis had imposed on those with an interwar era record of participating in Polish political groups, fearing that this scenario could very well repeat itself. The scouts were also resented as additional mouths to feed in this society of omnipresent shortages, which made locals fearful that they would steal their living supplies in the way the Soviets, Polish administrators, and newcomers had done.¹⁹⁰ It thus took much effort for the scouts to make inroads into these terrorized communities. They were successful in this respect only by distributing food, and by bringing over a local priest to hold an outside prayer service. According to one report of a supervisor of these scouts from the PZZ:

¹⁸⁸ PZZ reports from Sept. 1946 on these scouting activities in: APK 271 (PZZ)/ 6 (Akcja obozowa org. mlodziarzowych), doc. 5-13.

¹⁸⁹ PZZ Gliwice, To: PZZ Katowice, 19 Sept. 1946, *ibid.*, doc. 10.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, doc. 11.

The religiosity of the youth and the participation of a priest in the camp activities made the best impression on the religious autochthonic population and positively predisposed them to the scouts. Their comparison of Hitler Youth camps with those of our scouts must have worked to the benefit of the latter.¹⁹¹

Having clerics on their side allowed the scouts to earn the cooperation of locals, and thereby gave the PZZ grounds to boast that this effort had “awakened the consciousness of the autochthons.”¹⁹²

Ultimately, the regime’s border rallies, Germanophobic agitation, and “re-Polonization” courses, failed to achieve their main purpose: namely, to attract popular support for the PPR’s interests during the Referendum, and “coalition” during the Sejm Election. Both newcomers and natives voted for the oppositional PSL. Perhaps this may not have shocked the Peperowce as much as that several of the areas of the region also cast a majority “no” vote to the third question concerning the border. This de facto second “plebiscite” (after 1921), as the Church organ, the *Sunday Guest*,¹⁹³ once referred to it, thus resulted in a loss for Poland in some of the counties that this study had dealt with so far. Given the brutal treatment locals had endured at the hands of the Soviets and newcomers, in addition to the Polish state’s suppression of their native (German) language, it is hardly surprising that most of these areas were in the western parts of the region. They included the county of Gliwice (34% “yes”, 65.4% “no”), the county of Bytom (46.% “yes”, 53.5% “no”), the city of Bytom (47.8% “yes”, 52.2% “no”), and that of Strzelce (35.8% “yes”, 64% “no”).¹⁹⁴ As former Polish citizens, the native locals on the western side endured a different and milder experience at the hands of both Soviets and PPR officials, not least because they were more familiar with the Polish language and

¹⁹¹ Ibid., doc. 11.

¹⁹² Ibid., doc. 11.

¹⁹³ Quoted from: “Plebiscyt narodu Polskiego,” 120.

¹⁹⁴ These statistics from: Paczkowski, *Referendum*, 97, 105.

culture. Mostly likely this contributed to a positive vote to question three in all urban and rural areas of the industrial district—except one. Quite astoundingly, the inhabitants of the rural county of Rybnik, which had likewise been a part of the Voivodeship before the war, had voted “no” in almost as high of a frequency (62.5%) as the outskirts of Opole (63.4% “no”), one of Upper Silesia’s most western areas.¹⁹⁵ This not only reflected poorly on the PPR’s nationalization politics but also did so on that of Polish governments during the interwar era. In reaction to this slap in the face, after the electoral contests were over—and their results falsified—both the party and its aiding western affairs specialists turned away from persuasion and towards a stepped up use of terror, surveillance, and punishment. I now turn to address this last phase of “de-Germanization”/“re-Polonization.”

“Community Service”: popular mobilization for ethnic cleansing and the onset of Stalinism

By September of 1947, after the Potsdam Conference-sanctioned expulsion had for the most part already been completed, Zawadzki initiated a reinvigorated internal ethnic cleansing operation, the so-called “Struggle Against the Re-insurgence of Niemczyzna” (“*walka przeciw nawrotu niemczyzny*,” which I refer to as the “Struggle Operation”).¹⁹⁶ Confronted with a reluctantly cooperative and outright oppositional society, regime officials were unwilling to face up to their failures in creating a socially harmonious and politically active postwar regional society. Instead, the PPR, PZZ, and even low-level “re-Polonization” teachers, such as the Gliwice elementary school teacher

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹⁹⁶ Actually the names of the operation varied. They included “the struggle against niemczyzna,” and “the struggle against the surfacing of niemczyzna (*walka przeciw przejaw niemczyzny*)” which was the code name that the Insurgent’s Union used. Materiał dla prelegentów do odczytów Nr. 1, not dated (circa Sept. 1947), 273/31, doc. 11.

mentioned above, indulged in conspiracy theories of “crypto-Germans” and “German propaganda” to account for the shortcomings. The new operation was inherently based on these notions that a hidden “German element” existed and was operating in cooperation with the western allies to maintain “German influence,” to “Germanize” locals, and ultimately, to revise the border.¹⁹⁷

This “Struggle Operation” introduced no new measures of persecution. Rather it marked a mere reinvigoration and reorganization of policies that were being implemented since the spring of 1945, but that due to the regime’s focus on the expulsion and resettlements, on battling the (Polish) armed underground opposition, and on winning the electoral contests, had not been carried out to the regime’s liking. The latter complained that still in 1947 there was widespread use of “German,” relics of “Germandom” in private and public places, as well as individuals “behaving German,” or in other words in critical terms towards “democratic Poland.”¹⁹⁸ To get ready for this final showdown against “niemczyzna,” authorities created a new rubric of punishments that were to be imposed against “enemy” elements and violators, and even opened a new concentration camp for “crypto-Germans” and “traitors” in Gliwice in 1947. They mobilized all local communal administrators to form special committees called a “Citizen Control Committee” (*Obywatelski Komitet Kontroli*, or OKK) to screen, and re-screen, the backgrounds of suspected individuals, search, and re-search, private quarters in the search for “crypto-Germans” and all traits of “niemczyzna.” These OKKs were to incorporate foremost “good Poles,” particularly veteran insurgents and plebiscite activists, as well as

¹⁹⁷ See: Linek, “*Odniemczanie...*,” 74-99; and Linek “*Walka z Nawrotem Niemczyzny*,” in: Dziurok & Kaczmarek, eds., *Województwo*, 631-36.

¹⁹⁸ “*Zachowaniu się po niemiecku*” quoted from: Zawadzki, 19 August 1947, 185/4 (StP Bytom)/551, doc. 1ff.

members of the PZZ, PPR, and their satellite sociopolitical organizations and activist groups. Moreover, these groups were to work with the local organs of coercion and repression, the Ubecy and Milicja (police).¹⁹⁹

There is already a literature on aspects of the “Struggle Operation” in German, Polish, and English, which makes it unnecessary to spell out its various facets, including legal measures.²⁰⁰ Instead, here I focus on three of its elements that have received little or no scholarly attention: the relevance of the Operation to the wider pedagogical “re-Polonization” effort, how individuals at the grass-roots level who were targeted by the effort responded to it, and finally, how it facilitated the establishment of the Stalinist system. To some extent the “Struggle Operation” resembled the Nazi regime’s “Operation More Beautiful Silesia” and also the campaign against the use of “Polish” in wartime Upper Silesia. Fundamentally, the Polish campaign was also meant as part and parcel of forging the good national, the regime-serving “new man,” and a local homogeneous national community by way of mobilizing ordinary individuals to ethnic cleansing and repression against the “other.” According to official directives, the prime function of the “Struggle Operation” was to be:

Bringing the Silesian population to take an active part in the operation of cleansing the terrain of the truly German element and of real traitors. This common engagement in social work [współpraca społeczna] is to serve as a social-pedagogical means of shaping a national consciousness that does not recognize a middle ground between Polishness and niemczyzna. [Part of this consciousness is] the understanding that in societal life how an individual thinks and feels is not only important, but also how [he/she] acts and behaves.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ See: Linek, “Odniemczanie,” 74-99; ii. Linek “Walka z Nawrotem Niemczyzny,” in: Dziurok & Kaczmarek, eds., *Województwo*, 631-36; iii. Dziurok, “Odniemczanie i Repolonizacja,” in: same file, 587-91.

²⁰⁰ See sources in last note.

²⁰¹ Quoted from: Materiał dla prelegentów..., doc. 11ff.

In other words, by being indoctrinated with culturally racist ideology and mobilized to carry out violence against person and property, the local Upper Silesian was to learn how to become a full-fledged Pole, as well as an eager political activist. This policy certainly accorded with the PZZ's philosophy of raising a "new Pole" based on fanatical Germanophobia. The second official function of the "Struggle Operation" all the more echoed this philosophy: the raising of a "social community in the Silesian lands."²⁰²

This policy of using ethnic cleansing not just as a means of social de-construction but also re-construction had been promoted since 1945. In July of that year the governor of the county of Bytom ordered the mobilization of school youth to search private apartments and houses and collect books, periodicals, and anything else with German writing on it for destruction. He also ordered locals, including, as a punitive measure, "Germans" to work on removing any German language postings, and orientation signs, from public view. Those refusing to do so were to face eviction from their homes, arrest, and/or incarceration.²⁰³ The nature of these efforts and punishments hardly changed during mid-1947 to the end of 1949, the time span of the "Struggle Operation." As evident from Gliwice municipal government reports, managers and supervisors of apartment buildings and residential quarters were schooled on how private quarters were to be properly "de-Germanized." In turn, they were required to hold schooling sessions for this purpose for the residents of their block.²⁰⁴ Instruction on how to "de-Germanize" one's premises, and agitation calling for an end to "German" language use, attendance in "re-Polonization" courses, and the "Polonization" of personal names was also promoted

²⁰² "Wytworzenie wspólnoty społecznej na Ziemiach Śląskich," quoted from: *ibid.*, doc. 14-15.

²⁰³ All from: StP Bytom, "Dotyczące spolonizowania Śląska Opolskiego," 5 July 1945, APK 686/264, doc. 7.

²⁰⁴ Prezydent Miasta Gliwic, Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne za Luty 1948, 6 Mar. 1948, APK-Oddz. Gliwice (Gl) 160 (Zarząd Miejski Gliwice)/33, doc. 9.

at local rallies and assemblies organized by the communal government, the PZZ, the Insurgent Union, and other activist groups. One of the reasons for these public lessons was that the removal of “traits of niemczyzna” was a meticulous process: for example, even the German fine print had to be scraped off from underneath ash trays, and the signatures of “German names” had to be erased from works of art.²⁰⁵

By the time the “Struggle Operation” took its full-force, which was on the eve of Stalinism, the regime’s local administrators generally limited expressing shortcomings of policies in their situational reports in fear of being themselves blamed for them. Some exceptions to this include reports by the governors of the counties of Gliwice, and to the immediate west of this area, that of Strzelce. These reflect what one could expect, that people were not pleased to have their private quarters searched, their personal belongings tampered with, altered, and in the case of any German literature, requisitioned and most often destroyed. In the words of one OKK agent: “during [our] visit the people demonstrate fear and lack of will. [And] even though it is passive, their resistance nevertheless significantly slows down [our] work.”²⁰⁶ This hesitant and unwilling cooperation marked a common attitude on the part of those who had their homes searched.²⁰⁷ Many also prepared themselves accordingly for a possible inspection in advance, including by hiding books, and other belongings that were central targets for

²⁰⁵ See: Linek, “*Odnieranie*,” 89-92.

²⁰⁶ Quoted from: Protokół w sprawie komisijnego usuwania śladów niemczyzny, Leśnica, 13 May 1948, APO 179 (Starostwo Powiatowe Stzelce)/114, doc. 39.

²⁰⁷ In Powiat Strzelce (Strzelce county) alone the local authorities of OKK’s of various localities noted this, including Ujazd, Leśnica, Gogolin II, Zawadzkie, and Kielcza: APO 179/114, doc. 5, 13, 32-33, 39, 83. The city council of Gliwice also complained about passivity and opposition from the locals. Also: Prezydent Miasta Gliwic, Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne za Luty 1948...., doc. 9.

confiscation and manipulation.²⁰⁸ Some search commission agents thus reported finding more “traits of Germandom” upon coming in for an unexpected second searching of the same home than they had during the first one.²⁰⁹ According to the Strzelce governor’s reports, an even greater problem than this passive attitude among native locals was an even more extensive lack of engagement among newcomers.²¹⁰ No only this, but according to one local administrator, newcomers shared their complaints against the Polish government’s “alliance with the USSR” and “democracy” in general with native locals, thus fueling the latter’s opposition to state officials.²¹¹ Whereas most official reports underlined hatred and conflict between native Upper Silesians and migrant or expellee newcomers, these official accounts of a common front of opposition to the regime on the part of both these groups also point out that in some cases the antagonism had its limits.

In some cases house searches spurred open conflict between locals and the commissioners. This is evident in the reports of Strzelce county. The following is an excerpt of one commissioner’s report on the second search of a house in the locality of Leśnica, which was meant to make sure that the resident had made the appropriate removals demanded by the previous visit:

“[The resident] did not allow me to look at anything, telling me that we have to put an end to this, having some mayor or administrator walk around and search your apartment. I’m a free citizen, have finally awaited the coming of free democratic Poland, and want to feel free inside my own home. ...Only the public prosecutor can allow an official to inspect my home.”²¹²

²⁰⁸ Sources: Zarząd Gminy Gogolin II, To: Starostwo Powiatowe (StP) Strzelce (Strz.), 23 Nov. 1947, APO 179/114, doc. 39; and: Zarz. Gminy Kielscza, To StP Strz., 22 Nov. 1947, same file, doc. 31. Bernard Linek also mentions that this was going on in *Polityka*, 372.

²⁰⁹ Zarząd Gminy Kielcza, 10 Dec. 1947, To: StP Strzelce, 10 Dec. 1947, *ibid.*, doc. 13.

²¹⁰ Wojt Gminy Gogolin II, to: StP Strzelce, 30 Oct. 1947, *ibid.*, doc. 19.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, doc. 19.

²¹² Quoted from: Protokół w sprawie..., APO 179/114, doc. 39.

This reflects that some locals were hardly used to intrusion of this nature into their private quarters even as former citizens of the Third Reich. Other reports also point this out. For example, one inspector pointed out that after he was told to remove the German writings on his paintings he said “during German times I had paintings with Polish inscriptions and the Germans did not bother me, but you (which means Poles) are making a whole needless comedy about it.”²¹³ According to another report from an inspection at the locality of Zawadzkie, one of the residents said the following: “the Germans also did all this, but did not make us get rid of our Polish language prayer books in any way, but the current commission insists that we have to turn over our German books to the local administration bureau.”²¹⁴ In one respect, these reports demonstrated the discontent the regime’s confiscation of beloved personal items, including sacred materials, caused. In another respect, they exemplified how locals reacted to what was going on based on their collective experience of dealing with social engineering states, and thus compared “the Poles” to “the Germans.”

To summarize some of the major results of the “Struggle Operation” from the regime’s standpoint, 1,447 people had been fined for the “harmful use of the German language” in the entire Voivodeship (indeed, mainly in western Upper Silesia) by 1 January 1948.²¹⁵ In the city of Gliwice 296 of these had been punished by that time, and at least another 900 by October of the year.²¹⁶ A fine of up to 30,000 złotych²¹⁷ was

²¹³ Quoted from: Zarz. Gminy Kielcza Zędownice, To: Zarz. Gminy Kielczy, 22 Nov. 1947, APO 179/114, doc. 30.

²¹⁴ Komisja Obywatelska do walki z niemczyzną, gm. Zawadzkie, Protokół, 9 Dec. 1947, *ibid.*, doc. 83.

²¹⁵ This statistic from: “Dane Statystyczne z akcji zwalczania przejawów niemczyźnych według stanu na 1 I 1948, APK 185 (Starostwo Powiatowe Bytom)/552, doc. 1.

²¹⁶ This statistic from tabulating all the individuals punished according to the municipal authority’s situational reports for this time period in file: APK-Oddz. Gl., 160 (ZM/MRN Gliwice)/31.

²¹⁷ This was the maximum fine. See: Linek, “Weryfikacja,” 633.

perhaps the easiest form of punishment compared to some of the others. The most severe was incarceration at the concentration camp in Gliwice, which served both as a corrections institution and a temporary holding ground for those who were designated for eventual expulsion. From 1947, when the facility opened to the end of 1948, just before it was closed, 5,000 individuals had been incarcerated.²¹⁸ Of the close to 3,000 incarcerated in 1947, 2,200 had their temporary citizenships pulled and were expelled to Germany.²¹⁹

All this terror also caused local natives to turn complacent and to mimic the behavior that the regime required of them. Thus, by 1948-9, local administrators reported the disappearance of “German” language use in public, as well as all the vast majority of visible symbols of “niemczyzna,” even German inscriptions.²²⁰ Fined and harassed by officials for using “German,” and faced with the threat of expropriation and incarceration, hundreds of people also started to step into the “re-Polonization” classroom.²²¹ According to reports from the governor of Gliwice county, among the new participants in lessons on how to be “Polish” were even those who had kept themselves in hiding since the war ended.²²² Since none of these officials expressed any satisfaction with regard to participant behavior during the lessons, one could well assume that most only attended as a form of passive compliance. In this sense, they did what the majority had been doing all along—focusing on improving their Polish language skills so as to be able to imitate being a “good Pole” and thereby be able to avoid persecution. There were also those who found an alternative way of doing this, one which would allow them to avoid being an

²¹⁸ Ibid., 635.

²¹⁹ Diurok, “Odniemczanie,” 587.

²²⁰ See: Linek, „Weryfikacja,” 636;

²²¹ Examples in: i. Zarz. Miejski Gliwice, sprawozdania sytuacyjne (spr. syt.), for Apr. 1947, APK-Oddz. Gl., 160/31, doc. 21, and 30, 41. ii. Zarząd Miejski Gliwice, spr. syt., for May 1947, same, 160/33, doc. 10. And in this file set: doc. 14, 19, 38. There were also reports of this in the county of Strzelce: Zarząd Miejski Ujazd, To Starowsto Powiatowe Strzelce, APO 179.114, 9 Dec. 1947, doc. 82.

²²² Zarz. Miejski Gliwice, spr. syt., for May 1948, APK-Oddz. Gl. 160/33, doc. 23.

object of political indoctrination: taking private language instruction. According to the county administrator of Gliwice, driven “by fear of losing their temporary citizenships, some finally started to demonstrate some connection to Poland after three years” by studying Polish on their own.²²³ And so, by September 1948, the Gliwice county governor reported that, finally, most individuals now spoke Polish in his area of jurisdiction. One would think that he would have been as pleased as that scout leader serving in western Upper Silesia who took the concessive compliance of the population as a sign of their “awakened national consciousness.” However, this older and more experienced administrator was not as gullible, and understood well that locals had a tendency of merely mimicking the cultural behavior expected of them by the governors. In this sense, ironically, he found the increased local “interest” in language learning to be more of problem than a positive attribute. In his words, “those who had learned Polish in the last three years now have a good way to disguise themselves”—or in other words, to hide their true identity and convictions.²²⁴

At the end of the “National Road to Communism”

Ultimately, the “Struggle Against the Re-insurgence of Niemczyzna” worked to the advantage of the PPR. Following the Sejm Elections, the party strove to entrench and develop an ever more totalitarian dictatorship, a quest certainly benefited by the terror, violence, surveillance, and intrusiveness of this operation. With its façade of non-partisan and all-national cause, (since 1945) the search for “crypto-Germans” gave the PPR legitimate grounds of developing a police and surveillance state, intruding into the private sphere and “cleansing” the ranks of public institutions of its “unwanted.” Rapidly on the

²²³ Zarz. Miejski, Spr. Syt., for Apr. 1948, *ibid.*, doc. 19.

²²⁴ Quoted from: Zarz. Miejski Gliwice, Spr. Syt., to: Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski (UWŚI), 30 Sept. 1948, *ibid.*, doc. 50.

way to establishing the Stalinist order, in 1948 local-level regime officials were combining house and store searches for “elements of niemczyzna” with those for goods being hoarded for sales as part and parcel of the official (Poland-wide) “war on speculation,” or in other words, free enterprise. In the same regard, Communist Party agents were now also “cleansing” their party ranks not only of “crypto-Germans” but also of “class enemies,” “drunkards,” those “insubordinate to party discipline,” the “socially immoral,” and those who “abused party membership for personal gain and careerism.”²²⁵ In addition to legitimating this hunt for the socially and politically “unwanted,” the PPR’s mandate to “de-Germanize” allowed the regime to justifiably create the kind of atmosphere that the Stalinist system thrived in: one of terror, insecurity, and capricious violence/persecution on the part of the state against society.

In 1947 the PPR used the “niemczyzna” conspiracy myth as a weapon to put a permanent end to its limited and conditional “friendship” with the Church. Still in 1946, the PZZ regarded the latter as an indispensable tool of nationally integrating the post-German lands. In this sense, in mid-August of 1946, Ziętek participated in the largest pilgrimages of the time to Piekary Śląskie (Deutsche Piekar) since the war ended, one of 250,000 participants, led by Bishop Adamski.²²⁶ That same year the Strzelce county chapter of the PZZ organized a pilgrimage for 1,200 locals to central Poland’s main site for religious worship, Częstochwa, claiming that this had “deepened their trust to

²²⁵ The Gliwice municipal government’s report for Sept. 1948 demonstrates that officials searching private homes for “traits of niemczyzna” and also used the occasion to look for hidden goods. Indeed, private apartment searches had always been more than just searches for material traits of the “other.” They were an occasion for political and cultural screening of the individual: i.e. to find out whether she/he were loyal to “democratic Poland,” whether she/he spoke Polish, and whether she/he were hiding any “Germans” trying to resist expulsion. This report also denotes that the party was cleansing its ranks of the un-trusted, particularly those of the older, or German, generation. Source: *ibid.*, doc. 50. Also: APK-oddz. Gl. 160/21, doc. 36, and: “Protokół w sprawie...” APO 179/115, doc. 40.

²²⁶ Sprawozdanie Sytuacyjne za 21 VII. – 20 VIII. 1946, APK 1430 (Starostwo Powiatowe Tarnowskie Góry)/5, 64ff. See also: Waclaw, *Jerzy*, 197; Grajewski, *Wygnanie*, 36.

Poland's government" and also "recovered countless of Polish hearts" for the nation.²²⁷ Only one year later, the Peperowce and Catholic clerics were in heated fall-out over various issues, including the second group's opposition to the secularization of schools and the inclusion of school children in the communist "Union of Polish Youth" (ZMP), as well as similar groups, to get them away from religious influence.²²⁸ By the end of that year, the Peperowce and PZZ launched a propaganda campaign against Adamski for his having encouraged locals to sign up for the Deutsche Volksliste during the war.²²⁹ What only a year prior was still looked on by regime officials as a heroic effort to prevent local society from being expelled by the Nazi regime and thus keeping the region "Polish" was now officially represented as treasonous "Germanization." Just as its agents used the Germanophobic cultural racism in an effort to besmirch high-ranking clerics, they also used the "struggle against niemczyzna" to persecute regionally native local priests, nuns, and monks, and to fill clerical posts with newcomer (pro-regime) "patriotic priests."²³⁰ All this demonstrates how in Upper Silesia (just like in other parts of the NWT), the de-construction part of the territorial appropriation program served as a catalyst for the establishment of the Stalinist order.

Not just this component, but also the re-constructive one worked in the PPR's favor in this regard. By 1949, "re-Polonization" courses continued to be taught, although they were increasingly fused with the now officially *communist* (PZPR) party-state's stepped-up pet project, the "Struggle against Illiteracy" campaign. It's important to note

²²⁷ Quoted from: Starostwo Powiatowe Strzelce, Spr. Syt. za 21. Sept. – 20., Oct. 1946, APO 179/12, doc. 225-6.

²²⁸ Grajewski, *Wygnanie*, 49-51.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-61.

²³⁰ Piotr Madajczyk, "System władzy na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1956," in: Bernard Linek, Adam Dziurok, Krzysztof Tarki, eds., *Stalinizm i rok 1956 na Górnym Śląsku* (Katowice-Opole-Kraków 2007) 51; and Adam Dziurok, "Władze komunistyczne wobec Kościoła katolickiego w diecezji katowickiej," in same collection, 125-38.

that since up to the postwar period Upper Silesia's residents were almost entirely literate. Illiteracy thus became a factor in the region only as a result of immigration from the central and formerly eastern parts of the nation.²³¹ In 1949 the government mobilized all the region's major political activist groups, labor, youth, and teachers' organizations, to record all illiterates living in the region so they could be registered for literacy courses. Among many officials *literacy* was defined in nationalist terms – meaning *Polish-language* literacy. These agents thus recorded 45,000 literate Upper Silesians as “illiterates” for not having a “sufficient” command of Polish.²³² Recording agents from outside the region used their authority as a weapon against natives in the still heated conflict between newcomers and Upper Silesians. As a result, some Upper Silesians were placed on the “illiterate” register out of pure spite.²³³ In places where separate “re-Polonization” courses were not, or no longer, held, natives labeled “illiterate” had to sit in literacy courses along with their actually illiterate neighbors.²³⁴ For government officials, the fusion of “re-Polonization” and literacy courses made sense, since what really mattered to them was that these function as forums for communist propaganda. Coordinators of the “Struggle Against Illiteracy” emphasized that they were not seeking only to combat “literary-,” but also “political illiteracy,” proceeding to kill the two birds with one stone by using textbooks filled with party-line (communist) ideology.²³⁵ The already existing treatment of non-Polish speaking Upper Silesians as *de facto* “illiterates”

²³¹ „Uwagi o realizacji likwidacji analfabetyzmu na terenie miasta i powiatu Opola, 1949,” APO, 224/4374, doc. 56; also: Strauchold, *Polska Ludność*, 107.

²³² KOS-Śl. do Ministerstwa..., doc. 12.

²³³ Natives participating in the recording also did the same to newcomers: „uwagi o realizacji...,” doc. 56.

²³⁴ Ibid., doc. 56.

²³⁵ According to a report on the „Walka z Analfabetyzmem:” „akcja obejmowała nie tylko likwidację analfabetyzmu literowego ale i politycznego.” Quoted from „Osiągnięcia Oświaty Dorosłych w Woj. Katowickim,” circa early April 1949, APK, 186/411, doc. 1. See also textbook: Joanna Landy-Brzezińska et al., *Na Trasie: Pierwsze Czytanki dla Dorosłych*, (Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1949).

was made official in 1952 when “re-Polonization courses” were formally fused with the “Struggle against Illiteracy” and renamed “readership courses” (*kursy czytelnicze*).²³⁶ In this sense, the regime had officially abandoned the project of forging a nationalized “new Pole” based on the borderland native—a catalyst of the regime’s “national road” to power—for that of a regionally-blind, class-oriented, *homo-sovieticus*.

The abandonment of nationalism, national-regionalism, and the “Recovered Territories” project, at the end of the forties marked a core aspect of the Stalinist turn. In the latter’s last phase, the regime’s main agents of the territorial appropriation project likewise fell victim to the totalitarian state apparatus that they had worked to construct and legitimate. 1948-50 marked the deposition of Gomułka, the liquidation of all “western affairs” institutions along with the PZZ, and the ostracizing of the bulk of the national class of elites that had supported the Communist Party, the western territories specialists, from public life. Now on a strictly nationally-centrist and regionally-blind path to (soviet) “socialism,” the regime severely limited the public promotion of the cultural politics of “recovering” contested territories.²³⁷ As the hotbed of this revanchist national-regionalism, Katowice became a prime target of this politics of Stalinist centralism. This meant the liquidation of the Insurgent Union as a self-standing organization, and the sociopolitical out-casting of some of its high-ranking members, such as Arka Bożek. The most symbolic act of this attempt to erase a more than three-decade old heritage of a German-Polish revanchist contest was the official renaming of Katowice to Stalinogrod in 1953. To make the meaning of this act clear, the party *compelled* one of the most symbolic figures of the interwar nationalist “cold war” over

²³⁶ See: Kędryna, „Oświata Dorosłych,” 436.

²³⁷ See: Strauchold, *Myśl*, 327-372; Curp, *A Clean*, 80-106.

Upper Silesia, the Grażyńskiite national-regionalist novelist, Gustav Morcinek, to announce this name change. With various large buildings built in “social realist” architectural style, including one right inside the “Katowice Forum,” where Grażyński’s “Silesian Museum” building stood before it had been dismantled by the Nazis, Stalinogrod now officially symbolized the heartland of Poland’s proletarian.²³⁸

This official remaking of the region’s identity was not just meant to efface its heritage of national-regionalism but also of Upper Silesian (non-national) regionalism/localism. Aiming to forcefully assimilate all groups with equal measure, the regime encountered massive discontent from all of them, including Jews, newcomers, and natives. In the end, the “nationalist communist” utopian project of creating a harmonic homogenous society had failed. Conflicts between newcomers and natives and massive discontent about the political and socioeconomic order continued to plague the Industrial District and the less industrial western parts of the region for many decades to come.²³⁹ Moreover, widespread insecurity about the permanence of the Oder-Neisse Line marked another obstacle to the official dream of rooting (and re-rooting) all social groups in the region. Its detrimental effects, including that the population refrained from investing their labor and resources in the region’s socioeconomic development, was so serious that state officials coined a formal name for it: the “psychosis of temporariness” (*psychoza tymczasowości*).²⁴⁰ The rise of an independent, and officially revanchist (vis-à-vis the Oder-Neisse Line), Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 all the more exacerbated this

²³⁸ See: Grzegorz Bębik, „‘Stalinizacja’ jako zawłaszczenie sfery symbolicznej (na przykładzie Katowic, 1945-1956),” in: Tarki, Linek, Dziurok, eds., *Stalinizm*, 237-58.

²³⁹ For a study of group social relations in Upper Silesia during the postwar era, see: Ther, *Deutsche*; Eugeniusz Kłócek, *"Swoi" i "obcy" na Górnym Śląsku od 1945 roku: środowisko miejskie* (Wrocław, 1994).

²⁴⁰ Sprawozdanie Wojewody, For May 1948, AAN, 199 (Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej)/117, 11ff.

omnipresent state of waiting things out. As the conflict between the western Allies and USSR heated, newcomers and natives began to prepare for a WWII and a return to their lost homelands—in the case of the second group via the region’s reincorporation into Germany.²⁴¹ Even as both groups were dissatisfied with the material and political state of the new society, natives were much more hopeful of a border redrawing, while their high Polish neighbors, more fearful of the consequences of falling victim to a subsequent ethnic cleansing campaign orchestrated by a German government.

As the largest group of this society, and also a prime target of re-assimilation oriented politics since the end of the war, Upper Silesians were largely alienated from their new nation by 1950. Denied an official venue to express their discontent, they did so by staying aloof from politics, reverting to using the German language, and placing their hopes in the unrelenting rumors of border revision.²⁴² The most pivotal mark of Poland’s failure to “recover” this population for the nation was the well-known mass exodus of 55,563 individuals to (mostly West) Germany from the Voivodeship Katowice after the end of Stalinism in 1956, when this was briefly possible.²⁴³ This emigration was not necessarily a true mark of a German national consciousness on their part as it was an act of protest and search of a better life. Indeed, it was an option that the likewise largely dissatisfied rest of society would have taken if they had the chance. For example, in reaction to postwar pogroms and to official forced assimilation policies, around 22,400 Jews emigrated from Upper Silesia and the Dabrower Basin between the beginning of

²⁴¹ Zarząd Miejski Gl., to: Urząd Woj. Śląsko-Dąbrowski, Kat., spr. syt., 30 Sept. 1948, APK 160/31, doc. 50.

²⁴² Ibid., doc. 50.

²⁴³ See: Michał Lis, *Ludność Rodzima na Śląsku Opolskim Po II Wojnie Światowej (1945-1993)* (Opole 1993) 44. Another 47,185 had emigrated from Woj. Opolskie (est. 1950), where the county of Strzelce was now to be found.

1946 and mid-1949.²⁴⁴ Thus, after years of treatment as second-class citizens, being the objects of a Polish-German transnational political culture of “recovering” people and territory finally brought at least tens of thousands of native Upper Silesians some social advantage over their high national counterparts.

Conclusion

After WWII, Dmowskian nationalists and former Grażyńskiites entered into collaboration with the PPR, and thereby were allowed to realize one of the main goals of all their work thus far: the appropriation of western Upper Silesia. Long-standing narratives, discourses, and forms of their public broadcasting that had been developed during the course of the Polish-German “cold war” over the region during the interwar era now served as a fundamental aspect of ethnic cleansing. Revanchist border rallies, a culturally racist discourse of “niemczyzna,” as well as fantasies of “recovering” and “liberating” an age-old territory and peoples and creating an ethnically homogenous territorial bulwark against Germany all marked the legitimating symbolic politics behind a variegated social engineering effort. In the service of the latter, cultural politics was based on conceptualizing and segregating the “German” from the “Polish” and on collectively demonizing and trying to force an excision of the former—including from the *minds* of Western Upper Silesia’s natives. The “constructive” program of “public enlightenment” that I have examined in this chapter went hand-in-hand with the outwardly repressive and terror-ridden campaign to clear the landscape of “niemczyzna” and “crypto-Germans.” It was legitimated by a civilizing discourse that was also an inheritance from the interwar era, and had had its echo as a legitimating ideology of Nazi

²⁴⁴ In mid-1949, there were 6,446 Jews in Upper Silesia, most in Katowice (1,597), and Bytom (1,144). See: Kaczmarek & Dziurok, *Województwo*, 521-22.

social engineering during the war. In its essence, this discourse depicted Upper Silesians as historical “victims,” and their regional and Germanophile identities as marks of “false consciousness.” It thus legitimated a politics aimed to “cleanse” local landscapes and consciousness of marks of unwanted identities—“Germandom” and regionalisms/localisms alike. In the end, this radical project of engineering this utopian society failed miserably, resulting in widespread social conflict, discontent, alienation, and eventually mass flight from the bold “westernized Poland,” and the regime responsible for gardening it.

Even as it did not succeed in realizing its own goals, the revanchist project nevertheless worked in terms of its instrumental use on the part of the Communist Party. In staging border rallies, and promoting fortress mentality discourses, party leaders were able to flank themselves with high ranking clerics and an established intellectual class of elites, and in this sense represent themselves as a “national Polish movement.” Although this cooperation with the Church was a shaky and condition-based one, the all-round popular revanchist cause on which it was based gave the PPR its one token of legitimacy—as the nationwide majority “yes” to the NWT during the “People’s Referendum” demonstrated. With thousands of patriotic activists and professionals coming into the region after the war to “re-Polonize” it, this fantasy of making “recoveries” also gave the PPR a badly needed supporting elite—even if the latter was inherently anti-communist. Moreover, the mandate to remake society in Upper Silesia via force and ideologizing fortified the regime’s role of social engineer, and gave it the pretext for the establishment of an intrusive police state, and “public enlightenment” apparatus. Even as they did not succeed in creating their bold new society, the activists

and schooling institutions of “re-Polonization” marked the early vehicles for the establishing of the new political order in the postwar period on a nationalist basis. This is why to reestablish their image, after Stalinism, regime leaders once again turned to this German-Polish political culture of celebrating contested borderlands as those that “were, are, and remain ours.”

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In September of 1939, Upper Silesia entered an over two-decade long whirlwind of radical processes of nation-state changing. The two states that led this venture, the German Nazi and Polish communist regimes, sought to engineer a new social order via expulsion, resettlement, acculturation—and in the case of the first government, also genocide. After an interwar era of revanchist conflict, when each side made claims to the contested territory on grounds of the latter being a territory of “its” people, culture, and history, first the German (1939-45) and then Polish nationalists (1945-50) set out to promote a final solution to the border question. The war liberated both these camps from the kinds of restraints they had been subject to by international law, and also from fear of retaliation from their opponents, during 1922-39. It also made it easier for each to shed a light of justice on painting the national/ethnic “other” that they recognized at the local level in Upper Silesia in exclusivist culturally racist guise, and to argue for the uncompromising need of its permanent removal. In this region the labor needs of industry, as well as difficulty of differentiating between “Pole” and “German” prevented expulsion schemes from being fully realized.

Using their long-standing professionals devoted to the territorial issue to aid in this venture, both the Nazis and Polish “nationalist communists” came up with elaborate systems of drawing a “clear cut” break between nationalities both among the population and within local culture. The fantastic premises they were based on—particularly the assumption that a natural border of this sort actually existed—caused the dismal failure of both of these social engineering projects. One important factor to note is the similarity

between these ventures. Driven in large part by an idealism of “recovering” “their” ancient homeland and people, both these regimes deemed the vast majority of the population to be redeemable for the nation after they had been schooled in how to talk and behave like model citizens. The borderland activists, including those filling the ranks of the German Union of the German East (BDO), and the Polish Western Union (PZZ), worked out a whole pedagogical program geared towards making these so-called “*Volksdeutsche*”/“autochthons” into native speakers of the high national languages, fanatical haters of the national/ethnic “other,” and “frontier fighters” for a homogenous society. “Re-Germanization” and “re-Polonization,” the terms by which the Germans and Poles called their borderland programs of “public enlightenment” (*Volksbildung/oświata dorosłych*) respectively, were purposely misleading. Under the seemingly non-partisan and all-national façade of “recovering” “lost” souls, these pedagogical efforts actually served as means by which the regimes sought to inculcate the minds of locals with their own Nazi or communist ideologies. These governments were not as much interested in raising just Polish or German citizens as they were in shaping their own respective party-supporting “new man.” Even as many from among them did not begin their careers as devotees to the movements of their respective regimes, the local *Ostforscher* and “western thought” (“western research”) circles of professionals and activists found common cause in this part revanchist and part ideologically indoctrinating mission. This irony was much greater within the postwar Polish political camp, as the open and active support of onetime devoted anti-communist nationalists now became the regime’s token claim to national legitimacy in the country.

The political instrumentalization of these shaping programs was just a microcosm of a similar function of the entire war and postwar politics of territorial annexation. In working to represent the de facto colonial project of both regimes as “recoveries” of a “stolen” land and peoples that was timelessly and eternally theirs, the cultural-political agents of the Nazis (1939-45) and communists (1945-50) gave these the façade of justice, legitimacy, and patriotic mandate. In this sense, the Nazi regime initially prompted the building of its European-wide empire under the guise of “reuniting” Ostoberschlesien (and the Ostgebiete) with its “rightful motherland,” the German nation. In the same regard, it launched a war against its ideological enemies, Poles and non-national Upper Silesian culture, including Slavic dialect speaking and Catholic religiosity, under the guise of combating “Polishness.” To the postwar Polish “nationalist communist” regime, the political capital of the Allied-approved project to annex and ethnically cleanse the western part of the region was of even more value. “Reuniting” Śląsk Opolski (and the NWT) with its “motherland” marked a discourse denoting the only politics of the unpopular communist regime that carried nation-wide support. The ridding of this and other “Recovered Territories” of “Germandom” (*niemczyzna*) gave the party the support of a national intelligentsia, a mandate to establish its terror and indoctrination apparatus in these areas, and an opportunity to use it not just against the ethnic and cultural, but also the political foe.

My aim in this dissertation was not to offer a comprehensive study of German and Polish cultural politics in Upper Silesia, which far superseded the features of this domain that I have examined. The partition of the border in 1922 stepped up efforts by Polish and German regional studies societies to develop national-regional traditions as a way of

tying the whole region to its respective nations in narratives, symbols, and traditions. These societies included state-supported academic and cultural institutions on each national camp's own, and minority cultural organizations on its neighbor's side of the border. On the German side, these societies and the Heimatkunde and VVHO circle staffing them developed during the Weimar era, and—after being subject to Nazi Gleichschaltung measures—formed the regional network of Ostforschung. In Poland, they were the pivotal pet project of Michał Grażyński, in important respects tying the ZOKZ/PZZ circles of his main supporters to his opponents based on a commonly recognized need to “re-Polonize” the region as a way of keeping German revanchism at bay. After WWII, these many agents of these circles entered the new network of “western thought” institutions and PZZ activist circles that were subject to the scrutiny of the PPR.

This study has focused on aspects of Polish and German national-regionalism that carried a revanchist message. Part of my thesis has been that these official traditions developed as part of an interactive, albeit conflict-ridden, dialogue of the transnational Polish-German feud over this contested borderland. The discourses, symbols, and showcases that marked the important content of the official regional traditions were thus inherently trans-nationally entangled and interwoven. I started my analysis with a focus on official “historical culture” at this border, marked by the “duel of the presidents” (October 1927 and September 1928) who represented the essentialist narratives of two concepts of “Upper Silesian Peoples”—the “Lud Śląski” and “Oberschlesische Volk”—and symbolized them in border area statues and printed caricatures. For all the difference in content that these mythical ethnic schemas carried, they were quite similar in form: both sought to depict a cultural border in this borderless region by symbolically denying

the national neighbor's heritage and influence on the landscape and populace in past and present. Instead, they represented the "other" as fiend and intruder, and its cultural traits as merely superficial. Not to overlook by either party were the minority groups that identified/sympathized with the neighboring nationality on each side of the border. Both the German and Polish narratives dismissed this identity of the "other's" respective minority group as a state of "false consciousness" and a trait of the neighbor's manipulative nationalization politics. This is by no means to say that these ethnic schemas were carbon copies of one another: stemming from Dmowskian positivist ethno-linguistic ideology, the Grazyńskiite narrative was more essentialist, belligerent, and exclusivist than the more civic-nationalist German Catholic center's counterpart, which at least recognized the region's bilingual, Slavic, and strongly regionalist heritage.

The continuation of the Polish-German struggle to retain and to regain the borderland marked an inherent theme of the "duel of the presidents." The contest of border rallies this event was part of, which developed during the course of the twenties and early thirties also served as a basic means to fuel this "cold war" over the region. While the German Centrist government unabatedly used its annual "Plebiscite Day" to make open demands for the "return" of the Polish part of the region, the Polish side used its "Third of May" as an occasion for veteran insurgents to show off their aggressive military prowess and thereby also raise fears of an impending Polish invasion of the German one. These revisionist and warmongering spectacles fueled what I have referred to as fortress mentalities on both sides of the border during the early interwar era. During their visit, both national presidents called for a limit to partisan politics, for unity in the promotion of work and progress in the borderland, and also, ever readiness for its defense

in arms against the neighbor's aggression, if necessary. Moreover, premises guiding the waging of this "cold war" were also brought to public ear. These included the assertion that the objective promotion of "progress"—including "cultural uplift," and greater homogeneity along national lines (or at least a stronger border against the influence of the "other")—marked a nation's right to the possession of this borderland.

In the course of the 1930s, these ideas stood behind a contest to acculturate the Industrial District. Subject to restraints on the use of force and repression by international law, the competing factions had cultural politics as one of their most valuable weapons in this revanchist feud. Pressured by the neighbor's accusation of having stolen an age-old land of Kultur, the Silesian Sanacja regime hurriedly worked to turn its border area into a façade of Poland's cultural superiority and advancement. Accompanied by a transnational discourse that denied the neighbor credit in achievement, and even worse, accused it of ruining the landscape, a contest of symbolic building took place. Monumental and high-rise structures, places of national-regional memory, and avant-garde modernist architecture, marked the products of this race to demonstrate which side is more entitled to the region via its track record as carrier of culture. As builders, architects, and planners worked one front of this "cold war," archeologists, folklorists, and other specialists, "searched" for their nation's "roots" in the ancient past and also in its local languages, folk music, costumes, dancing, and historical architecture. The work of professionals in this regard was not limited to forging official "regional knowledge" but to representing these elements as part and parcel of Polish and German national-regionalisms to the local, national, and international communities. The aspects of this effort that I focused on included campaigns to standardize the local dialects along national lines through radio

programs, published folk song collections, folkloric performances, and more traditional publications. The building of tourist sites around transplanted historical architectural relics, and the mobilization of folk costume wearers, sometimes singers and dancers, at revanchist rallies, all functioned to symbolically tie the region, its customs, and “rooted” population, to the nation and the politics of its government. All of this standardization went hand-in-hand with the first campaigns to culturally homogenize (remove all traits of the “other”) the borderland by way of the persecution and social marginalization of minority groups by the Polish Sanacja and German Nazi regime.

The regimes dominating Upper Silesia during the war and postwar eras drew on these official regional traditions and continued to develop them. Although the struggle over the border had formally ended by the way of the military defeat of the neighbor, the agents of the German Nazi (during 1939-45) and Polish “nationalist communist” regimes (during 1945-50) insisted that the bilateral national struggle over the border continued. To help them fuel this notion of ongoing conflict, they turned to the already familiar culturally racist discourses of the “other” as well as narratives of Upper Silesian ethnicity. Although these were altered to heroize the regimes promoting them, and to legitimate the most radical acts of ethnic cleansing in the region, many essential principles remained. For one, the interwar era ethnic narratives of the “Oberschlesische Volk” (now Mensch, in the case of the German agents of the Nazis) and of the “Lud Śląski” (in the case of the Polish aids of the communists) maintained the symbolic borders they mapped between the “Polish” and “German” features of the region. Moreover, other notions of the interwar era features of these also remained and were now radicalized: “false consciousness” and historical “victimhood” on the part of the “Upper Silesians peoples,”

as well as the need for the state to promote “cultural uplifting” in the borderland. I have argued that the Nazi-German wartime and Polish “nationalist communist” postwar versions of these discourses marked each state’s legitimating discourse to civilize (socialize) the regional native population along national and politically ideological lines.

The post-September 1939 era, including the war and immediate postwar periods, also marked a continuation of border rallies and their function as a basic forum for the discourses behind the new internal revanchist “wars”—the mission to cleanse the region of cultural diversity. Moreover, aided by some of the experts who promoted these tasks during the interwar era, the Nazis and “nationalist communists” continued the mission of “inventing” suitable folkloric traditions, promoting folklore in national guise, and standardizing—or trying to altogether to stamp out—the local dialects. Each was forced to confront the symbolic and official cultural landscape left behind by the other, and each was severely limited by the means it had to alter this. A process of recycling, and relabeling, the revanchist cultural-political capital of the national/ethnic “other” thus went on. Nazis and “nationalist communists” used each other’s places of national memory to hold rallies, even as these had originally been built to demonize the nationality that each regime was representing and legitimate the removal of its traces and memory. Having hardly any means beyond this to convince them that they were living in an entirely new polity, both regimes strove to mobilize the masses to take part in this process of cultural ethnic cleansing. All of this demonstrates that even during the war and postwar eras, the acculturation politics of the regimes continued to be significantly transnationally interwoven and inherently similar to one another.

Throughout the period of study, the Polish and German official national-regionalisms functioned not just as weapons against the neighbor across the border and its political allies from among the minority groups. They were also tools of strives on the part of governments to weaken strictly regional bonds and to strengthen national ones among the Upper Silesian population. Although the phenomenon of “national indifference” has not been the prime subject of this study, I have tried to incorporate popular reception of state policy whenever possible since the latter’s shape and fate was contingent upon this. The Polish Sanacja, National Socialists, and “nationalist communist” regimes alienated locals from their respective nationalization mission. There were good reasons for this: each episode of territorial appropriation examined was accompanied with the in-migration of high national elites against which a class and cultural conflict developed between these newcomers and the native inhabitants of the region. To this last group, these elites became the face of the violent, repressive, and intolerant policies of each regime (Sanacja, Nazi, “national communist”), including treatment of Upper Silesians as second-class citizens, and tampering with their age-old regional ways. During the war and postwar eras, native locals were officially classified as “citizens subject to revocation,” making their secondary status vis-à-vis the high national newcomers all the more blatant. Violence, intrusion into private life, austerity measures, and social marginalization during these eras all the more served to alienate locals from these radical governments. All of this conflict and persecution in turn strengthened regional bonds and resentment against the given nationalizing nation. By the 1960s, as they set off on their exodus to Germany, native Upper Silesians were not leaving as

patriotic Germans, but more as a result of alienation from the dictatorial and repressive Stalinist government.

Postscript

The border rallies and other forms of mass mobilization examined in this dissertation were not only meant as a tutelage to locals but also to the rest of the nation. This was all the more the case in Poland during interwar and postwar era. For a nation undergoing reconstruction, as Poland was just after WWI and also WWII, Upper Silesia's official myth as an endangered industrial borderland served to raise patriotism all over the nation. After the fall of Stalinism, the region maintained its symbolic function as a distinctly long-term belligerent and proletarian variant of the all-national Western Territories Myth. In search of a popular identity after the brutal Stalinist years that strongly alienated the public, the party returned to underscoring the one identity that it was somewhat accepted for—that of guarantor of the Oder-Neisse lands and a Poland safe from Germany and free of Germans. This meant the restoration of the institutes of “western thought” and their specialists in the region, and a limited return to the forging of Germanophobic national-regional traditions.¹

The officially revisionist policies of West Germany towards the Oder-Neisse border enabled the return to revanchist cultural politics. In part out of sincere fears, but largely in reflection of a new era of promoting fortress mentalities for an unpopular government's benefit, the communist regime represented the Silesian and Upper Silesian Landsmannschaften (regional societies of former expellees) as a new revanchist German

¹ Strauchold, *Myśl Zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945-7*, (Toruń, 2003), 400-38.

piedmont.² The continuities of the politics of the interwar era become all the more striking when one considers who the head of these expellee societies was: Otto Ulitz, the former leader of the Volksbund (German minority in interwar Polish Silesia), longstanding face of the “German fifth column” in the interwar Voivodeship, and during the Nazi years the icon of the Nazis’ “model Volksdeutsche.”³ The regime thus mobilized its secret service (the Ubegy) to be on the alert for “the revisionist element” (or just “revisionism/rewizjonizm”) as it came to be called—a name that dated back to the early postwar era. This hunt was aimed particularly to penetrate circles of native Upper Silesian locals who maintained correspondence with West Germany, received western goods in so-called “Packages from the Reich,” and also hosted tourists from that country. The Ubegy were also interested in all the wealth of popular propaganda that these Landsmannschaften and the newly established Ostforschung centers were distributing in the FRG and whether it was reaching Polish citizens.⁴

To counter West German revisionism and to overshadow its main domestic political rival, the Catholic Church, the regime staged its most grandiose rallies devoted to the “Recovered Territories” in 1966.⁵ On occasion of the Thousand Years of Poland’s Birth, the spectacles were held in the “Piast Lands,” including atop the Mount of St. Anne and also in the city center of Katowice. With hundreds of thousands of guests participating from all over Poland, this event—a successor of the border rallies of the

² Bernard Linek, “Rewizjonizm niemiecki,” in: Adam Dziurok, Bernard Linek, Krzysztof Tarki, *Stalinizm in rok 1956 na Górnym Śląsku*, (Katowice, 2007) 209-236; Adam Dziurok and Adam Dziuba, „Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung des ‘Revisionistischen Elements’ in der Woiwodschaft Kattowitz in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahre,” *Jahrbucher f. Geschichte Osteuropas* 51:2 (2003): 254-280.

³ See: Mirosław Cygański, *Zawsze Przeciwno Polsce: kariera Otto Ulitz*, (Warszawa: Zachodnia Agencja Prasowa, 1966).

⁴ Same as last note. Also: Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien: der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Polen und Deutschland, 1919-1956*, (Osnabrück, 2008) chapter IV; Perti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: Western Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-90*, (Oxford, 2003).

⁵ Bartłomiej Noszczak, *Milenium czy Tysiąclecie*, (Warszawa. 2006) 90-131.

interwar and immediate postwar eras—had several functions: one was to remind the public of the continuing “threat” from the west and the need for all to unite behind the only “guarantor” of Poland’s existence, and another, to give an identity to Katowice’s new urban development project that the communists had just completed in large part. Built in the “social realist” architecture of that decade, during this occasion this project in the far north side of the city had its prime symbol of identity unveiled, a large winged monument to the symbol of the three insurgencies.⁶ In stark reminder of the Grażyński era, when the prolific erection of such statues served as an act of “Polonizing” the border area, in the next years more of them were erected. Marking the fiftieth anniversary of the third insurgency (May-June 1921) at another grandiose nation-wide rally in 1971, two more monuments were unveiled. The first was one of Katowice’s architectural marvels of the late communist era, an assembly hall, which due to its shape carries the popular nickname “the (UFO) saucer” and remains one of the city’s main landmarks until today. The government dubbed it an official monument to the insurgencies. The second monument was a reconstruction of the “Insurgent’s Monument” that had been unveiled in October of 1927 by President Ignacy Mościcki in the former border city of Chorzow (Königshütte).⁷ All of these unveilings were examples of how the regime sought to revive even the Grażyńskiite interwar era legacy of the revanchist feud for its own self-legitimizing purposes. Upper Silesia thus became a ground for national memory sites of the Polish-German revanchist culture. This symbolic use of the region hardly lasted for long in any effective manner. The beginning of Willi Brandt’s Ostpolitik took the air out of the windbag that was the foundation of this ongoing representation of fortress

⁶ Franciszek Hawranek, et. al., eds., *Encyklopedia Powstańcza*, (Opole, 1982) 430-2.

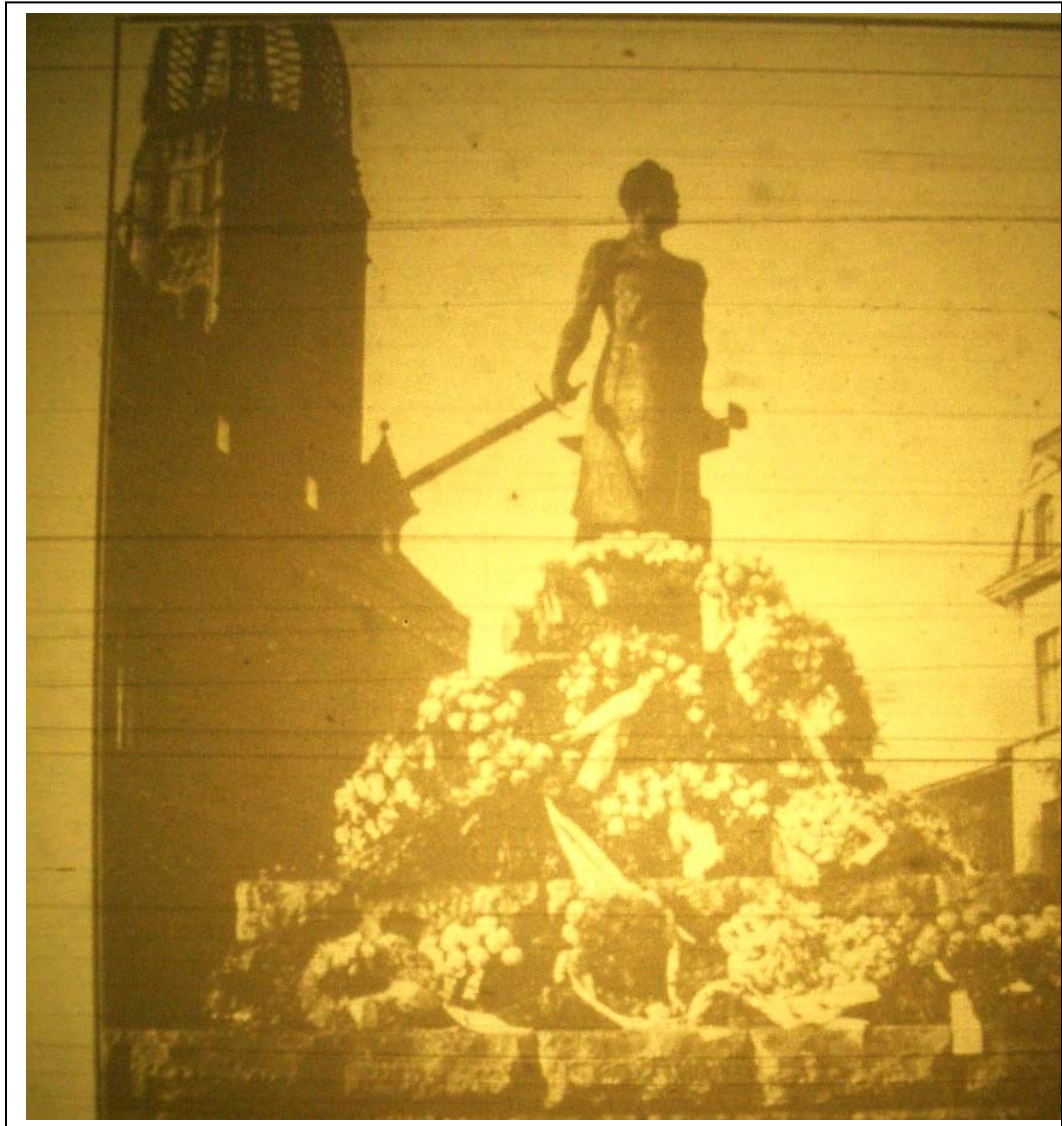
⁷ Ibid., 73-4, 430-2.

mentalities—the notion that (West) Germany aimed to “re-take” the borderlands. The early seventies thus marked the beginning of the end of a half-century long transnational Polish-German cultural politics aimed at making “recoveries.”

IMAGES

Image 1.1: Silesian Insurgent's Monument in Królewska Huta

(Königshütte/Chorzow)



The statue represents the male local metallurgy worker wearing his work apron and sporting a bare torso. In his left hand he holds his work instruments and in his right hand a medieval broad sword. This worker is standing “on guard” at the border, facing the city of Beuthen (Bytom) in Germany on the other side.

Source: *Powstaniec Śląski*, 8:11 (Nov. 1934): 17

Image 1.2: Unveiling of Silesian Insurgent's Monument



Silesian Insurgent's Monument in Królewska Huta (Königshütte/Chorzow) during the unveiling ceremony of 2 Oct 1927, hosted by Poland's President, Ignacy Mościcki, who is shown speaking among other government officials.
Source: *Powstaniec Śląski*, 3:8 (17-18 August 1929)

**Image 1.3: Insurgent's Monument in Chorzow
Restored in 1971.**



**“Insurgent’s Monument” in Chorzow
(Königshütte/Królewska Huta) restored in 1971
after its destruction by the Nazi regime in 1939.
Photo by: Łukasz Krajs
Source: <http://kriz.blox.pl/resource/powstaniec1.jpg>**

Image 1.4: Plaque Commemorating the Polish-German war of 1921



Unveiled inside the Youth Hostel of the Franciscan Cloister as part of the festivities commemorating the memory of the battles around Annaberg (25 May 1931). It was made by Professor dell'Antonio. The top part depicts the busts of Carl Ulitzka, Gen. Karl Hoeffler, and Hans Lukaschek. The bottom part is a caricature of Annaberg and the Upper Silesian Industrial district to its right.

The text reads: „In love and loyalty to the Heimat, the Oberschlesische Volk has endured hard battles. Supported by comrades (Volksgenossen) of all German lines, it defended itself against enemy thieving passions, and has protected a great part of German land from foreign yoke. This must remain unforgettable in the hearts of youth for all times.”

Source: *Oberschlesische Volksstimme* 141 (23 May 1931), from: GStA PK, HA I, Rep. 77 (Pr. MdI). Tit. 856. Nr. 390. doc. 124.

**Image 1.5: “Beuthen O/S Das Bollwerk”
Propaganda Pamphlet**



Front cover of propaganda pamphlet published by the municipal government of Beuthen (Bytom). On top: “Beuthen O/S: the Bulwark of German Culture in the East.” On Bottom: “Germans Don’t Forget It” (referring perils imposed by the drawing of the partition)

Caricature shows local metallurgy plant worker standing “on guard” at the border with his work instrument in one hand and a medieval broad-sword in the other.

Source: *Beuthen O.S.: Die Schädigung der Stadt durch die Grenzziehung und ihre Bedeutung als deutscher Wirtschafts- und Kulturfaktor im Osten: ein Bildwerk.* Verkehrs- u. Wirtschaftsamt der Stadt Beuthen O/S, 1925.

Image 3.1: Voivodeship Government Building



Image 3.2



3.1 – 3.2: Urząd Województwo Śląskie
Opened May 1929 in Katowice (Kattowitz)

Reproduced with permission of Bibliotheka Śląska – Zbiory Specjalne (BS
– ZS)

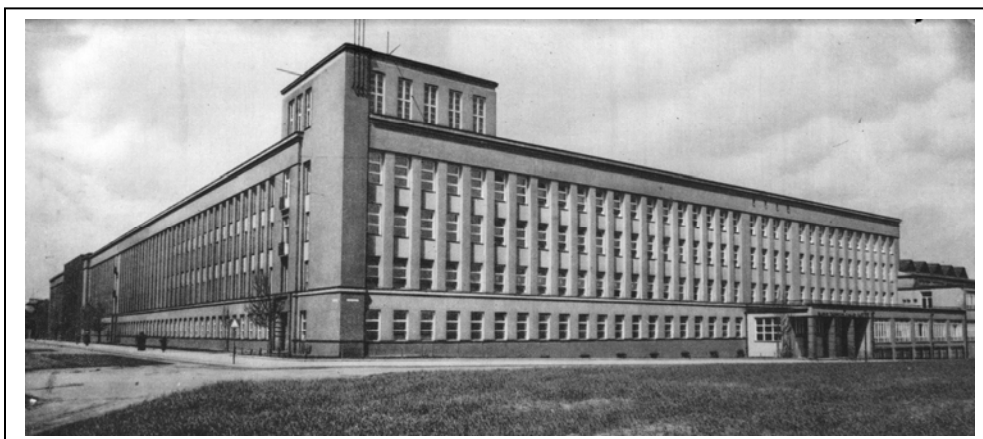
Image 3.3:



3.3: The House of Enlightenment and Society of People's Libraries, Katowice, 1928.

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS

Image 3.4



The Silesian Technical Scientific Works. Completed 1929.
Katowice.

Reproduced with permission of of BS – ZS

Image 3.5: Administration Offices Building



Left: Administration Offices Building (Gmach Urzędów Niezespółonych), Katowice, completed 1935.

Middle: open plaza used for state ceremonies

Right (not visible): Voivodeship Government Building

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS

Image 3.6



„Skyscraper,” Katowice, 1934
Reproduced with permission of BŚ-ZS

Image 3.7



Image 3.5: The „Skyscraper” set in the urban landscape of Katowice.

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS

Image 3.8: The Cathedral



Christ The King Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Katowice, Built from 1925 to 1955. Side View.

Photo By: [PetrusSilesius](#)

Source:

http://pl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Plik:Cathedral_in_Katowice.jpg&filetimestamp=20051116103201

Image 3.9



Upper Silesian Regional Museum
(Oberschlesische Landesmuseum), Beuthen/Bytom,
Opened 1932.
Photo by: [Lestat](#) (Jan Mehlich)
Source:
http://pl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Plik:Bytom_-

Image 3.10



Silesian Museum Building,
Katowice, completed 1939

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS

Image 3.11



Silesian Museum Building,
Katowice, completed 1939

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS

Image 3.12



The Water Tower in Ratibor (Raciborz), Opened 1938.
Source: *Ratibor: die Stadt an zwei Grenzen: Der Grenzlandturm* (May 1938)

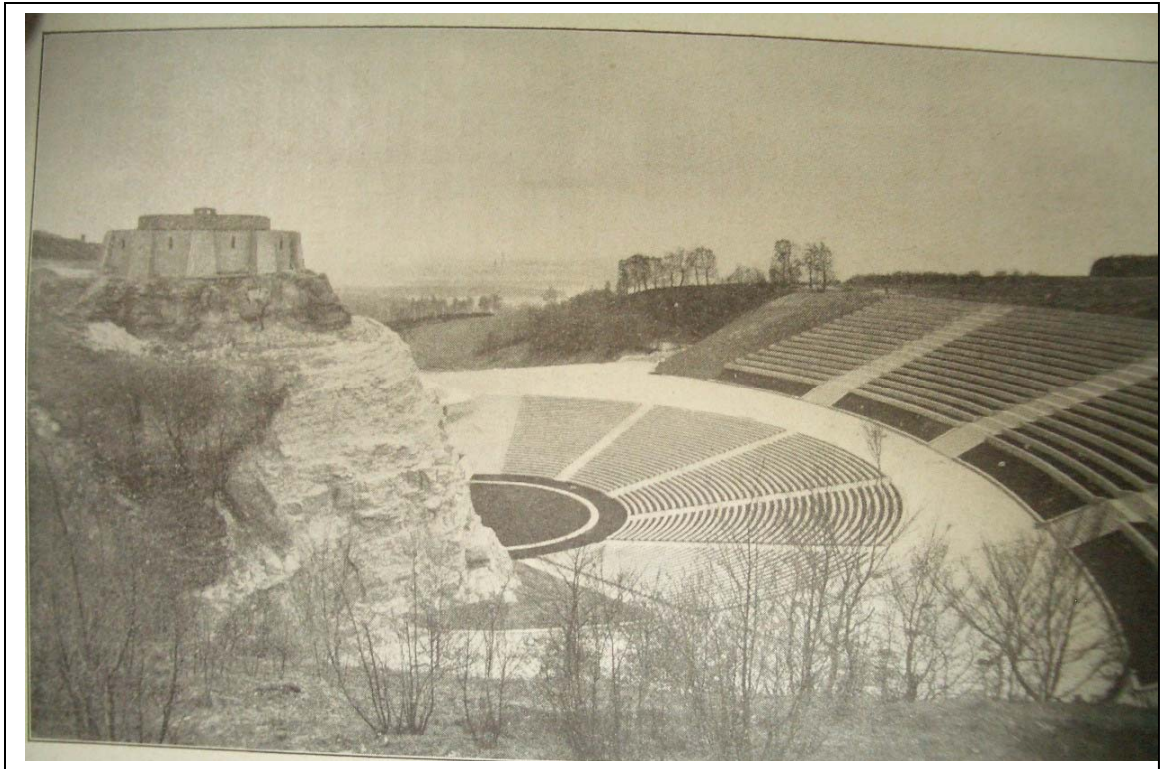
Image 3.13: Reich Memorial Atop the Mount of St. Anne



Reichsehrenmal at Annaberg (Mount of St. Anne)
SA-men bringing in the remains of foreign Freikops fighters
into the Mausoleum and Monument to the Freikorps, May
1938.

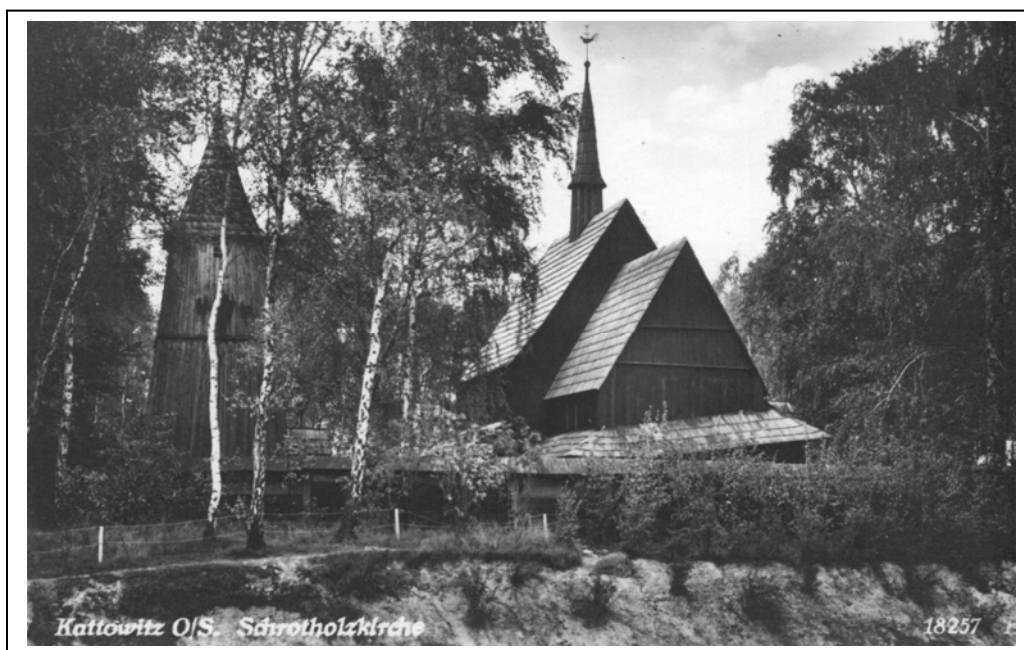
Source: Georg Kate, hrsg., *Oberschlesien und sein Beitrag
zum grossdeutschen Freiheitskampf*, (Breslau/Kattowitz,
1940)

Image 3.14: Reich Memorial Atop the Mount of St. Anne with Amphitheater



Reichsehrenmal atop Annaberg (Mt. of St. Anne). Freikorps Monument and Amphitheater
Mount of St. Anne, Großstrehlitz/Strzelce Opolskie
Source: H. Rogier, hrsg., *Der Annaberg O/S* (1938)

Image 3.15



Wooden Church from the 14th. Century that had been transported from the village of Syrin (Syrinka) to the South Park of Katowice in the mid 1930s. This is a German postcard from the war period.
Reproduced with permission of BŚ-ZS

Image 3.16: Insurgent Youth in Folk Costume



Members of the Insurgent Union (ZPSI.) Youth Group (OMP) in Folk Costume during the Harvest Festival.
Source: *Powstaniec*, 1934.

Image 3.17



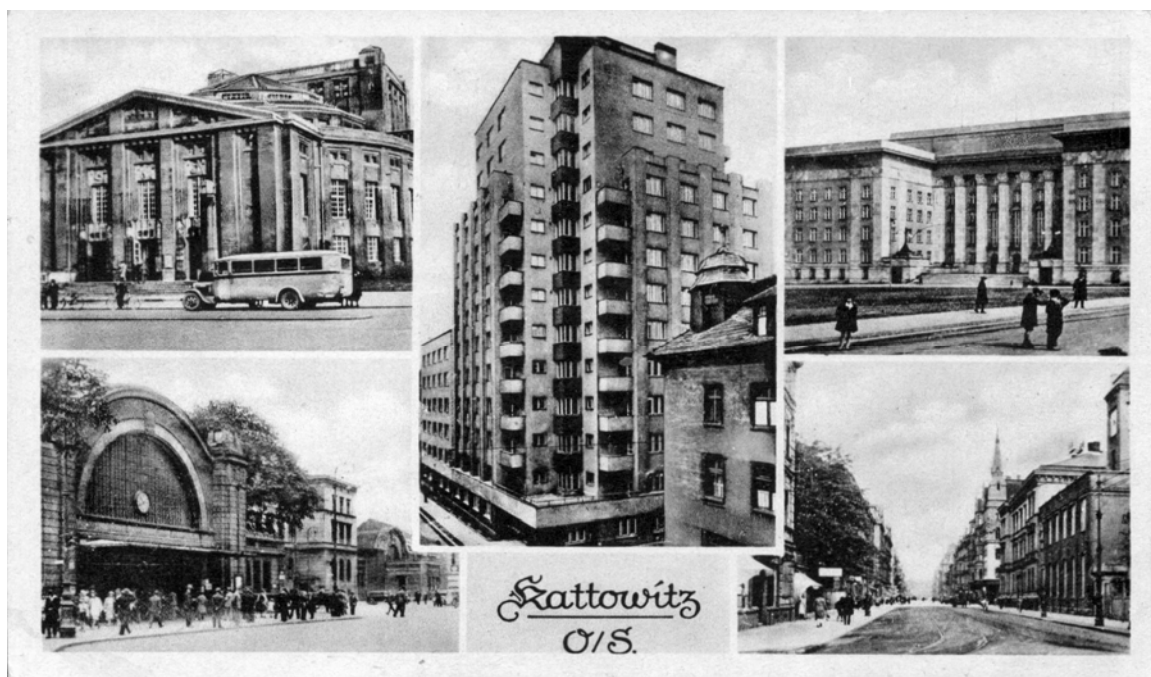
Ryc. 158.

*Fot. H. Podgębski. Ze zb. P. T. K.
PIEKARY WIELKIE. TYP ŚLĄZAKA.*

**Man in Folk Costume from Piekary Wielkie
(Deutsche Piekar)**

Source: *Ziemia*, 15-16 (15 Aug. 1928).

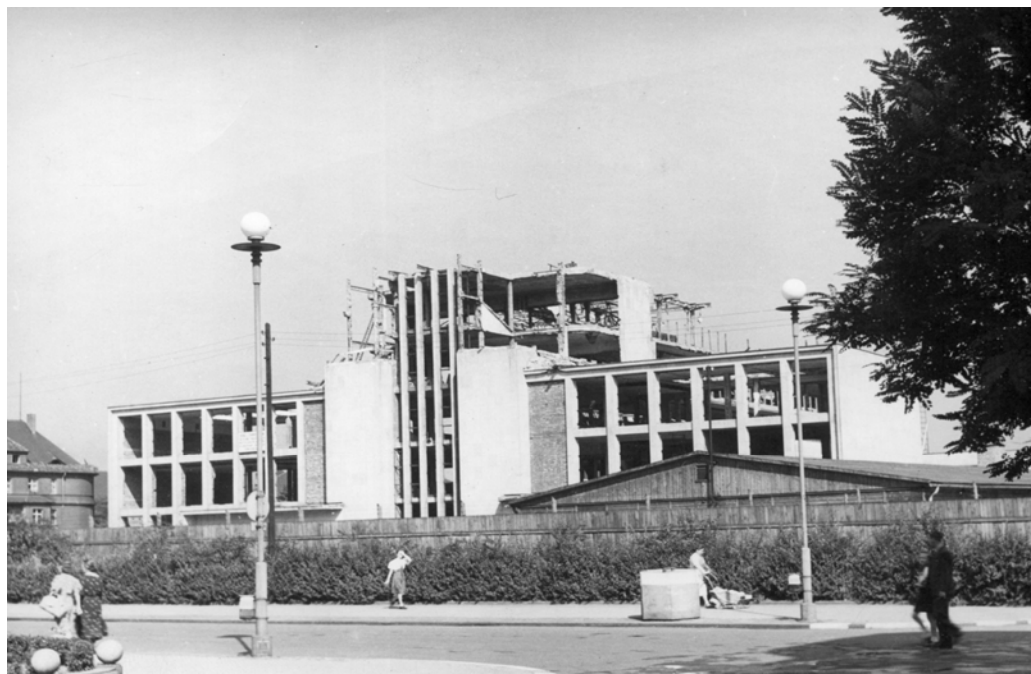
Image 4.1: Postcard of Kattowitz



Officially endorsed postcard of Kattowitz (Katowice) from the war period. Center: the “skyscraper”. Top right: the Voivodeship Government Building. Bottom Left: train station from the Prussian period. Top left: municipal theater building from the turn of the century.

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS.

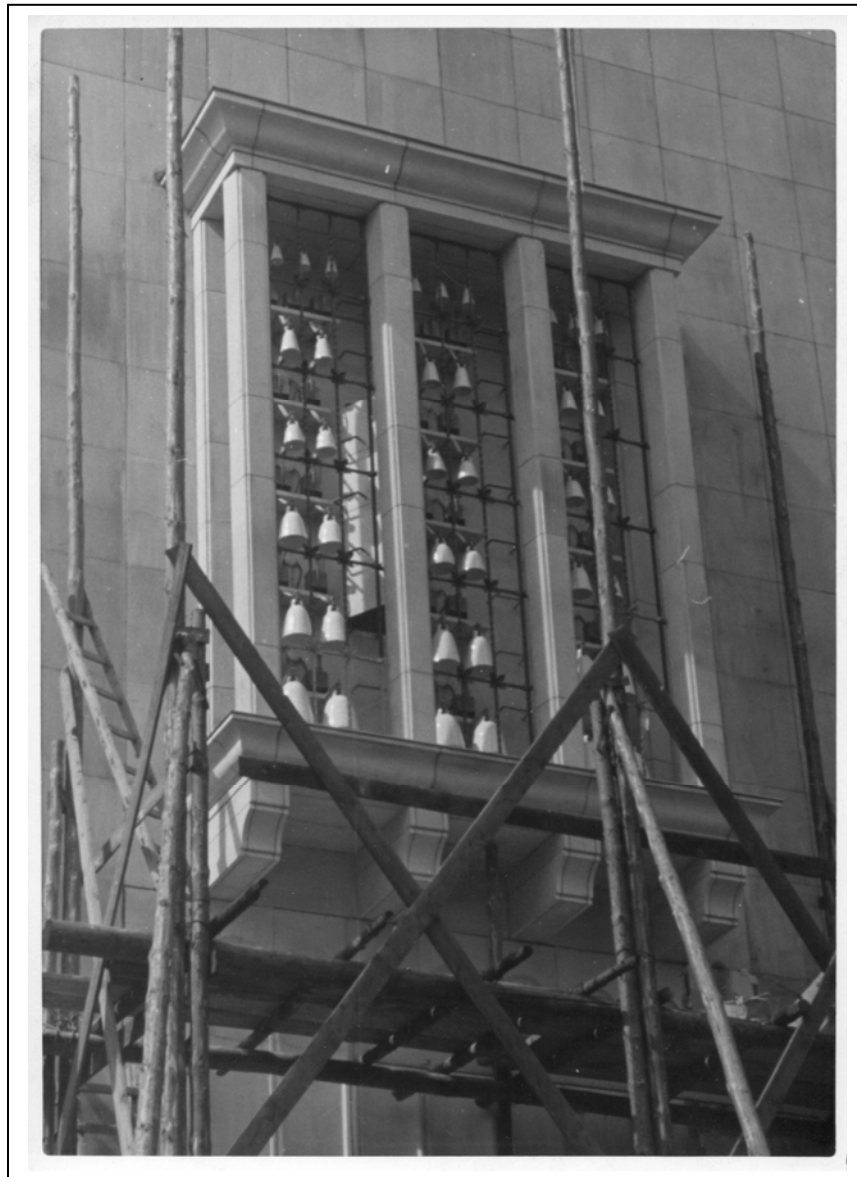
Image 4.2



Dismantling of the Silesian Museum Building, 1942 to 1945.

Reproduced with permission of BŚ - ZS

Image 4.3: Porcelain Bells



Porcelain bells being installed into the left wing of the façade of the Polish Government Administration Offices Building, which during WWII served as police headquarters (Polizeipräsidium). 1941. Reproduced with permission of BS – ZS.

**Image 4.4: Nazi Police Headquarters
in Kattowitz**



Polish Government Administration Offices Building serving as police headquarters for the Nazi regime. On the left wing of the façade, the porcelain bells that play the melody of the “March of the Germans in Poland” by Heinrich Gutberlet.

Reproduced with permission of BŚ – ZS.

Image 4.5: BDO Flyer Placed in Stores

**Translation:** Sales Personnel and Business Owners !

Remember your earlier poverty and hardship !

Never forget the gruesome martyrdom of the Volksdeutsche in the onetime Poland!

Don't tolerate the Polish language under any circumstances!

Inform your employees that they are not to serve any client who speaks Polish in your store. Always acknowledge the victims of the murdered and maimed Volksdeutsche, the brave service rendered by the German Wehrmacht and the ultimate sacrifice that those in its ranks made. It is thanks to this alone that we have dethroned the hell of the Polish blood sucker and murderer and have been led home into the womb of the Greater German Fatherland.

Thus, refuse all service to Polish speaking clients !

Support the mission of the Volkstumkampf in the "Union of the German East" !

Only in this manner will you yourselves shape your closer Heimat, your beloved Silesia in the manner in which it must be.

And Silesia was, is, and remains German forever !

Among Poles fought to defend ourselves; today we fight on the offensive against everthing Polish.

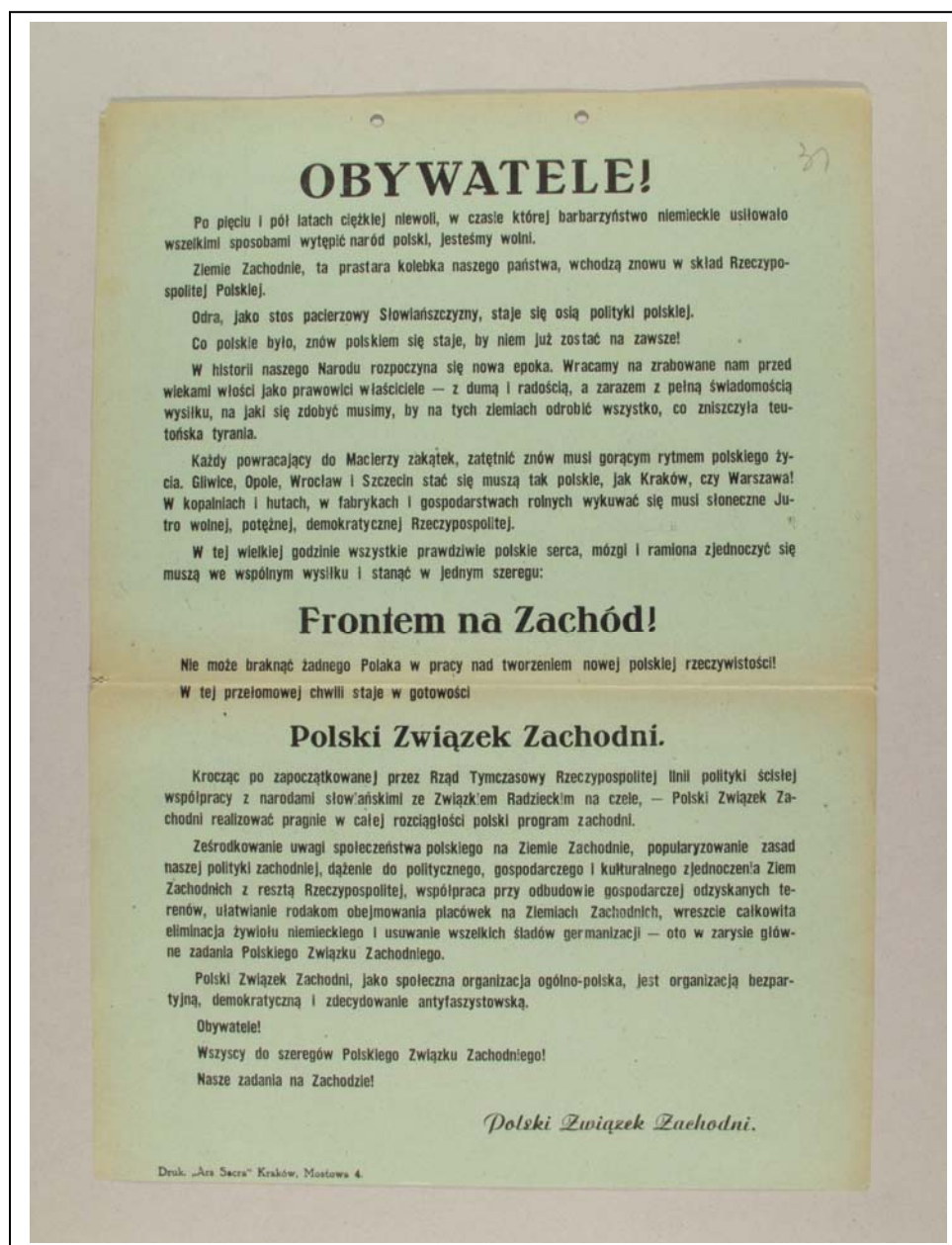
Become a member of the "Union of the German East" today !

Tarnowitz, 25 May 1940.

Union of the German East

Reproduced with permission of Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (APK)

Image 5.1: PZZ Poster rallying sentiment for new political and territorial order (translation on following page)



Translation:

Citizens!

After five and a half years of hard captivity, during which German barbarism tried to eradicate the Polish nation via all means, we are free. The Western Territories, the ancient cradle of our nation, are once again a part of the Republic of Poland.

As the paternal heap of Slavdom, the Oder River has become the axel of Polish politics.

That which was Polish becomes Polish again, so as to remain so forever ! In the history of our nation a new epoch is beginning. We are returning to the property that was pillaged from use centuries ago as its rightful owners – with pride and joy, and at the same time in full consciousness of the effort we must invest so as to fix everything that teutonic tyranny has destroyed in these territories.

Every parcel returning to the Motherland has to accord with the heated rhythm of Polish life. Gliwice, Opole, Wrocław and Szczecin have to become as Polish as Cracow or Warsaw! In the mines and plants, in the factories and on farms a sunny tomorrow of a free, powerful, and emocratic Republic has to take shape.

In this great hour all truly Polish hearts, minds, and arms have to unite in a common effort and stand in the same ranks:

Join the Front to the West!

There is to be no shortage of a single Pole in the work towards creating a new Polish reality! Standing ready in this breakthrough moment is the

Polish Western Union.

Heading along a political course begun by the Rząd Tymczasowy [Temporary Government] of the Republic, one of tight collaboration with the Slavic nations with the USSR at the head, the Polish Wester Union strives to realize the Polish western program in its entirety.

Mediating the caution of Polish society in the Wester Territories, popularizing the principle of our western politics, heading towards a political, economic, and culutral union of the Western Territories with the rest of the Republic, collaboration in the economic re-building of the recovered lands, facilitating our siblings' [fellow nationals'] acqisition of the positions in the Western Territories, and finally a thorough elimination of the German element and removal of all traits of Germanization – these characterize the main tasks of the Polish Western Union.

The Polish Western Union, as an all-Polish societal organization is a non-party organization of democratic, and decisively antifascist, character.

Citizens!

All into the ranks of the Polish Western Union!

Our mission in the West !

Polish Western Union.

Ostrzegamy Niemców w Zabrze!

Wzywamy Niemców do opuszczenia naszego terenu — zgodnie z zarządzeniem naszego Wojewody Generała Zawadzkiego. Jeżeli to nie nastąpi w wyznaczonym terminie, to przekonacie się, że nasze wezwanie nie będzie gołosłownym . . .

Nie nadarmo krwawiliśmy w 3-krotnej walce powstańczej o naszą Śląską ziemię. Nie zapomnieliśmy o masowym mordowaniu naszych sióstr i braci w ciągu 6 lat wojny przez „Gestapo”, SS, policję i wojsko niemieckie. Nie zapomnieliśmy też o tym, że setki tysięcy naszych braci zostało wysiedlonych z Poznańskiego i innych części kraju, przyczem zagrabiono ich majątek! Nie zapominały wam obozów koncentracyjnych — Majdanka, Oświęcimia, Dachau, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, Gusen, Mauthausen, Flossenberga, Stutthof, Neuengamme!

Współżycia z wami nie będzie i nie może być nigdy! Ani jeden Niemiec nie śmie pozostać na polskiej ziemi!

Podszeptajcie waszych kumoszów zpoza kordonu, abyście tutaj pozostali, przetrwali, wbrew nakazom władz polskich, spełzną na niczym.

Ostrzegamy was póki czas, bo jutro już może być za późno!

ZWIĄZEK WETERANÓW POWSTAŃ ŚLĄSKICH
GRUPA ZABRZE

(-) Koźlik (-) Malinowski (-) Potyka (-) Białoch (-) Śliwka (-) Pyka
(-) Dworaczek (-) Waduż (-) Gwóźdź (-) Kaleta (-) Gawron

Zakład Drukarni Państwowych w Zabrzu

TRANSLATION: We Warn the Germans in Zabrze !

We call on the Germans to leave our territory – in accordance with the orders of our Voivode, General Zawadzki. If this does not take place by the given deadline, then you will find out that our calling is not going to be a purely verbal one . . .

We did not bleed in the three time insurgency struggle [of 1919-21] for our Silesian soil for nothing. We did not forget about the mass murder of our brothers and sisters during the 6 years of war by the „Gestapo”, SS, police, and German army. We also did not forget about that tens of thousands of our brothers had been expelled from the Poznanian and other parts of the country, during which their property was pillaged! We did not forget the concentration camps – Majdanek, Oświęcim [Auschwitz], Dachau, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, Gusen, Mauthausen, Flossenberga, Stutthof, Neuengamme!

There will be no co-existence with you, and there can never be! Not a single German dares to remain on Polish soil!

The rumors [spread] by fellows from your homeland from across the border [in Germany] calling on you to remain and endure in defiance of the orders of Polish authorities will come to naught.

We warn you while there is still time, since tomorrow it may already be too late!

UNION OF VETERANS OF THE SILESIAN INSURGENCIES
THE ZABRZE GROUP

(Reproduced with Permission of APK)

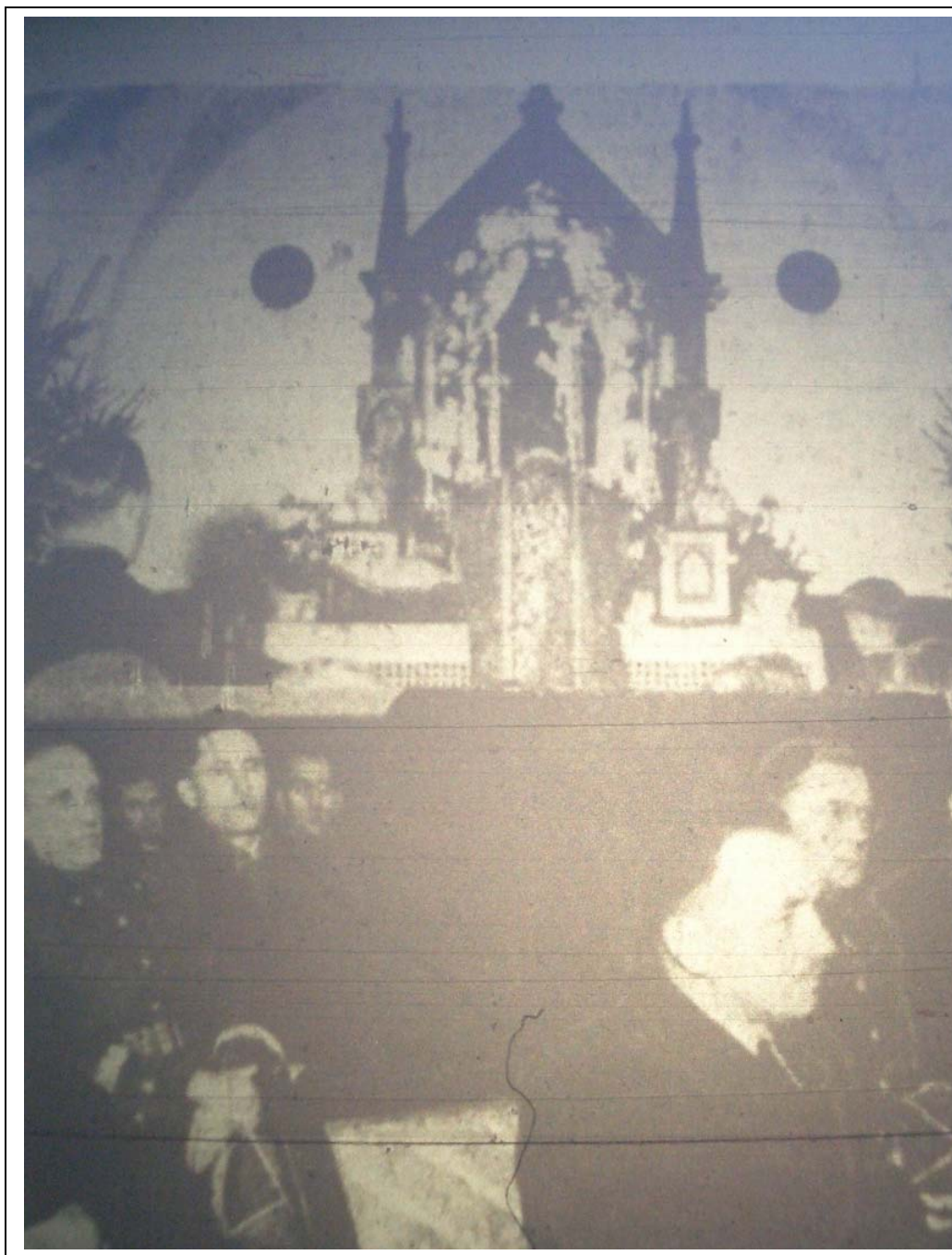
Image 5.3:



First of May Rally in Katowice, 1946. On the tribunal (first from the left), Władysław Gomułka, Prime Minister of the Polish government and head of the PPR. Marching: coal miners and children in ceremonial (parade) uniform.

Reproduced with permission of APK.

Image 5.4: Bolesław Bierut at Prayer



Bolesław Bierut (bottom right) and (to his left) **Aleksander Zawadzki** taking part in prayer ceremony during the Feast of St. Barbara at the Chapel of St. Barbara in depths of the Coal Mine „Niwka” in Sosnowiec.
Source: Dziennik Zachodni. 5 Dec. 1947.

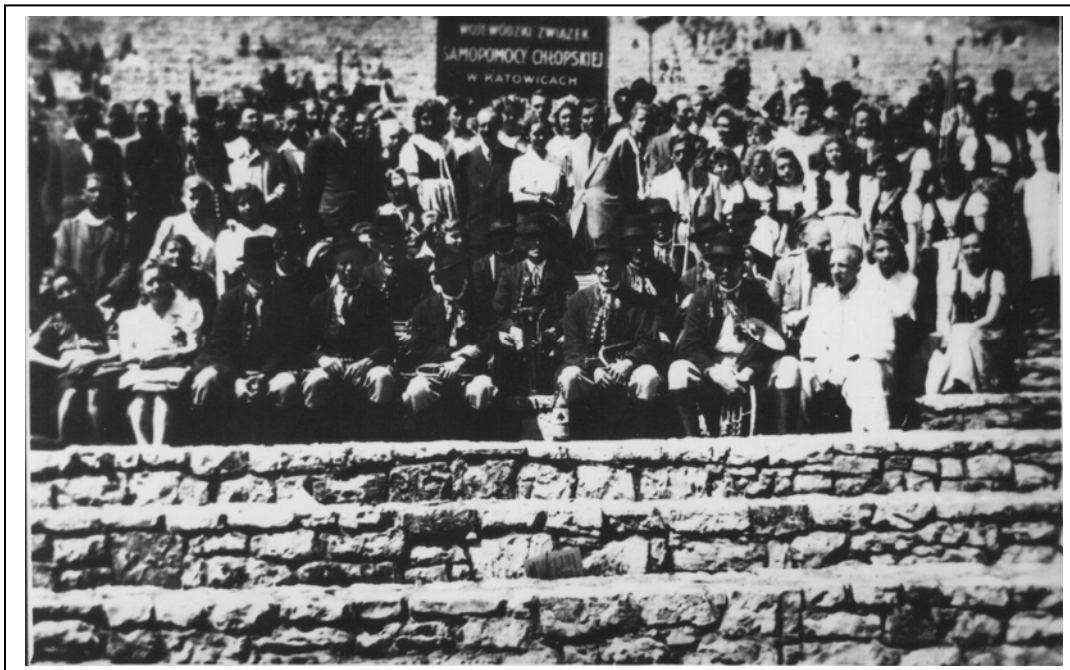
Image 5.5: Mass atop Mt. Of St. Anne



Rally Atop the Mount of St. Anne, 19 May 1946. Prayer service on the stage of the Amphitheater. Urns with soil from the battlefields the insurgencies (right). Polish Scouts kneeling (left).

Reproduced with permission of APK.

Image 5.6: Folk Costume Wearers atop the Mount of St. Anne



Rally Atop the Mount of St. Anne, 19 May 1946. Men and women in peasant folk costume. Behind them, banner of the Katowice section of the Farmer's Aid Union (Związek Samopomocy Chłopskiej), one of the main agencies for the redistribution of land confiscated from those expelled to Germany.
Reproduced with permission of APK

Image 5.7:



Plaque marking the foundation stone of new monument to the Silesian Insurgents. Unveilled 19 May 1946 on the Mount of St. Anne. *Translation of inscription:* In the name of the Poles, the President of the National Council, Bolesław Bierut, layed the foundational stone for the monument to the Silesian insurgents.
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Image 5.8

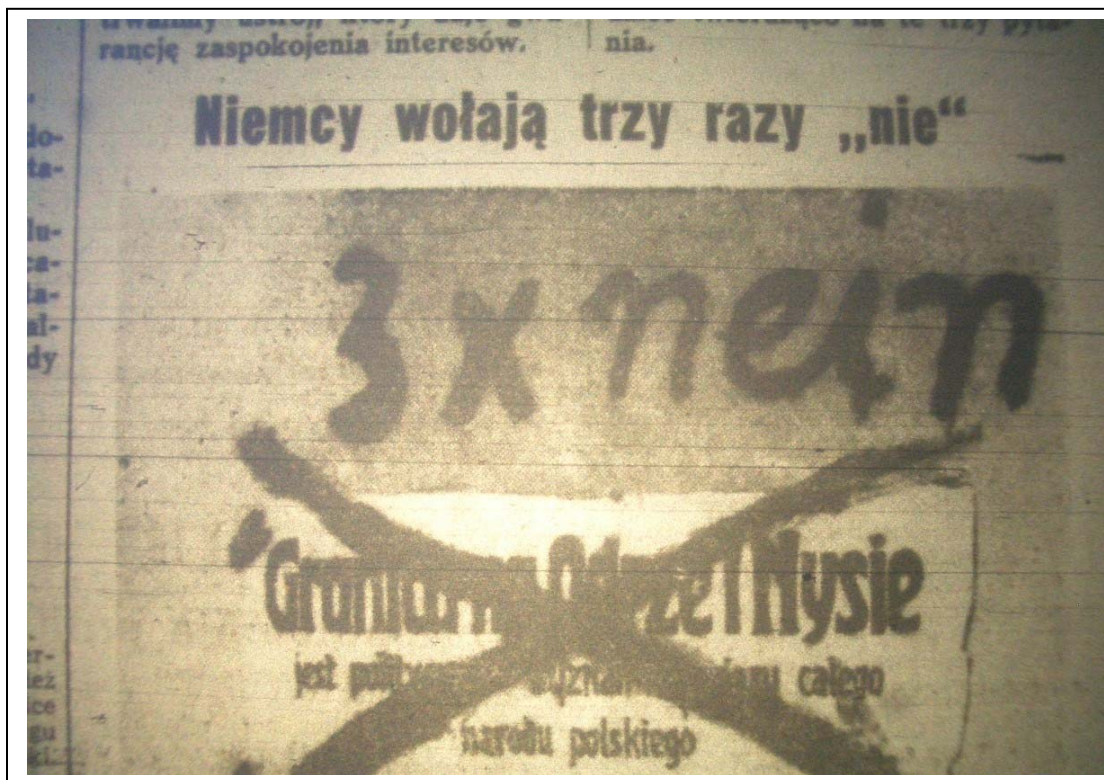


Propaganda for the “People’s Referendum” in the city of Katowice in 1946, on the eve of the Referendum, representing all three questions as pertaining to the border issue. Inscriptions read:

“The Border on the Baltic, Oder, and Neisse is the right of the Polish nation – the Polish Peoples Vote 3 times Yes. ‘Three times yes’ is the voice a united Polish nation. “

Reproduced with permission of APK

Image 5.9



“The Germans cry three times ‘no’”. Instigated poster propagating the Oder-Neisse Line for the „People’s Referendum” crossed out by the German underground. This reflects the PPR’s propaganda that voting „3 x No” was a pro-German act.

Source: Dziennik Zachodni, 30 June 1946, cover page.

Image 5.10



Books being given out during a „Repolonization Course.”

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- NSDAP Kreisleitung Hindenburg
- NSDAP Kreisleitung Kattowitz
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- Oberpräsidium Kattowitz
- Polska Partia Robotnicza, Komitet Wojewódzki
- Polski Związek Zachodni, Okręg Śląski
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- Starostwo Powiatowe Gliwice
- Starostwo Powiatowe Katowice
- Starostwo Powiatowe Tarnowskie Góry
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- Urząd Wojewódzki Śląsko-Dąbrowski
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- Akta Miasta Zabrze

- Zarząd Miejski Gliwice
- Zarząd Miejski Zabrze
- BDO Kreisverband Hindenburg

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