

DANZIG AND POLAND IN HISTORY*

by STANISŁAW KUTRZEBA

(CRACOW, POLAND)

INTRODUCTION

Danzig's relations with Poland have described a chequered course since the city first received historical mention in the Life of St. Adalbert, in 997. The interwoven fortunes of Danzig and Poland are a fruitful theme, and it will be of singular interest to ascertain to what extent they have been moulded by the geographical location of the region in which Danzig is situated, and to what extent they mirror the influence of human factors.

It will be apposite to commence with a brief outline of Danzig's past. The city was first under the sway of a Polish monarch, and from the twelfth century belonged to the territories ruled by the Dukes of Pomerania. On the extinction of this dynasty in 1294, its dominions together with Danzig passed into the hands of Przemysław II, Duke of Great-Poland, who was crowned King of Poland a year later. In 1308 the Knights of the Teutonic Order stormed the city and held it until 1454, when Danzig returned to the Polish Crown during the reign of Casimir II. From that time the fate of Danzig was bound up with Poland until the partition of the Polish Commonwealth in 1793, when the city passed for a short time under Prussian rule. After the crushing defeat of the Prussians at Jena and Auerstädt, Napoleon severed Danzig's connexion with Prussia and made it a Free City in 1807 under the protectorate of the Duchy of Warsaw and of Saxony. Eight years later, when Napoleon was finally brought to bay, the city was again handed over to Prussia by the Treaty of Vienna. It returned to its status as a Free City under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and was bracketed in intimate relation with Poland: the control of its foreign affairs was vested in the Polish Republic and it was incorporated within the Polish customs area.

In surveying Danzig's position in the past, we are accustomed to regard it as having been the principal and virtually only port of the former Polish Commonwealth, and, as such, an essential apanage of that massive realm. Straddling the mouth of Poland's main commercial artery, the Vistula, Danzig handled the trade served by that river and its navigable tributaries (comprising 4,000 kilometres of waterways) over an area of nearly 200,000 square kilometres. Possession of Danzig was therefore an obvious and vital necessity for the economic life of Poland. Nearly the whole of her extensive corn trade and the bulk of her exports of forest produce were routed through Danzig; the port also served as the

chief point of ingress for Poland's imports, particularly of cloth and manufactured goods from the Western countries.

But it would be erroneous to regard these purely economic circumstances as having solely inspired Poland with an urge to reach the sea with the avowed purpose of occupying Danzig (as many historians mistakenly strive to prove when discussing such an early event as the war of 1454-66 against the Teutonic Order). Economic considerations actually had no influence on Poland's policy towards the Teutonic Order in the fifteenth century. In those days trade was still the exclusive preserve of the towns of the Commonwealth, who lived their lives apart and had nothing to do with the framing of State policies. The mere fact that Danzig was held by the Teutonic Order did not constitute a barrier to trade, although of course the wars with the Order frequently hampered the normal flow of commerce. Nor had Poland's corn exports yet attained the significance they later assumed. The Twelve Years' War was, in fact, inspired by Poland's ambition to recover the territories wrested from her by the Order in the fourteenth century, and by the keen desire of the Prussians to throw off the irksome yoke of the Knights.

Not till the sixteenth century did Poland's corn exports assume really important dimensions. The trade was now conducted by the landed gentry, to the complete exclusion of the towns, and the economic factor appeared as the dominant feature of the problem of Danzig. The revenues and prosperity of the very numerous and politically dominant landed gentry were poised on the vital condition of freedom of corn transports through Danzig; hence the lively interest displayed by the General Assemblies of the *Sejm* in the policy adopted towards Danzig, and hence the direct interference of the gentry in this matter.

After 1454 a new factor, of a political nature, entered into the pattern of Polish-Danzig relations. We refer here to the emergence of certain characteristic differences between Danzig and Poland. In so far as these differences were bound up with the question of nationality, it should be realized that by now Danzig had already become purely German. Even so, the differences in question were not primarily rooted in ethnical considerations. It is sufficient to recall that German elements fought on the Polish side throughout the Twelve Years' War with the Teutonic Order, and that Danzig, as in 1409, distinguished itself by its whole-hearted and voluntary adherence

* The following paper was read at the Congress of Baltic Historians, Riga, August 13, 1937 (see *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, Vol. III, No. 3, September 1937, pp. 562-566); the

theme was treated in rather more detail but along the same lines in *Strażnica Zachodnia* (The Western Outpost), Vol. I, No. 4, Warsaw 1922, pp. 1-17.

to the Polish cause. The divergences that appeared between Danzig and Poland hinged not so much on ethnic circumstances as on the development of the former's urban life. Here we have to do with a characteristic typical of the Middle Ages in Europe—namely the desire of every mediaeval town to cut itself off from the State as such. Municipal authorities barred their gates against external influences and strove to attain autonomy over the widest possible range of affairs, which were then subordinated to the control of the various organs of municipal government. The aim of every town was to become a fully autonomous

unit. Danzig could claim to enjoy this status during the period of its attachment to the Order, but with this difference, that the towns under the Order enjoyed less liberty than those owing allegiance to the Polish Crown. When Danzig made common cause with Poland against the Order, the city demanded that its particularism should be maintained and the right to manage its own affairs respected. Firmly entrenched as they were in their powerful economic position, the Danzigers made every effort to stretch ever wider the juridical boundaries which no sovereign or his functionaries might invade.

I

DANZIG'S POSITION UNDER THE POLISH CROWN

Polish-Danzig relations were fundamentally governed by the *Privilegia Casimiriana*, i.e. the privileges granted to the city by King Casimir IV. The first charter was issued in 1454, the second in 1455, the third and fourth in 1457, the fifth and sixth in 1472 and 1477. Danzig was thereby accorded a wide measure of freedom from State interference within the sphere of its municipal affairs.

The *Privilegia* assured Danzig self-government and unlimited freedom to impose levies within the area of the city (these matters were regulated primarily by the charter of 1455). The charter of 1457, known as the *Haupt-Privilegia*, empowered the City Council to appoint office-holders, to endow persons with other municipal titles, and to mint gold and silver coins—on condition that they bore the King's image and were of the same fineness as Polish currency. The charter of 1457 also granted certain honorary rights to Danzig: the King was pleased to ennoble the municipal coat-of-arms (gules, two crosses argent) by adding a royal crown over the crosses; furthermore, he permitted the city to use red wax for its seals, whilst the burgomaster and councillors were allowed to wear gold on their dress. The right to dig moats, erect walls, gateways and towers, and to install portcullises and drawbridges had been extended to Danzig by the Order in 1379, and was confirmed by King Sigismund I in 1526. The privileges accorded Danzig did not outweigh those enjoyed by other towns of the Polish Commonwealth on the basis of charters or custom, although none of them had been so comprehensively endowed as Danzig. The fact that Danzig alone was entitled to fly its own flag is explained by the circumstance that the others were all inland towns.

THE STAPLE RIGHT

In view of Danzig's success in securing such far-reaching privileges, we may wonder why no attempt was made to secure the same rights of staple as many other Polish towns enjoyed. The explanation is a simple one: Danzig had no need of a formal charter for this purpose, as in practice the market was so organized that it enjoyed all the advantages offered by staple rights, and more besides. Its by-laws favoured the burghers to an extent equalled only for a fleeting period by Cracow. Danzig enjoyed as it were a natural staple right, since it was a trans-shipment point in maritime trade and the burghers knew how to extract the utmost profit from this function. Outsiders who brought goods to the port (1) were obliged to discharge or unload their goods, and forbidden to transport them farther; (2) outside the fair they were allowed to sell their merchandise only

wholesale and to Danzigers; failing this they were obliged to return with their goods; (3) they could buy only from Danzigers, and that wholesale. Hence all goods routed through Danzig had to pass through the hands of the local merchants, who derived appreciable profits from this compulsory middleman trade and furthermore by dint of mutual co-operation were able to buy at low prices and to sell at high ones. 'Outsiders' were in principle considered to be all those who were not burghers of Danzig. But the restrictions applying to them were waived for a time in the case of the burghers of Toruń and Elbing, until the Danzigers questioned the privilege and finally abolished it in 1643. When the Jagellon Kings of Poland issued letters patent to certain individuals during the sixteenth century releasing them from these restrictions, Danzig countered with active opposition. Finally, Stefan Batory promised to issue no more privileges of this kind.

THE EMPORIUM RIGHT

Danzig gained a further striking advantage when it succeeded in enforcing the right of emporium—which it very skilfully distinguished from staple rights—against the powerful Polish landed gentry and even the King himself. From the early sixteenth century onwards the gentry launched a series of attacks against these rights, demanding permission to sell their corn at Danzig to whomever they wished, and so also to foreigners—i.e. direct to the overseas buyers. But their efforts were in vain. The burghers maintained their rights unimpaired, and not even the King himself was exempted from their strict application. Although the city fathers built a special silo for the King's grain, they refused to allow a single bushel to be sold to 'outsiders'; and when in 1686 they were finally obliged to give way, evidently under strong pressure, their surrender was material but not formal—one of the merchants would be instructed to sell the King's grain ostensibly as his own and to pay all the necessary fees, whilst the Abbot of Oliva, who acted as the commissioner for the collection of *Pfahlgeld* (dues exacted from ships using the port), received a handsome present every time he connived at the practice. In short, Danzig refused to abandon its fundamental attitude in spite of the substantial sums it had to sacrifice in order to maintain the letter of its regulations in restraint of trade.

It was not until the eighteenth century that a method of evading these by-laws was perfected and afterwards widely applied by the Polish gentry. Danzig burghers were instructed to import goods ostensibly for themselves but in reality for Polish

principals; a similar practice was adopted in the case of Polish exports, which were shipped abroad as the property of Danzig merchants, although all that the latter did was to lend their name. This procedure was considered to be legal only for deliveries of goods to the Royal Court. But in practice, the landed gentry and even Warsaw merchants took advantage of it. This means of evasion was actually suggested by the Danzigers themselves—a fact noted by the scandalized guardians of the local laws; but for some reason or other the city authorities took no steps to put an end to the practice.

RIGHTS OF THE CROWN IN DANZIG

When the Kings of Poland guaranteed Danzig's rights and privileges in the various charters, they simultaneously underlined the prerogatives of the Polish Crown in that city; for Danzig, equally with the other towns of the Commonwealth, was directly under the authority of the Crown. The King of Poland was represented in the affairs of Danzig by the Governor-General of Prussia or by the burggrave, whom he selected from amongst the eight City Councillors of Danzig. The King also claimed a number of pecuniary rights in the city. Danzig was bound to pay him 2,000 ducats per annum; to accord a three day's 'station' once a year (that is, to maintain the King and his Court in the city at its own cost); to erect a 'hoff und haws' as his Danzig residence—the building, even the roof, had to be of brick and kept in good repair, as befitting a royal residence; the city further undertook to provide stable accommodation for two hundred horses, as well as a silo. Danzig paid the levy each year, and after 1526 an additional sum of 4,000 Polish marks. In 1570 Danzig also agreed to pay the King half of the *Pfahlgeld*. A granary was built for storing the corn delivered from the Royal estates, but the palace and stables were never erected: in fact, the King did not insist on this (he rarely came to Danzig) and the obligation to provide a 'station' was later supplanted by a small annual payment.

The King was entitled to decide on all matters falling outside the sphere of the city's autonomy. Thus Danzig could not revise the binding Chełmno legislative code without the royal consent. When an amendment became necessary in 1552, the City Council petitioned the King and he appointed a Commission to attend to the matter. The King alone had authority to decide the status of the various religions. He authorized the rite of communion in both forms in 1557 and twenty years later recognized the Lutheran faith. Sometimes, however, the King did invade the city's legislative preserves, either in the attempt to extend the royal authority and to secure for the Crown legislative rights analogous to those it enjoyed from the sixteenth century onwards in other Polish towns, or under the stress of internal conditions in Danzig, when matters reached such a pitch that the civic estates could find no other forum than the Crown to adjudicate the questions in dispute amongst them.

The King was often invited to mediate in the affairs of Danzig, usually at the request of the Third Estate, which looked for the support of the sovereign in its struggle for emancipation. As a result the King of Poland had on several occasions to legislate on an extensive scale in Danzig.

Thus in 1526 religious riots in the city made the intervention of the Crown necessary, and the King issued a very comprehensive statute for Danzig known as the *Constitutiones regis Sigismundi*, which not only regulated all the current religious questions but also covered a wide range of internal affairs. The second instance of Royal intervention occurred in 1552, when the Third Estate presented a list of complaints to Sigismund Augustus; the King's reply to the fifty-five points at issue was embodied in a statute which resolved a number of matters in dispute. Sigismund Augustus issued a second statute in 1570 which also regulated a very varied assortment of questions. The statute was known as the *Constitutiones Karnkovicanae*, as Bishop Karnkowski presided over the special commission which visited Danzig and drew up the text on which the King based his edict. On this occasion Danzig refused to recognize the 'constitutions' and standing resolutely by its rights finally gained its own way. None the less, a new statute was imposed on Danzig by Stefan Batory—the *Tractatus portorii* of 1585; though drawn up with the compliance of the city it was in effect a royal charter, and the appellation of treaty is rather a misnomer. Finally there were the royal edicts of 1678 and 1750 which encroached on Danzig's jealously guarded rights of municipal autonomy—both, however, issued at the request of the Danzigers themselves, who had asked the King to resolve certain disputes between the Estates.

The royal prerogatives in the realm of judicial affairs also covered a good deal of ground. The Crown acted as a court of first instance (a) in conflicts between the Estates of Danzig, and (b) in complaints raised against the decisions of the Danzig municipal authorities. Further, the King decided appeals from the decisions of the urban courts, but this prerogative was later waived where minor cases were concerned. The burggrave, in his capacity as a royal surrogate-justice, sat on the bench in some of the city courts and judged cases of violation of the public safety within the city boundaries. After 1633 the City Council decided that criminals might not be tried, questioned, or sentenced to death without the consent of the burggrave. In addition, the King was empowered to legitimize children born out of wedlock, to proclaim *litterae moratoriae* for debtors (but only under certain conditions), to take charge of wreckage cast up on the sea-shore if the owner did not present himself, to sequester the estates of burghers who died without heirs (after 1660 this prerogative applied only to estates valued at over 50,000 zlotys), and to confiscate the property of those found guilty of high treason. He was entitled to one-third of the goods confiscated from smugglers, and enjoyed the privilege of hunting on the wolds in the vicinity of Danzig.

II

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLAND AND DANZIG

The rights and prerogatives we have enumerated above gave rise to no complications of a serious nature. The element of friction between Danzig and the Polish Crown essentially resulted from three other

factors: Danzig's claim to maintain its own armed force, to enter into relations with other Powers, and to open or close the port (i.e. to declare an embargo on maritime exports and imports).

THE RIGHT TO OWN ARMED FORCES

During the Twelve Years' War, Danzig organized and equipped a force at its own expense which fought in the ranks of the Polish army. In later times, levies were organized with the tacit consent of the Polish Crown to meet the emergency of defence. In 1570 the Karnkowski Constitutions decreed that in case the levies were called upon to defend the city, the City Council should present the commander (*praeфекtus*) of the troops to the Royal Commissioners, who would administer the oath of fealty to him. As we have already mentioned, Danzig repudiated the Karnkowski statute, and in 1596 the Estates declared that the provision that no armed force could be raised without the royal consent was incompatible with the liberties of the city. Sigismund III quashed a suit brought against the city in this connexion in 1598. A century later, in 1678, King John III (Sobieski) recognized the city's right to maintain a garrison on condition that its strength was reduced by one-third (in accordance with the demands of the Third Estate). Augustus III, in 1750, forbade the city to augment its armed force without the consent of the Crown, but Danzig denied the legality of this restriction. The city pushed its claims even further and refused to allow royal troops to enter within the boundaries of Danzig, as they had done in 1593, 1678, 1702 and 1758. The city lifted the ban in 1733, but inscribed the soldiers on its own payrolls, and so the letter of the municipal privilege was maintained although at considerable financial cost.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Danzig endeavoured to conduct its own foreign policy and frequently took independent steps in the field of foreign affairs. Danzig was of course a member of the Hanseatic League, in company with other Polish towns, including Cracow. During the period of its subservience to the Teutonic Order, Danzig participated in the wars waged by the Hansa against England in the fifteenth century, and was a party to the peace treaty of 1477. Similarly, when the city was still in the hands of the Order, it concluded a treaty of peace with the Netherlands (1441) and renewed it in 1484, 1529 and later. The city also entered into alliance with Lübeck against Christian of Denmark in 1522 and declared war on him. It joined in the conflict with Sweden until an understanding was reached with that kingdom in 1541. During the Polish-Swedish wars in the seventeenth century, Danzig on many occasions declared its neutrality. The City Council signed a treaty in 1630 with Oxenstierna, the Swedish Governor-General of Prussia, wherein it promised to allow no offensive action to be launched against the Swedes from its territory. Danzig often sent envoys to foreign Powers and received those of other countries. It would be mistaken, however, to assume from this evidence that Danzig was an independent State: these are only facts which extend beyond the limits of the law or which were merely designed to establish a juridical convention with the passage of time. The bonds of union linking together the component territories of States were often extremely loose in the Middle Ages and even later in such countries as escaped the imposition of absolute rule: the existence of such conditions by no means implied an impairment of State allegiance. It suffices to recall the position of the German Empire, particularly of the Hanseatic towns, which never ceased to belong to the Empire

although they frequently waged wars on their own account. As far as its relations with Poland were concerned, Danzig was perfectly aware that its conduct was not in line with the status of the city as a unit of the Polish realm. When Christian of Denmark took steps at the Polish Court to restrain Danzig from declaring war, the city authorities sent envoys to Warsaw to explain the position but prudently instructed their representatives to say nothing of the arrangement with Lübeck against Denmark unless the King himself referred to the pact. Again, when Danzig rejected Ladislas IV's demand that the city should fit out ships and prepare the port for war against Sweden, the City Council explained its refusal by referring to the truce it had signed with the Swedes. Ladislas remonstrated in sharp terms (1635), stating that neither he nor his father had ever ratified the understanding, and that he would refuse to allow the Danzigers to impose it upon him. Danzig tried to evade the issue but dared not invoke any rights or privileges it might have had, though the Board of Aldermen made suggestions to that effect.

Danzig was also entitled to negotiate with foreign Powers, but only in commercial matters. As in the case of other Polish cities, e.g. Cracow, the Kings of Poland raised no objections to this practice. King John III's charter of 1678 recognized as self-evident Danzig's right to send envoys abroad on commercial missions. Political activity in the field of foreign affairs was, however, quite another matter. Not only had it no justification in law, but it was liable to evoke the sharp resistance of the King; and if Danzig was sometimes able to take political steps abroad with impunity, that was only because the Polish statesmen had their own opportunist reasons for avoiding more vigorous measures. Danzig appreciated the state of affairs, and took such liberties only when its position was strong. But when their actions were sharply questioned, the city authorities turned and twisted to the best of their ability or simply bribed Poland to look the other way, as when they bought off Augustus III with a payment of 600,000 florins.

NAVIGATION AND PORT TRAFFIC

Finally, we come to the rights applying to navigation and port traffic. The Crown granted Danzig the following privileges by the charter of 1457: (1) freedom of navigation along the Polish sea-coast, and the right to erect installations upon it, and (2) the right to open or close the port of Danzig (but only with the knowledge and consent of the King or his representative), without, however, the right to impose customs duties or to take action in restraint of navigation in the absence of the knowledge and consent of the King himself. These prerogatives, particularly the second, were of major importance. The decision to open or close the port of Danzig to shipping was of fundamental moment for the whole import and export trade. When the port was closed to exports, large stocks of unsold Polish produce, especially of corn, accumulated, thereby depressing prices, whilst an embargo on maritime imports caused a rise in the prices of merchandise already stored in the warehouses of Danzig. The interests of Poland and of Danzig clashed in such cases, particularly in the corn trade. In early spring, when grain stocks in Danzig were still low, it was to the interest of the Danzigers that the port should be closed to exports, since they were thereby assured cheaper food. Polish grain exporters, on the other hand, were severely hit.

When the closure of the port interrupted exports the silos of the Danzig merchants became filled to repletion, and unable to bear the cost of storing the grain for long periods the Polish exporters were obliged to sell their produce at lower prices to local middlemen. The latter naturally reaped handsome profits when vessels were again permitted to leave the harbour.

The clash of commercial interests between Danzig and Poland became more acute in proportion as Polish corn exports increased in volume during the sixteenth century, and Danzig's policy was the subject of numerous complaints. The Karnkowski Commission (1570) was intended to effect a radical reformation in the prevailing state of affairs. In its report the Commission referred to the charter of 1457 and on the basis of its text claimed that *merum maris imperium et dominium directum* (i.e. full sovereignty over the sea) belonged solely to the King; and that this principle was the fountain-head of all the royal prerogatives. The Commission therefore pronounced it a punishable offence to impair or attempt to impair the royal prerogative to rule the sea, to administer justice and to take charge of wreckage. The stipulations were

violently opposed by the Danzigers. Finally, and not till after a passage of arms, the conflict was settled by the above mentioned *Tractatus portorii* of 1585. King Stefan Batory's charter was a word for word repetition of the charter of 1457. Danzig thus received the right to regulate navigation by opening or closing the port, but only with the consent of the King and his representatives. In short, the city was entitled to propose measures in restraint of maritime trade, but the final decision lay with the King. At a later period, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the conflict broke out anew. But in any case, although the regulation of navigation remained in the hands of Danzig, the execution of the right was dependent on the consent of the King.

For the rest, it should be borne in mind that the interests of Danzig were largely coincident with those of Poland. The greater the volume of traffic on the Vistula, i.e. the larger the export and import trade of Poland, the larger were the turnovers on the Danzig market, yielding profit and manifold advantages both to the city and its inhabitants. Yet we must not forget the divergent interests that were also at stake, and which we have already indicated.

III

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

The logical necessity of Danzig's connexion with Poland was transparent not only to the Danzigers and the rest of the Polish Commonwealth but also to other countries. When Poland was first dismembered in 1772, Austria and Russia refused to allow the King of Prussia to seize Danzig. Prussia acquired the Polish districts lying on both banks of the Vistula, but Danzig was left to Poland though separated from her by a broad strip of Prussian territory. On the second partition of Poland in 1793, however, Danzig was finally incorporated within Prussia. When Napoleon restored the Polish State in the shape of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, he left the Polish territories on the lower Vistula in Prussian hands, but established Danzig as a Free City with the object of facilitating the access of the Duchy to the sea.

During the prolonged period of Prussian rule (1815-1919), Danzig lost its former importance and sank to the status of an ordinary provincial town of Prussia. It no longer functioned as a port for Poland, as the customs boundary hindered access to it, and in addition a new means of transport—the railways—changed the routes followed by exports and imports.

And so matters remained until the Free City was re-established by the Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919). We do not propose to trace here the rise of the present Free City and its organization, or to chronicle the course of its post-War relations with Poland. It will be instructive, however, to draw attention to the bases on which these relations are poised, and to the similarities and dissimilarities which may be detected when we compare the history of Danzig and Poland since the War with that of bygone days.

As in former centuries, Danzig's relations with Poland revolve round two main premisses: (1) the city's natural economic connexion with Poland, and (2) its lack of affinity in certain respects with that country.

With regard to the first point, we may state that compared with conditions in the past, the particularism of Danzig has been heightened. The city now consti-

tutes a separate though not a sovereign political unit (the control of its foreign affairs is vested in Poland), whereas formerly it was merely a town of the Polish realm enjoying rights of municipal self-government. There are close analogies in the past with the conflicts which have arisen on several occasions since the War over Poland's conduct of the foreign affairs of Danzig.

With regard to the second point, Poland has strengthened her grip in the sphere of economic control. It has been unequivocally stated that Poland shall enjoy absolutely unimpeded access to the sea. Danzig forms part of the Polish customs area, its railways—with the exception of local lines—are owned and operated by Poland, Poland maintains a postal service in the Free City, and the management of the port is carried out jointly with Poland.

So much for the points of analogy between present and past. The emergence of new factors in the pattern of Polish-Danzig relations has now to be indicated:

(1) What lack of affinity there is between Danzig and Poland is now rooted, not in the particularism of municipal life and development—differences in this respect no longer exist—but in ethnic differences.

(2) The mainspring of the economic connexion with Poland is no longer the port and the Vistula, but only the port. The Vistula ceased to be a great artery of communication in the nineteenth century, when it had to yield pride of place to the railways. The hinterland served by Danzig has changed—it has greatly expanded and now stretches as far as Upper Silesia and the Eastern Carpathians.

(3) The ability to direct goods traffic by railway in any desired direction (as against the hard and fast river routes) has made possible the construction of a second port, Gdynia, on purely Polish territory. In former days the Polish Commonwealth had no instrument of competitive pressure capable of keeping Danzig within bounds; but under modern conditions and thanks to human energy this aim has been accomplished in little more than a decade.