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## **FROM THE HISTORY OF GERMAN SABOTAGE ON THE TERRITORY OF THE SILESIAN PROVINCE IN AUGUST 1939**

*In spring of the year 1939 the Abwehr and the subordinated to the SS Reichshfuehrer security service commenced mass recruitment among members of the German minority inhabiting the territory of the Republic of Poland to combat and sabotage diversionary organisations. In case of an outbreak of a war, the organisations subordinated to the Abwehr were to carry out attacks on the Polish Army troops, civilians and also destroy important from a military point of view objects, primarily communication ones. Completely different tasks were posed for implementation for groups set up by the security service (Sicherheitsdienst - SD). They were engaged in the preparation of provocative actions to justify the aggression of the Third Reich on Poland, as well as drawing up the inventory of people for arrest after the Wehrmacht invaded the Polish territory.*

**Key words:** *sabotage, Upper Silesia 1939, national minorities, German security service 1939*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The case of the German sabotage on the territory of the Republic of Poland on the eve of World War 2 has been arousing a lot of controversy for many years and is the subject of a great number of significant case studies, not only by Polish and German historians. The most controversial issue is the scale of the participation of German minorities in special actions against the Polish state, organized primarily by the Abwehr and the SD, and the size of the repression against minorities applied by the Polish side<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Extensive research into the condition of the above issues discussed recently in details T. Chiciński, *Niemiecka dywersja w Polsce w 1939 r. w świetle dokumentów policyjnych i wojskowych II Rzeczypospolitej*.

## 1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN SABOTAGE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE YEAR OF 1939

In late April 1939, Germany broke off a non-aggression treaty of 1934 with Poland. Nevertheless, a month earlier, the Wrocław Abwehr<sup>2</sup> post began recruiting members of the German minority living on the territory of the Republic of Poland to combat organizations: the Kampf Organisation (KO) and the Sabotage Organisation (SO). This recruitment started to adopt a mass character. In May 1939, only within the territory of the Silesian province the Abwehr, according to German sources, was to gain 2,465, and in July 4,474 people<sup>3</sup> to subversive activities. In case of war, these organizations were to launch attacks on the Polish Army troops, civilians and also destroy important from a military point of view objects, primarily communication ones<sup>4</sup>.

Completely different tasks were posed for implementation for groups set up by the security service (Sicherheitsdienst – SD)<sup>5</sup>. They were engaged in the preparation of provocative actions to justify the aggression of the Third Reich in Poland, as well as drawing up the inventory of people for arrest after the Wehrmacht invaded Polish territory<sup>6</sup>.

According to the SS Reichsführer<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Himmler's plans, subordinated to him sabotage groups were to make more than 180 attacks on 223 objects, on the territory of the Third Reich as well as Poland, and the Free City of Gdańsk in the summer of 1939. These objects were mostly owned by German minority organizations or companies, or were private property of the Germans<sup>8</sup>.

Groups of Himmler's agents penetrated into the Polish territory at the beginning of April 1939. Their task was to spread unrest and hold provocative actions. The first wave of arrests of saboteurs made by the Polish authorities took place in the same month. In total, in April and May on charges of spying for Germany dozens of people<sup>9</sup> were arrested. Border incidents in the first half of August 1939<sup>10</sup> were the reason for

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*spolitej oraz służb specjalnych III Rzeszy część 1 (marzec – sierpień 1939 r.), [w:] „Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość”, nr 2 (8), 2008, pp. 159 – 196.*

<sup>2</sup> The *Abwehr* was a German military intelligence (information gathering) organisation from 1921 to 1944.

<sup>3</sup> In June in the Poznań province diversionary groups consisted of 2,077, and in July 2,324 people. Diversionary groups formed of Ukrainian nationalists in the Eastern Galicia reached the status of about 4,000 people. There are some missing figures about the *Abwehr* subversive organizations in other provinces and structures subordinated to the SS Reichsführer.

<sup>4</sup> T. Chinciński, op. cit., pp. 169 – 170.

<sup>5</sup> The *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD, Security Service) was primarily the intelligence service of the SS and the Nazi Party in Nazi Germany.

<sup>6</sup> T. Chinciński, op. cit., pp. 170 – 171.

<sup>7</sup> The highest rank of the German *Schutzstaffel*.

<sup>8</sup> E. J. Osmańczyk, *Dowody prowokacji (nieznane archiwum Himmlera)*, Kraków 1951, pp. 10 – 15.

<sup>9</sup> T. Chinciński, op. cit. pp. 167 – 168.

<sup>10</sup> The most important of them include an unsuccessful attempt to kill a Polish guard by members of the German *freikorps* in the area of Ruda Śląska in the night from 9th to 10th August. However, as a result of the shooting, a German saboteur was killed. On the other hand, on 14th August in Piekary Śląskie another German saboteur, a member of *Jugenddeutsche Partei* at the same time, shot a Polish policeman. The killer was caught by passers-by and handed over to the police. M. Cygański, *Hitlerowska V kolumna w województwach śląskim i krakowskim w 1939 r.*, Opole 1972, pp. 122 – 123.

the Silesian police to carry out numerous arrests of German saboteurs on 15th and 16th August. Special police units detained 360 people then. As a result of the reviews, weapons and ammunition were found. Among those who were arrested was Senator Rudolf Wiesner. However, due to the interventions of British and French embassies and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs the vast majority of the arrested people were set free<sup>11</sup>.

The German authorities used these arrests for propaganda purposes, giving them to international public opinion as one of many examples of persecution of the German minority by the Polish authorities. In addition, the severity of provocative attacks on German institutions and organized attacks on German homes and farms by the militia subordinated to the SS Reichsführer on the last days of August were supposed to show the world the ill will of the Polish side and provide a pretext for war with Poland.

## 2. THE BEGINNING OF ACTIVITY OF THE FRENZEL'S GROUP

One of the many cases of the German sabotage in Silesia was 'Frenzel's affair'. On 24th August 1939 at about 2 p.m. at the border post in Lagiewniki<sup>12</sup> Hans Rudolf Thien<sup>13</sup> was arrested. The reason for Thien's detention was to be his suspicious behaviour and an attempt to cross the border from Poland to Germany without the required Polish visa. On the same day he was escorted to the State Police Investigation Department in Chorzow, and then, because of suspected espionage activity, he was taken over by the Independent Officer Post of the Information Department<sup>14</sup> DOK V<sup>15</sup> in Katowice<sup>16</sup>.

Later the same day Thien was questioned by Francis Hejnowicz – an official from the SRI Officer Post in Katowice. He admitted that he had been cooperating with the German intelligence. He gave the names of the persons who he came into contact with during his illegal activities as well. His testimony led to the arrests of several

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<sup>11</sup> T. Chinciński, op. cit., pp. 175.

<sup>12</sup> Lagiewniki - (in German: Hohenlinde) - currently a district of Bytom, in the Silesia province. By 1939 the Polish - German border crossing point.

<sup>13</sup> Hans Rudolf Thien - born on 4th November 1911 in Cieszyn, a son of Otton Wilhelm and Berta Hartmann, a Protestant, a German citizen of Polish nationality, a dyer by profession, he completed five years of elementary school and three years of secondary school (an equivalent to today's basic vocational schools), a reserve lance corporal military subjected to the Replenishment District Headquarters in Bielsko, took his military service in the battalion of Border Protection Corps (Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza) 'Derdrekały', at the time of detention he was living with his parents in Bielsko.

<sup>14</sup> The Independent Information Office (Samodzielny Referat Informacyjny) - a body of military counterintelligence of the Second Republic of Poland.

<sup>15</sup> DOK (Dowództwo Okręgu Korpusu - the Corps Area Command) - the territorial authority of the Ministry of Military Affairs in the Second Republic of Poland performing administrative, logistics (economic), mobilizational and charring functions. In the years 1921 - 1939 the Polish territory was divided into ten districts of Corps Areas. Their region was not identical as the administrative division of the province. The headquarters of DOK V, whose area covered, among others, Silesia, was Krakow.

<sup>16</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (APK), Policja Województwa Śląskiego /1911/ 1922 – 1939 (PWŚl.), 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Frenzel Herbert – niem.[iecka] akcja dywersyjna, sprawa dostarczania bomb zegarowych - pismo Wydziału Śledczego Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Urzędu Śledczego Głównej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego z 26 VIII 1939 roku.

people – Polish citizens of German origin – also recruited to work with the German intelligence<sup>17</sup>.

Noteworthy is close cooperation of the State Police with the military counter-espionage and the speed at which they started 'interrogation' of the person suspected of subversive activities to the detriment of the Polish state. This demonstrates the seriousness which such cases were treated with in the full of tension August 1939.

The founder and also the head of the subversive and espionage ring, which arrested in Lagiewniki Hans Thien belonged to, was born and residing in Bielsko<sup>18</sup> a German citizen Herbert Frenzel<sup>19</sup>. In 1936, after graduating from elementary school and junior high school in Bielsko, he left for Breslau to university. Until that time he had not belonged to any organisation, either Polish or German.

At the beginning of 1938 Frenzel met Joachim Nehring during one of students' meetings and he established a closer relationship with him. According to Frenzel, Nehring spoke Polish fluently enough, was a student at the University of Wrocław, as well as an SS officer<sup>20</sup>.

In March 1938 Frenzel, at the instigation of Nehring, set off for Bytom, where he met Heinz Brandt, who was working for the German newspaper 'Deutsche Nachrichten' published in Katowice. Brandt suggested to Frenzel that he translated articles from the Polish press during his stay at college in Wrocław. The work was performed by the Wrocław student without demanding a salary in return until the end of 1938.

On 13th August 1939 during the meeting with Nehring, Frenzel was instructed, with the use of a dummy of a time bomb, about details of the preparation for its detonation. Moreover, Nehring stated that on 17th August in Bielsko Frenzel was to obtain 5 trunks with time bombs from a specimen on the password 'Breslau'. The bombs were to be planted under official buildings in Bielsko and Katowice. Nehring mentioned, among other things, the Polish Bank building, the station, as well as other

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<sup>17</sup> APK, PWŚI, sygn. 38/I, Odpis zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Hansa Rudolfa Thiena sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach przez Franciszka Hejnowicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 24 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>18</sup> Until the year of 1950 an independent city in Cieszyn Silesia. Currently, Bielsko-Biała in the Silesia province. Since the division of Cieszyn Silesia in 1920, despite protests of 87 per cent German majority of inhabitants of the city, Bielsko was connected to Poland.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert Frenzel - residing and born on 10th October 1916 in Bielsko, a son of Rudolf and Maria nee Klimczok, a Roman-Catholic, unmarried at the time of arrest, a German citizen of German nationality, unpunished, did not take military service, a student of Philosophy at the University of Wrocław. He probably came from a wealthy family – police documents specify his father as a businessman. According to Hans Thien's testimony, Frenzel was supposed to be a member of the SS. This is not confirmed by other evidence – including Frenzel's testimony.

<sup>20</sup> SS Obersturmführer Joachim Nehring was the head of the SD post in Bytom. He was subjected to SS Obersturmbannführer Günther, the commander of the SD for the management of sabotage in the Silesia province. Günther had his headquarters in Wrocław. In one of his statements Frenzel said that Nehring came from the Poznan region.

at Frenzel's discretion<sup>21</sup>. Nehring also added that the targets of the bomb attacks were to be German buildings as well in both of those cities. When asked by Frenzel why German buildings were to be damaged, Nehring explained that it was feared that the Polish authorities would seize the buildings<sup>22</sup>. Two trunks, each containing four bombs were to be used in Bielsko. The remaining three trunks, with a total content of twelve bombs were to be delivered in the early morning hours on 24th August at the 'Schwidewski' petrol station at Castle Street in Katowice. They were to be collected by a specimen on the password 'Beuthen'.

The alarm signal to begin preparations for the subversive actions was to be 'Deutschmeistermarsch' given by the German radio station in Wroclaw at 7.50 p.m. A specimen sent for that purpose from Germany was to inform about the precise time of the action and he would also be to accept the objects of the attack selected by Frenzel.

Frenzel left Wroclaw the next day after the meeting with Nehring and he set about building a diversionary network<sup>23</sup>. The first candidate for recruitment was Hans Thien, who Frenzel met in March 1939 in the editorial office of 'Der Aufbruch' in Bielsko<sup>24</sup>.

Thien worked for that editorial since the spring of 1938 as a newspaper carrier. Low incomes – 35 zlotys a month – forced him to take additional work as a collector for 'Deutscher Wehlfahrtsdienst', where he received 15 zlotys a month.

On 17th August 1939 Frenzel invited Thien to one of Bielsko restaurants named 'Alley', where they drank vodka and beer together. In the same way Frenzel hosted Thien the following day. He offered him a job for the German intelligence and a salary of 1,000 zlotys for executing 'certain activities'. He also bound him, as a German, to secrecy<sup>25</sup>. On 21st August in the afternoon they met again in the restaurant 'Alley', from where they went to Frenzel's apartment, where Thien finally was to agree to cooperate. Frenzel decided to use Thien as a liaison officer to contacts with

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<sup>21</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach sporządzony przez Tadeusza Rózkiewicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 25 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>22</sup> Thus the provocative nature of these attacks Nehring disguised even against his own agents. Центральний державний історичний архів України, м. Львів, (ЦДІАЛ України), Komenda Główna Policji Województwa Śląskiego. Urząd Śledczy w Katowicach (KGPWŚI), sygn. 643/1/1, Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela przeprowadzony przez komisarza Skrysko z komisariatu Policji Państwowej w Białej Krakowskiej w dniu 28 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>23</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach sporządzony przez Tadeusza Rózkiewicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 25 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>24</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚI, sygn. 643/1/1, Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela przeprowadzony przez komisarza Skrysko z Komisariatu z komisariatu Policji Państwowej w Białej Krakowskiej w dniu 28 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>25</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Odpis zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Hansa Rudolfa Thiena sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach przez Franciszka Hejnowicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 24 VIII 1939 roku.

Nehring. For this purpose, they both went by bus from Bielsko to Katowice. In the German consulate in Katowice Frenzel requested a talk to consul Schaller. Thien stayed in a waiting room, and Frenzel informed the consul that he was maintaining contacts with the SS officer Nehring and intended to send Thien for the instructions to the above mentioned person. He asked the consul to issue a passport for Thien. The consul strongly rejected the possibility of issuing a German passport to a Polish citizen, and therefore the two German saboteurs returned to Bielsko on the same day<sup>26</sup>.

On the following day they both went by bus to Cieszyn, where Thien received the first task – he was to go to the Moravian Ostrava<sup>27</sup> to Gajer<sup>28</sup>. After giving the password 'Parkstrasse 119' he was to receive passwords and information about when the broadcasting station in Wroclaw changes a broadcasted until that time march into another one during the evening messages at 8 p.m. or 10 p.m. Thien was to learn by heart the passwords given so that he could pass them later to Frenzel. The passwords and the change of the march was to be obviously a signal for starting the diversionary activities.

After obtaining the information Gajer was to provide him a false passport on the basis of which Thien would return to Poland. He was to cross the Polish border with the Protectorate illegally<sup>29</sup> with the help of Broda – Frenzel's friend from Cieszyn. On that same day Thien together with Broda went to a farmer living not far from the border in the neighbourhood of Trzyniec. The person, according to Brody, was engaged in smuggling. Thien stayed at his place and after dusk he was to be conducted on the territory of the Protectorate. But yet in the evening he changed his mind and walked to Cieszyn, from where he went to Bielsko by train.

The next day, i.e. on 23rd August, Thien met Frenzel in Bielsko. During the conversation Thien stated that he was afraid of crossing the border illegally – he would prefer to do it with a passport. Therefore, on the same day in the morning they both left for Cieszyn<sup>30</sup>, in order to obtain a passport in the local German consulate. However, they did not find the vice-consul – Dr. Ehrenhaus – and drove off back to Bielsko.

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<sup>26</sup> APK, PWŚl, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Frenzel Herbert – niem.[iecka] akcja dywersyjna, sprawa dostarczania bomb zegarowych - pismo Wydziału Śledczego Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Urzędu Śledczego Głównej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego z 26 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>27</sup> Currently Ostrava – a city in the Czech Republic on the border of Cieszyn Silesia. Since March 1939, Ostrava was in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia - an autonomous administrative unit created by the Germans from the occupied parts of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia Cieszyn.

<sup>28</sup> During the first interrogation on 24 August 1939, Thien said that Frenzel ordered him to go to Bytom to a man named Grimm. Perhaps Grimm was also one of the 'contacts' of the subversive network being built by Nehring.

<sup>29</sup> After 15th August legal border crossing was greatly hampered. On that date the Office of the Silesian Province ordered the closure of border traffic with the Third Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which had been held on the basis of the border passes. A day earlier the German authorities issued the same order in the section of the district of Rybnik.

<sup>30</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Dodatkowy zapisek rozpytania Hansa Rudolfa Thiena spisany dnia 26 sierpnia 1939 r. w Wydziale Śledczym w Katowicach przez starszego przodownika śledczego Gurtlara.

On 24th August in the morning, Frenzel and Thien went to Cieszyn by bus again. In the consulate Thien, like in Katowice, remained in the waiting room<sup>31</sup>, while Frenzel, referring to his contacts with the SS, presented the vice-consul the need to issue a passport for Thien. Dr. Ehrenhaus initially hesitated, saying that this was impossible, but after Frenzel's explanations that it was a very important matter, answered that he 'will see what can be done'<sup>32</sup>. Then Dr. Ehrenhaus went by car, together with Thien, to the German Consulate in Katowice. There Thien received a German passport and he learnt that he would cross the border on the same day by a car of the Consulate<sup>33</sup>, in the company of the German Consul in Katowice – Schüller – the countess of Praszma and the chauffeur of the Consulate<sup>34</sup>.

At 100 meters from the border point the driver stopped the car, then he ordered Thien to get out and cross the border on foot. Thien firmly replied that he would not get out of the car and wanted to cross the border in a car. At the border point, the police checked only Thien's identity papers, he had his passport confiscated, then he was declared to be detained. At that time other people traveling in the consulate car crossed the border<sup>35</sup>. Thien's detention initiated arrests of other members of the subversive network created by Frenzel.

### 3. THE DELIVERY OF EXPLOSIVES

A week earlier, at noon on 17th August a Mercedes-Benz<sup>36</sup> with Polish registration numbers drove up to Frenzel's flat in Bielsko. A man at the age of about 40<sup>37</sup> got out of the car, and after ascertaining that he was dealing with Herbert Frenzel mentioned

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<sup>31</sup> Whereas Thien gave in his testimony that both the day and the previous one, he waited for Frenzel in one of the restaurants in Cieszyn - APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Odpis zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Hansa Rudolfa Thiena sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach przez Franciszka Hejnowicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 24 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>32</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Frenzel Herbert – niem.[iecka] akcja dywersyjna, sprawa dostarczania bomb zegarowych - Pismo Wydziału Śledczego Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Urzędu Śledczego Głównej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego z 26 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>33</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Odpis zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Hansa Rudolfa Thiena sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach przez Franciszka Hejnowicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 24 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>34</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚI, sygn. 643/1/1, Frenzel Herbert – niem.[iecka] akcja dywersyjna, sprawa dostarczania bomb zegarowych - Pismo Wydziału Śledczego Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Urzędu Śledczego Głównej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego z 26 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>35</sup> APK, PWŚI, 38/I, Osoby podejrzane o szpiegostwo. Materiały dochodzeń policyjnych z lat 1922 – 1939, Odpis zapisek z rozpytania podejrzanego Hansa Rudolfa Thiena sporządzony w Wydziale Śledczym Policji Państwowej w Katowicach przez Franciszka Hejnowicza - urzędnika Placówki Oficerskiej Samodzielnego Referatu Informacyjnego DOK V w Katowicach w dniu 24 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>36</sup> According to M. Cygański the car was to be owned by the German Consulate in Katowice. M. Cygański, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>37</sup> The personal profile of the man could not be determined. According to Frenzel, his name probably was Kreizel or Kreisel.

the previously agreed password 'Breslau'. This person gave Frenzel 5 trunks<sup>38</sup> – each of them contained four bombs. He repeated and specified the instructions given earlier by Nehring – the contents of two trunks were to be used in Bielsko, while the 3 other ones Frenzel was supposed to deliver to the petrol station 'Schwidowski' at Castle Street in Katowice to a person who would mention the password 'Deuthen' on 24th August at 5 a.m.

On the same day the bombs were transported to Gustav Prawitz<sup>39</sup>, whose daughter<sup>40</sup> was Thien's fiancée. There, with the help of Hans Thien, his fiancée, Wiktor König and Walter Hoffman<sup>41</sup> they were hidden in the Prawitz's garden. According to Frenzel's later testimony, he informed all those present there that the trunks contained bombs, which were to be used to carry out attacks. Next day they were transported to 'a staunch German'<sup>42</sup> Wiktor König, also residing in Bielsko.

On about 20th August Karmel or Kermel<sup>43</sup> came to Frenzel's flat in Bielsko. He stated that he came on Nehring's command and reminded to pass the three trunks with bombs to Katowice<sup>44</sup>.

On 24th August at about 3.30 in the morning, after previous consultation with König, Frenzel went to him with Francis Wagner<sup>45</sup>, in his car, then he took the three trunks with bombs and a briefcase containing German hand grenades. In addition, Frenzel ordered König to transport the other two trunks, one hand grenade and a detonator to Las Cygański in the neighbourhood of Bielsko as soon as possible. Then Frenzel with Wagner set out to the agreed place in Katowice, where they passed the trunks to the awaiting specimen, who turned out to be Stanislaw Stachura<sup>46</sup>, finally they drove off back to Bielsko<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> In his first testimony Frenzel stated that he had been delivered three trunks.

<sup>39</sup> Prawitz Gustaw Wilhelm - born in 1883 in Bielsko, residing in Bielsko, a Protestant, a Polish citizen of German nationality, a private official.

<sup>40</sup> Prawitz Hilda – born in 1909 in Kamienica, a daughter of Gustaw Wilhelm and Waleria nee Schanke, residing in Bielsko, a Protestant, unmarried, no occupation, a Polish citizen of German nationality.

<sup>41</sup> There are missing details about Rudolf Hoffmann.

<sup>42</sup> The term given to the protocol by Frenzel. König was recruited by Frenzel at the same time as Thien did. No details about him.

<sup>43</sup> There are missing details about him. According to Frenzel he was to be a German citizen residing in Katowice.

<sup>44</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚI, sygn. 643/1/1, Dodatkowy zapiszek rozpytania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela przeprowadzony przez przeprowadzony przez Andrzeja Nadolnego, przodownika Wydziału Śledczego Policji Państwowej w Katowicach 26 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>45</sup> Franciszek Wagner – born in 1904 in Bielsko, a son of Alojzy and Maria nee Banat, residing in Bielsko, a Roman-Catholic, a sales manager of the company 'Polhurt', married, a platoon reserve of the 3rd infantry regiment, not punished, a Polish citizen of Polish nationality (Wagner gave the Polish nationality to the protocol – although, according to the interrogator – he hardly spoke Polish).

<sup>46</sup> Stanislaw Stachura – born in 1893 in Srokowiec, a son of Karol and Maria nee Stefan, a bachelor, a miner by profession, residing in Wołnowiec, served in the Polish Army.

<sup>47</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚI, sygn. 643/1/1, Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Herberta Frenzela przeprowadzony przez komisarza Skrysko z Komisariatu z komisariatu Policji Państwowej w Białej Krakowskiej w dniu 28 VIII 1939 r.



Stanisław Stachura, according to his own testimony, was to be enlisted in the diversionary work on 22nd August 1939. He preserved the explosives entrusted to him for a few hours and then he passed them to other German saboteurs<sup>48</sup>.

They were probably used as early as several hours later. On 26th August a few minutes after 1.00 at night two explosions took place in Katowice. Explosives were planted under the local office of Volksbund at 23 Młyńska Street and the minority school building at Stawowa Street. There were no fatalities, but the explosions caused considerable material losses. A day earlier, on 25th August at 7.55 p.m. the broadcasting station Breslau-Gleiwitz made the following announcement in German: 'Die Kameraden Dr. Funk und Eichhorn die Gemeinsame Arbeit haben und sich aufzunehmen zumelden'<sup>49</sup>. Officers of the police in Katowice associated this with Frenzel's previous testimony giving evidence that the above-mentioned station was to cooperate in the bomb attacks by transmitting the agreed passwords. Moreover, on the night from 27th to 28th August in the König's premises in Biała there was a strong explosion that caused severe damage. Policemen from Katowice linked the explosion with the trunks, which Frenzel had given König for storing, and came to a conclusion that they were the result of careless handling them by saboteurs or of intentional operation<sup>50</sup>.

#### 4. ARRESTS

As already mentioned by way of introduction, Hans Thien, shortly after being arrested on 24th August, confessed to his participation in the subversive action and also gave the names of the persons who he had met during his illegal activities. The next day at 6.00 a.m. in Bielsko Herbert Frenzel was detained<sup>51</sup>. During the next few days, the police searched houses of the persons mentioned in Thien's and Frenzel's testimonies<sup>52</sup>. At least a dozen or so people were apprehended, but most of them were released after interrogation<sup>53</sup>. The following persons were put in a custodial remand and submitted for the disposal of the public prosecutor's office: Herbert Frenzel, Hans Thien, Franciszek Wagner, Stanisław Stachura, Gustaw Prawitz and Hilda Prawitz<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Dalsze zapiski rozpytania podejrzanego Stanisława Stachury sporządzone dnia 27 sierpnia 1939 roku w Wydziale Śledczym w Katowicach przez starszego przodownika służby śledczej Jokla Romana, w obecności nadkomisarza Brodniewicza.

<sup>49</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Frenzel Herbert – niem.[iecka] akcja dywersyjna, sprawa dostarczania bomb zegarowych - Pismo Wydziału Śledczego Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Urzędu Śledczego Głównej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego z 26 VIII 1939 roku.

<sup>50</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Pismo Wydziału Śledczego Miejskiej i Powiatowej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Prokuratora Sądu Okręgowego – Rejonu I – w Katowicach dotyczące Frenzela Herberta i tow.[arzyszy] – dostarczanie bomb zegarowych do niem.[ieckiej] akcji dywersyjnej z 28 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>51</sup> Later that day he was escorted to the custodial remand in Katowice.

<sup>52</sup> As a result of the reviews, there were not found any time bombs or other objects that could be used to carry out sabotage actions.

<sup>53</sup> On 25th August the Police Headquarters of the Silesia Province in Bielsko stopped and released after questioning, among others, Herbert Frenzel's parents and siblings and Gustav Prawitz's wife and son as well.

<sup>54</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Pismo Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Bielsku do Wydziału Śledczego w Katowicach w sprawie Frenzela Herberta i tow.[arzyszy] z 27 VIII

The detainees were subjected to everyday interrogations, obtaining more and more new information from them. As a result of the carried out confrontation, Stanisław Stachura identified Wagner and Thien as persons who he had received the trunks with time bombs from<sup>55</sup>. Stachura also gave names of the people<sup>56</sup> who had taken these trunks away from him<sup>57</sup>.

On 25th August, after Frenzel's apprehending, the Municipal and District Police Headquarters in Katowice sent a facsimile to subordinated police stations, in which very careful permanent or, in case of lack of a sufficient number of police officers, casual but frequent observation of state office buildings was ordered. Performing controls of packages and suitcases was considered advisable. In the explanation information about the German plans of German subversive bands and time bombs they possessed was given.

The persons detained in the 'Frenzel's affair' were Polish citizens. Some of them were Polish army reservists having valid mobilization assignments at the time of their detention. There is a lack of information about prior belonging to German nationalist organizations or anti-Polish activity of those detainees. Only Wiktor König was considered 'a staunch German'. Being in a poor financial situation, Thien bore in mind the need of material benefits – for the held action he was to be paid 1000 zlotys. Probably Frenzel followed similar motives. This reason appears in one of the documents. It is not known what motivated the others.

From the accumulated documentation it does not appear that the creator of the subversive network – Frenzel – underwent more serious diversionary training. Other members were recruited in a random manner as well. The big problem was the communication with principals from the security service who were directing the action from the territory of the Reich. It usually took place via coded information passed on by German radio stations, through the German consular posts or couriers crossing the border illegally. However, the last way on the last days of August caused considerable difficulties.

Thien's accidental apprehension by the border police contributed to the liquidation, in just a few days, of the entire diversionary network. Almost all the detainees immediately admitted their subversive activities, gave the names of collaborators and in successive questionings more and more new details about their operation. This demonstrates good work of the Silesian province police cooperating with the bodies of the military counterespionage, but also a less than perfect organization of the German

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1939 r.; Pismo Wydziału Śledczego Miejskiej i Powiatowej Komendy Policji Województwa Śląskiego w Katowicach do Prokuratora Sądu Okręgowego – Rejonu I – w Katowicach dotyczące Frenzela Herberta i tow.[arzyszy] – dostarczanie bomb zegarowych do niem.[ieckiej] akcji dywersyjnej z 28 VIII 1939 r.

<sup>55</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Dalsze zapiski rozpytania podejrzanego Stanisława Stachury sporządzone dnia 27 sierpnia 1939 roku w Wydziale Śledczym w Katowicach przez starszego przodownika służby śledczej Jokla Romana, w obecności nadkomisarza Brodniewicza

<sup>56</sup> They were: Willi Kermel, Student and probably Schmidt (Stachura did not remember the first names of the last two of them). It is not known whether these people were detained.

<sup>57</sup> ЦДІАЛ України, KGPWŚl, sygn. 643/1/1, Dodatkowe zapiski z rozpytania podejrzanego Stanisława Stachury przeprowadzone przez Andrzeja Nadobnego – przodownika służby śledczej z Wydziału Śledczego w Katowicach w dniu 28 VIII 1939 r.

intelligence networks. On the last days before the explosion creating them the German security service conducted mass and accidental recruitment. Targets of attacks and action plans were assigned not precisely. It was not also established where and how to store explosives.

## THE END

Noteworthy is the co-operation of German consulate workers with Frenzel's network. Mentioned in the article explosive materials were transported to Bielsko by car owned by the German Consulate in Katowice. Then Thien, with the help of the German vice-consul in Cieszyn – Dr. Ehrenhaus – received a German passport issued by the Consulate in Katowice. The issuance of this document by a German consular office to a Polish citizen was not only a violation of international consular law, but also a crime. Thien was arrested at the border point in Lagiewniki in a car owned by the German Consulate in Katowice and in the presence of vice-consul Schuller, who was fully aware of who and for what reasons he was carrying. On 30th August 1939 Polish authorities decided to close the only Consulate in Bielsko, but this also constituted the basis for the closure of the Third Reich post in Katowice.

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## Z DZIEJÓW NIEMIECKIEJ DYWERSJI NA TERENIE WOJEWÓDZTWA ŚLĄSKIEGO W SIERPNIU 1939 ROKU

### Streszczenie

Wiosną 1939 roku Abwehra i podległa Reichshführerowi SS służba bezpieczeństwa rozpoczęły masowy werbunek do organizacji bojowych i sabotażowo-dywersyjnych członków mniejszości niemieckiej zamieszkujących terytorium Rzeczypospolitej. W przypadku wybuchu wojny organizacje podległe Abwehrze miały dokonywać ataków na oddziały WP, ludność cywilną, a także niszczyć ważne z wojskowego punktu widzenia obiekty – przede wszystkim komunikacyjne. Zupełnie inne zadania postawiono do wykonania grupom utworzonym przez służbę

*bezpieczeństwa (Siherheitsdienst–SD). Zajmowały się one przygotowaniem akcji prowokacyjnych mających uzasadnić agresję III Rzeszy na Polskę, a także sporządzeniem spisu osób przeznaczonych do aresztowania po wkroczeniu Wehrmachtu na ziemie polskie.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** *dywersja, Śląsk Górny 1939, mniejszości narodowe, służba bezpieczeństwa Niemiec 1939*

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