

WORLD HISTORY AT KMLA

1557-
1660

HISTORY OF DANZIG (GDANSK)

1793-
1807

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Danzig, 1660-1793

Poland's wars, as well as the territorial losses to Russia (Peace of Andrussovo, 1667) resulted in diminished grain exports through the port of Danzig, down from 55,000 last (weight units) in 1651 to 28,000 last on average in the 1660es. Reduced Polish exports also meant a reduced purchasing power. Poland's kings, in order to make up for reduced income, repeatedly raised the tolls collected on goods from Danzig, which again was detrimental to Danzig's trade. To make matters worse, the Vistula mouth began to silt up, causing problems for shipping; a new sandbank, the WESTERPLATTE, emerged. A new shipping route was excavated and kept open (Neufahrwasser). In order to face the economic problems, the city council promoted the growth of a textile industry in Danzig.

The populace suffered from heavy taxation. The various religious communities - majority Lutherans, minority Calvinists, Catholics, Mennonites - became increasingly antagonistic. The Jesuits, in Danzig since 1585, demanded that a parish church would be transferred to them, and attempted to use the Polish king to achieve their goal; King Jan Sobieski visited Danzig in 1677, without interfering on behalf of the Jesuits.

In 1668, a woman was executed for witchcraft in Zoppot outside Danzig. In 1670, c. 40,000 Mennonites lived in Royal Prussia, 28,000 of them in and around Danzig. In 1677 the municipal constitution was revised; codified in 1678 (Decretum Johannis III.).

Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit (1686-1736), the inventor of the thermometer, was born in Danzig. In 1743 the NATURFORSCHENDE GESELLSCHAFT IN DANZIG (Society for Natural Science in D.) was founded. A SOCIETAS LITERARIA had been established in 1720.

In 1700 the GREAT NORTHERN WAR began; again Swedish armies invaded Poland. Swedish troops appeared in front of Danzig (1703, 1704), and the city was forced to make huge payments and (1704) to join the Warsaw Confederation, i.e. to recognize Stanislas Leszczyński, the king enthroned by Swedish king Charles XII. (and in consequence to defy reigning king Augustus II. who had fled the country). In 1709 the Swedes lost the Battle of Poltava, and Danzig was relieved from the Swedish menace; yet the plague returned to the city and claimed thousands of victims. In 1710 the Black Death claimed 1,784 victims. The Russians, who claimed to have come as liberators, in the same manner as before the Swedes, demanded payments; peace was only negotiated in 1719-1721. In 1716, Czar Peter visited Danzig.

In 1723, the Jews were expelled from the city and from the suburbs of Petershagen and Ohra. In 1733 the WAR OF POLISH SUCCESSION (1733-1735) broke out. Following the death of Augustus II., Stanislas Leszczynski, supported by France, reclaimed the throne; Russia and Austria supported Augustus III., son of the late Augustus II. The decisive struggle in the Polish theatre of war took place at Danzig, to where Stanislas Leszczynski had taken refuge after failing to rally support in Poland. Danzig proclaimed her allegiance to Leszczynski; in February 1734 a Russian army laid siege to the city. Danzig surrendered in June 1734; the city again had to pay heavy contributions; the city had suffered heavy damage during the siege.

In the 18th century, Danzig experienced increased competition (among others, the first American wheat exports) and also suffered from mercantilist policies introduced elsewhere. The city's economy was based on privileges which seemed the more outdated the more time progressed. Danzig's shipping declined, even in times of peace. The population declined from 77,000 in 1650 to 48,000 in 1730, 46,000 in 1750. In 1772 Prussia, Austria and Russia agreed on the FIRST POLISH PARTITION. While the city of Danzig herself was unaffected, her hinterland (now officially referred to as WEST PRUSSIA) was annexed by Prussia; the city of Danzig only had been spared the same fate because Prussia's desire to annex the city had been vetoed by Czarina Catherine the Great. Prussia's rigidly planned economic policy was to harm Danzig's trade by collecting tolls, redirecting trade to Prussian ports, promoting a new municipal community created out of Danzig's suburbs on Prussian soil (Stolzenberg). In the SECOND POLISH PARTITION of 1793, Prussia annexed, among others, the city of Danzig herself; a tradition of municipal autonomy, lasting for over 300 years, was terminated.

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<p>EXTERNAL LINKS</p>	<p>Entry Naturforschende Gesellschaft in Danzig, from Scholarly Societies Project From Danzig to Kolberg (1734), from History of the Russian Navy</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS</p>	<p>Coat of Arms, from International Civic Heraldry Article Dantzig, from Zedlers Universallexikon (1732), posted by Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, in German; 18th century font</p>
<p>REFERENCE</p>	<p>Erich Keyser, Danzigs Geschichte, (Danzig 1928) Reprint Hamburg : Danziger Verlagsgesellschaft Paul Rosenberg, undated (History of Danzig), 300 pp. Hans Georg Siegler, Danzig - Chronik eines Jahrtausends (Danzig - Chronicle of a Millennium; a timeline),</p>