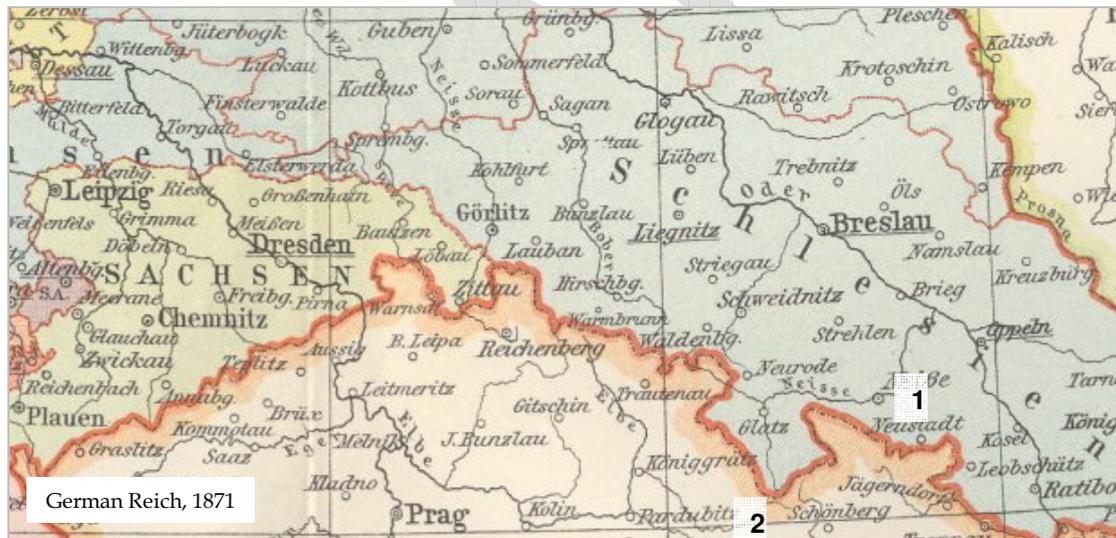


IV: THE LONE RANGER FROM THE EAST: TOWARDS 1900

About three years after Friedrich Hinsch's son left Leipzig, the city registered a new citizen to its burgeoning population. The 20th century was barely new when Paul Tyralla arrived from Prussia's Province of Silesia (*Schlesien* in German, *Śląsk* in Polish). Like Friedrich some 23 years earlier, Paul travelled several hundred kilometers. But while Friedrich was 25 years old when he arrived, Paul was just 18.

In 1987, my grandmother could tell us just three things about her father. First, that he died in world war one; second, his unusual family name, and; third, that he came from somewhere in Poland. It wasn't until 1992 that I learned the name of that 'somewhere,' and after combing through old German maps on a damp autumn afternoon in 1993 in London's British Library, I finally found where that somewhere was. Paul Joseph Tyralla came from *Radstein*. In 1995, I was fortunate enough to visit his home village and as I drifted in, exchanging German language greetings with the locals I wondered what more I would learn about my great grandfather's family.



It's easy to see on the above map that Radstein ('1') lay almost at the border of what since 1867 had been the Austro-Hungarian Empire (and since 1804, the Austrian Empire). Yet it was also not far from 'Russian' Poland's border, to its north and east.

Silesia in fact had once been under the Austrian (Habsburg) crown, but Prussia's annexation of almost all of it in 1742 left just a few southeastern duchies in Austrian hands. Following the Napoleonic Wars, in 1815, Prussia made Silesia a province, which from 1871 found itself part of the German Empire (see also Chapter I). From this time on, Silesia was administered as three districts, their centres being *Liegnitz*, *Breslau* and *Oppeln*. Later in 1919, those parts of the province remaining in German hands were reorganized into western 'Lower Silesia' and eastern 'Upper Silesia' (*Niederschlesien* and *Oberschlesien* respectively).

Sandwiched as it was between Poland and Austria-Hungary, it's not surprising that Silesia was a multi-ethnic province. According to the population census of 1905, three-quarters of its inhabitants were Germans, while east of the Oder River (which ran from its southeastern corner through *Oppeln*, *Breslau* and *Grünberg*) the majority were Poles.



Polish as a mother tongue in Silesia (green), 1900 (Wikipedia: German Empire)

The map left also indicates (in green) those regions of Silesia where Polish was spoken as a mother tongue in 1900. It's not hard to spot the green stripe extending southwest of Oppeln – one that effectively ran straight through Radstein. This community resided in what later became Upper Silesia, where R.L. Bell remarked they “speak a dialect called *Wasserpolnisch*.”¹

Other sources (e.g. Wikipedia) mention Upper Silesian was a Slavic language, which some considered to be a Polish dialect (Lower Silesian in contrast was constituted by German dialects). This suggests Paul Tyralla's family lived predominantly among 'Upper Silesian' Poles. Maps too (from 1893 and 1907) indicate German was spoken by just 20-25 percent of Radstein's residents, as a mother tongue.²

'Tyralla' doesn't sound very German, but neither does it come across as particularly Polish. This may be because Silesians are said to be “a strange racial mixture of German and Slav³” whose loyalty typically remains first and foremost to Silesia.⁴ Of its five million residents in 1905, some 56 percent (2,765,394) were Catholics, 43 percent (2,120,361) were Protestants and one percent (46,845) was Jewish.⁵ Paul Tyralla's family was Catholic, a religion that was predominant in the province's southeastern part and around Glatz – that visible 'pocket' of land southeast of Waldenburg.

Given Silesia's ethnic and religious make-up and history, what is there to say about Paul Tyralla's family background and his home itself, which today is called *Radostynia*? Answers came thick and fast during a bitterly cold November 1995, when three days were spent inside a freezing parish church a few kilometers away in *Ellguth*, poring over dusty volumes that listed the births and deaths of Radstein's residents (see also the 'How did I do it?' annex). Literally hundreds of Tyrallas were listed and considerable time was required to identify the relationships between them and constitute their family tree. The more or less complete version is shown below.

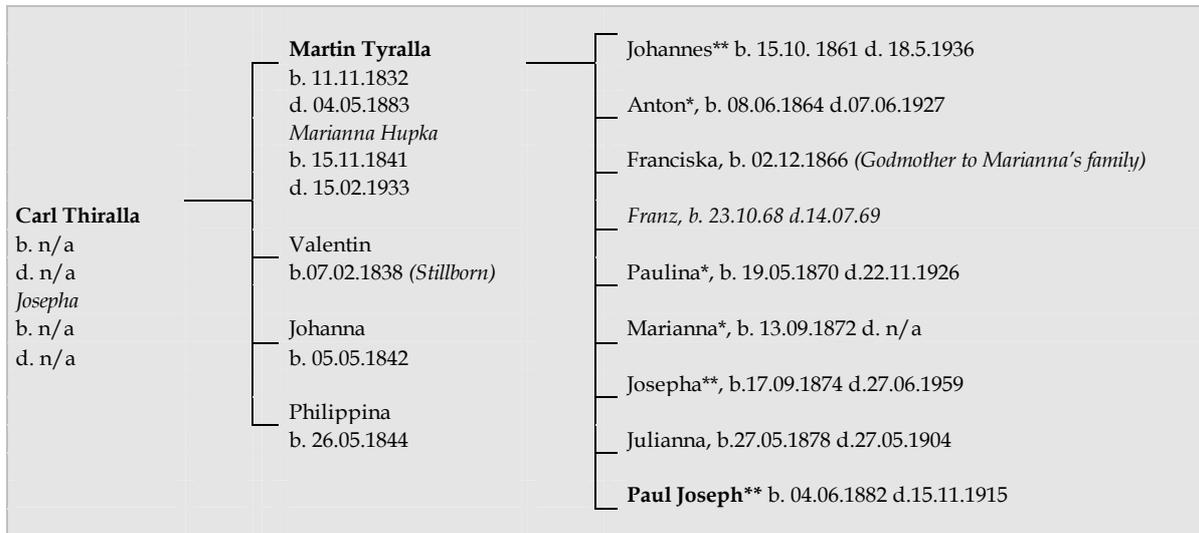
¹ R.L. Bell, *Poland: Key to Europe*, 1939, pg.245

² [Landkarte-Schlesien-Meyer-5 1893.gif](#) and [Schlesien1907.jpg](#)

³ [Berlin](#) P.40

⁴ Over 170,000 people declared Silesian nationality in the Polish national census in 2002 (Wikipedia)

⁵ <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Silesia>



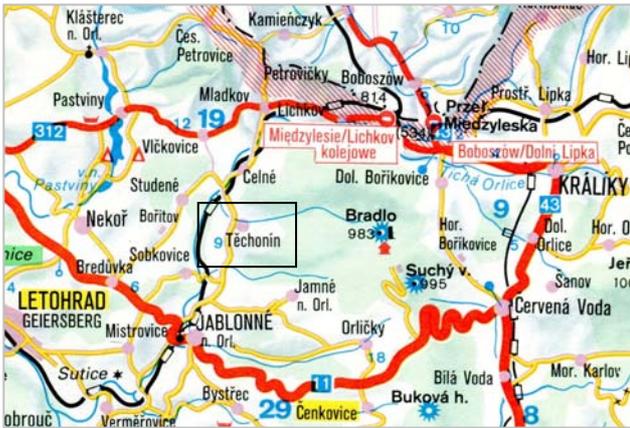
*Married seemingly Polish locals named Przyklenk, Suchy, and Janik/Schendzielarz and bore large families.

**Married seemingly Germans named Rehrmet, Ernst and Hinsch (respectively)

It reveals that Paul was the ninth and last child to Marianna Hupka and Martin Tyralla and that he was born 4th June 1882. His parents were hardly young when he arrived – his father was almost 50, while his mother was 41. That made them a generation or so older than Paul's eventual in-laws; Friedrich and Marie Hinsch. It also means Paul was a generation younger than his older brother, who could easily have been his father!

The Tyrallas started their family in 1861, when Martin was 29 and Marianna was just a month short of her twentieth birthday (a demographic consistent with typical age differences within couples at that time - see also Chapter II). Two sons (Johannes and Anton) were followed by five daughters (Franciska, Paulina, Marianna, Josepha and Julianna). A son, Franz arrived between the first and second daughter but died within less than a year. The last of the crop was Paul, a good 20 years after Johannes. A customarily large Catholic family, all of whose names reflected their religion, observed Martina Wermes of the *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv* in May 2011.

The paternal side of the family had made Radstein their home for generations; Paul's father had been born there on 11th November 1832 and was one of four children to Josepha and Carl 'Thiralla.' Paul's mother, at almost exactly nine years younger than her husband, was born in Radstein on 15th November, 1841 to Veronika and Thomas Hupka. Both they, however, were regarded according to their daughter's birth register as *Aussiedlerin*; i.e. settlers or immigrants. Who then were his migratory grandparents, and where did they come from? Determining that required considerable study in itself.

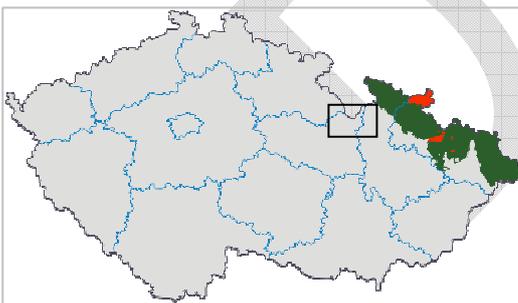


Linsdorf (today Těchonín), just south of Glatzer Land and today's Polish border (see enlarged area below for context)

Thomas and Veronika Hupka hailed from a place called *Linsdorf* (marked '2' on the map on pg. 65). It lay 75km from Radstein and 25km south of Glatz, on the other side of what had become Prussia's boundary in 1742. Today it is called *Těchonín* (boxed left) and lies in modern-day Czech Republic. Paul's grandparents were most likely born between 1800 and 1820, while their emigration was surely no later than 1840. That means they resettled from the Austrian Empire (and within it, the Kingdom of Bohemia) to Prussia at a time when both were jostling to lead the new German Confederation (see Chapter I).

So why did they migrate? According to *Geschichte der Stadt Zülz*, a priceless historical account of a town lying just six kilometers from Radstein, there had been a wave of Bohemian immigrants.⁶ No date is given but we can probably rule out this occurred during the Napoleonic wars (1803-15), since the kinds of "oppressive French occupation"⁷ seen in other German-speaking lands did not occur on Bohemian territory.⁸ Famine might have been a cause, but noting the last two on Bohemian soil occurred in 1771 and 1847,⁹ this neither explains Paul's grandparents' migration.

It may in fact still have had something to do with Napoleonic expansionism, the end of which inspired national revivals among Germans and Slavic peoples. The concept of the 'nation' (defined as a people united by linguistic and cultural affinities) resulted in an intellectual renaissance that laid the foundation for a subsequent struggle for political autonomy. In Bohemia, where the nobility was largely German or Germanized, the leaders of the Czech revival were members of the new intelligentsia, which had its origin in peasant stock.¹⁰



Ancient Hupka homelands? Austrian Silesia (green) or just the boxed area (enlarged above). NB: red indicates Moravian enclaves (wiki/Bohemian_Silesia)

So what does that have to do with Paul's grand-parents? Well, they may have rejected Czech nationalism in favour of a future within Prussia's new 'Province of Silesia,' but if so, under what pretext? In fact the 'Bohemian' Germans largely stayed put (until 1945), while the ethnic Silesians left outside Prussia in 1742 lived farther east (see map left).¹¹ So were the Hupkas ethnic Poles that chose to settle in 'Polish' Radstein? Were they fonder of Silesian farmland (in Czech the almost-identical '*Kupka*' means haystack)? Or were they simply given greater 'freedom' to travel? Or was it all of the above?

⁶ [Geschichte der Stadt Zülz. J.Chrzaszcz, 1926](#). That wave may have been Jewish. See also pg. 64-5 and text box 4.2.

⁷ Questions on German History: Paths to Parliamentary Democracy. German Bundestag PR. 1998. Pg. 19, 49

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famines_in_Czech_Lands

¹⁰ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Lands_of_the_Bohemian_Crown_\(1648-1867\)#National_Revival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Lands_of_the_Bohemian_Crown_(1648-1867)#National_Revival)

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohemian_Silesia

Geschichte der Stadt Zülz notes that in Radstein's parish centre of Ellguth there were 8 farms, 17 gardeners, 5 tenant farmers and 161 residents in 1784, while parish registers indicate Paul Tyralla's father's occupation was that of *Gärtner* (gardener) On Paul's own personal certificates, his father was deemed a *Landwirt* – or farmer.

The term *Gärtner*¹² was typically used in central Germany until 1900 to define 'small' farmers, whose plots ran between an eighth and three quarters of a *Hufe*.¹³ Doing the maths means the Tyrallas' plot should have ranged from 4 to 22 acres (NB: an English football pitch is about 2 acres)! As I passed through I asked the locals what they could tell me about the Tyrallas.¹⁴ One mentioned they indeed managed a small farm with animals, while another pointed to a yard and said "that was Tyralla property until world war two."¹⁵ It is pictured and boxed right.



The Tyralla Yard at bird's eye and eye level, 1995

Writing in 1972 in *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939*, Polonsky observed that the Germans tended to dominate the larger agricultural estates, adding that they would lease out parts in Upper Silesia to agricultural labourers, largely Poles. Poles in turn depended on them for their livelihood, practising subsistence farming.¹⁶ In defining 'larger estates,' the 1911 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* says they are "at least 250 acres" and that "properties of 50-100,000 acres are common." Polonsky adds: "Medium peasant holdings of 5-20 hectares [12-50 acres] were common everywhere." That certainly strengthens the argument that the Tyrallas were among the Polish members of Radstein's community.



With this in mind, let's try to understand their livelihoods. Women played an important role in agricultural families in the 19th century,¹⁷ at a time when subsistence depended on what was produced on the farm. The division of labour was based on gender and the farmer and head of the household took care of the fields, with the assistance of his sons and farmhands. The farmer's wife had many functions too: she took care of the home in terms of bed-making, tending linen and clothing, washing, sewing and cleaning. She supervised work in the dairy barns, the kitchen and cellar, as well as the rearing of the livestock.

¹² <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gärtner>

¹³ A *Hufe* (in English an 'oxgang') constituted up to 30 acres or 12 hectares. See: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hufe

¹⁴ I could converse with locals in German because Silesians with strong roots are often bilingual even today. Many have German ancestors (Salter and McLachlan, 1991) but it was their knowledge of Polish that earned many the right to stay when the land passed into Polish hands in 1945.

¹⁵ Further conversations confirmed a number of Paul Tyralla's nephews and nieces (e.g. Johannes offspring) migrated west to Germany and Switzerland when Silesia passed to Poland in 1945. But would that render them more German than Polish? Or simply opportunist, given the centuries' struggle for the right to occupy this land?

¹⁶ *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939*. A. Polonsky, 1972. Oxford, Clarendon Press. pg.13

¹⁷ Lisa Pine writing in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History* (pg. 357)

In such families, Pine explains, the work of the *Hausmutter* and *Hausvater* were of equal value and importance in maintaining the estate. But men and women did not have equal status within the family hierarchy. In the majority of cases, the traditional patriarchal family structure remained firmly entrenched, with the *Hausmutter* subordinate to the *Hausvater*.

4.1 Silesian Cuisine

The influence of neighboring countries was clear in Silesian cuisine when the territory belonged to Germany; Polish carp and cheeses, Bohemian goulash, Austrian sausage and *Pfefferkuchen* (pepper cakes) were all commonly found in the Silesian kitchen. Schnapps too was commonly drunk with beer in Silesia. An old saying went "Silesia has two principal rivers, Schnapps and the river Oder." In turn, Silesia has influenced the culinary tradition of its Czech, German, Hungarian, and Polish neighbours. So popular is its cuisine today that German chef and professional lecturer in nutritional science, [Harald Saul](#) could publish three volumes of traditional Silesian "Grandma's kitchen" family recipes during the last decade. Some of the most well-known dishes include:



- Silesian Heaven (*Schlesisches Himmelreich*) - dried fruit with bacon (pictured)
- Potato soup (*Kartoffelsuppe aus rohen Kartoffeln*)
- Roast goose (*Gänsebraten*)
- Silesian potato dumplings (*Schlesische Kartoffelklöße*)
- Breslau 'sweet bites' - cookies (*Breslauer Leckerbissen*)
- Silesian Christmas cake (*Schlesischer Striezel*)
- Silesian poppy cake (*Schlesischer Mohnstollen*)
- Liegnitz honey cakes (*Liegnitzer Bomben*); and my favourite of them all,
- Beetroot soup (*Borscht*)

To make Silesian Heaven (pictured), chop one large onion and a stick of celery and fry gently in a little olive oil for five to ten minutes until it softens. Some 450g of mixed dried fruit (apples, pears, prunes, apricots) are mixed in together with a small bottle of cider. Next place one rolled boned joint of pork (approx 1.75 kilos) in a casserole dish and surround with the onion, fruits and its juice. Six cloves, one cinnamon stick, and plenty of salt and pepper will add flavour while an ounce of flour will thicken the sauce. Cook on gas mark 3 (170°C) for 2-2 ½ hours. At the end add a couple of spoonfuls of honey to take the edge off the tartness of the cider and fruit - a bit more seasoning doesn't hurt either. Before carving and serving it's good to remove the rind from the pork. A thicker sauce can be gained by liquidising some of the fruit (but remove the spices and prunes if you don't want unappetising black flecks in it)! Mashed potatoes or Polenta will soak up the sauce and steamed leeks go down a treat - although broccoli also works in their place.

(Wikipedia: Silesian Cuisine)

By the time Paul was born, his elder brothers were already adults: Johannes was 20, Anton; 18. Paul's father died aged 51, just before he was a year old.¹⁸ That means Johannes will have begun to take over as *Hausvater* once he completed his military service aged 20 (which may explain why he didn't start his own family till he himself was 40 years old in 1901). Anton by comparison was 23 and began his family in 1887. That means Paul was already an uncle by the age of five!

¹⁸ It makes me wonder whether his early passing away might possibly be a result of an injury sustained during military service on the occasion of the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war (albeit a long time to carry an injury). As a then 38 year old Prussian he would have been eligible for conscription - see Chapter I.

At the same time as their father died, Paul's sisters were aged between five and sixteen. It's fair to imagine they too played an important role in managing the homestead, assisting until they had their own families. Marianna started hers in 1895 (aged 23) and Paulina hers in 1900 (aged 30). Information on the other sisters isn't available, suggesting they moved from Radstein (Josepha) or never married (Franciska and Julianna).

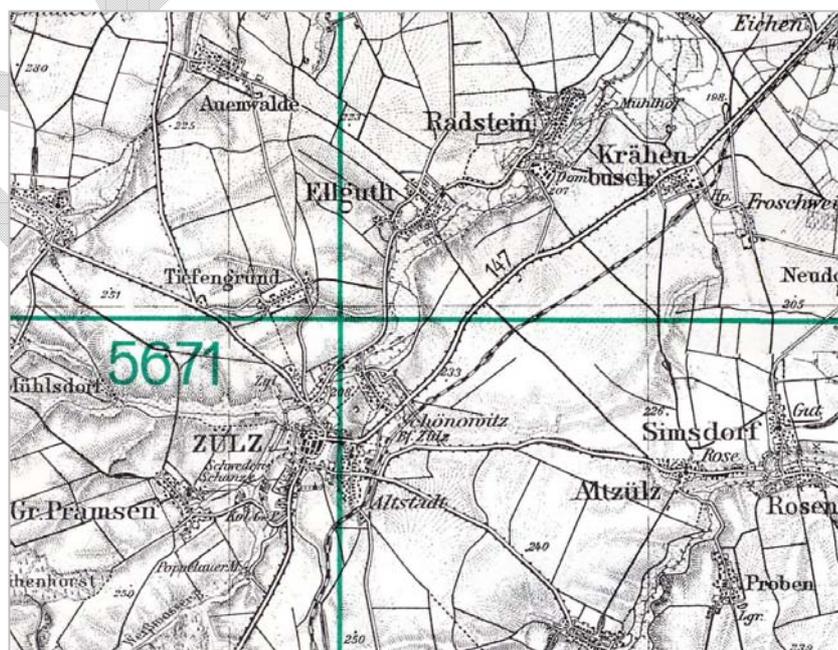


The parish church in Ellguth, 1995

Come the end of his own schooling in or around 1896¹⁹, I'll wager Paul felt surplus to the farm's requirements. More intensively farmed plots were leaving little need for extra labour, while according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the percentage of illiterate recruits in Silesia in 1900 was just 0.05 "in spite of the large Polish-speaking contingent" (sic) At the same time his brother Anton had three (living) children (Anton, Julianne and Catherine) while Marianna had had Johannes - her first of ten. Even if Paul's mother was 55 years old, she was still capable of taking care of parts of the farm - she lived till she was 91, passing away just 37 years later in 1933!

But Radstein was a sleepy backwater and will have offered few reasons to stay, beyond family. In 1905, its population was 658 (virtually unchanged by 1910 and roughly the same today). Peasants, it was said, lived their lives in large families, in relatively compact communities usually dominated by the local church, easily unaware of or able to ignore the sea-changes occurring at the national level.²⁰

As if to epitomize this, Radstein's own parish church in Ellguth lay 2km up the road atop a hill, along the river Weisswasser towards Zülz (see map right). Beyond Zülz lay the county seat and town of Neustadt, less than 10km from the Austro-Hungarian Empire's border (population: 18,856²¹). By 1896 Neustadt was connected to the German railway network, which meant the district capital of Oppeln, 35 km away was within reach, and beyond that some 90 km, the provincial capital of Breslau (see maps at the start of chapter for orientation).



Radstein and its relation to nearby villages and towns, 1937

¹⁹ Recalling the majority of German children completed elementary school at the age of 13 or 14 to work full-time (see for instance text box 3.2 within Chapter III), it's reasonable to assume this marked the end of his schooling.

²⁰ Reference Missing: Not Gay or Fuks, probably Davies, Polonsky, Mackray or Bell

²¹ Population data: ulischubert.de/geografie/gem1900/gem1900.htm?schlesien/neustadt.htm

Within three years Radstein too was connected to the railway network, 2km east at *Krähenbusch*. It's not hard to imagine why the world beyond appealed to Paul – but what of that world?

Most of Prussia's province of Silesia is relatively flat (only its southern border is generally mountainous). According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, some 56 percent of its total area was arable land with good fertile soil while nearly 29 percent was covered by forest (another 10 percent was pasture and meadow). Underground, however, was where its natural wealth lay, particularly along its eastern flank. During the 19th century Silesia began taking advantage of its plentiful coal and iron ore such that prior to world war one, eastern Silesia had grown to be the most highly industrialized area of Germany, after the Ruhr and Saxony²². Alongside its coal mines and vast iron and zinc foundries, it had an important chemical industry.

But while the prospect of work in the mines and foundries of *Kattowitz*, *Gleiwitz*, and *Jaztrebie* brought about the mass migration of many Polish individuals, heavy industry did not appeal to Paul. He was more inclined towards using his hands, and so in 1896 he began his working life apprenticing as a furrier²³ – a trade that was itself industrializing fast with the advent of the fur sewing machine in the 1870s. My assumption is he completed this nearby in Zülz.



Why Zülz and why particularly a furrier?

The town which is known today as *Białá* lay just six kilometres southwest of Radstein (see map on the previous page). Not only was it walking distance but I suspect that Paul attended primary and elementary school here too.²⁴ Nothing out of the ordinary that. However, Zülz small population of 2,462 had had a large Jewish community for centuries²⁵. It's that community that I believe held the key to Paul's future, including his eventual departure from Radstein.

Not dissimilar to today: *Zülz Ring* (www.vogel-soya.de)

²² Polonsky, 1972. *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939*

²³ In early 2000, I came across Paul's Leipzig-based *Einwohnermeldekarte*, a vital document that helps complete his life story. It reveals he was a furrier and records: „*Arb.[eits]buch Amtsvorsteher, Radstein 6/7/1896*“ which is believed to mean: „registered as employed by the chief district officer.“ This implies not an end to Paul's schooling but a move into the world of work. Probably the data was recorded in his personal documentation, e.g. a passport or *Wanderbuch*, which was then relied on when he arrived in Leipzig to denote his 'starting point' (his place of work could still easily have been Zülz). NB: The „Prussian District Ordinance of 13th Dec. 1872 for the Eastern Provinces“ replaced police officers with chief administrators (called *Amtsvorsteher*). They became responsible for matters such as safety, health and order within groups of newly defined rural districts called *Amtsbezirk* (as opposed to towns which remained outside their jurisdiction and had their own administrations). See also: [Amtsvorsteher](#) and [Amtsbezirk](#).

²⁴ Zülz had many schools incl. a *Landschule* for Poles, a Catholic *Volksschule* as well as an open Jewish elementary school since 1845. For obvious reasons Paul probably attended the Catholic *Volksschule*. But also note that from 1879, according to [Chrzaszcz](#), it had a teacher named Josef Hupka (he was also a Choristor). He may well therefore have been related to Paul's mother and grandmother! Radstein on the other hand was probably too small to host even a primary school (for kids aged 7-11). If even a quarter of its population were aged between 1 and 15 (150 or so), there'd be barely 10 youngsters per academic year. I could of course be wrong as a return visit would reveal!

²⁵ In 1782, it even marginally outnumbered other denominations when 1,061 of the town's inhabitants or 52.5 percent were Jewish, according to <http://www.szteti.org.pl/de/article/biala/6,demografie/>

Zülz Jewish community arose because of a decree dating back to 1699 that assured its settlers' civil protection and commercial rights equal to local Christian merchants. This enabled them to do business with people from Bohemia, Silesia and the rest of Poland.²⁶ Since 1580 in fact, the only other Jewish community in the province, was in *Glogau* to its west.²⁷ This gave the impetus for strong Jewish immigration, mainly in the 18th century, which made it "a cultural center of Eastern Jewry in Silesia," according to Helga Schuster in 2010.²⁸ It even had a Hebrew nickname: *Makom Zadik* or 'Place of the Protected.' By 1812 it had a synagogue, a printing house, yeshiva²⁹ and Jewish library.³⁰ Another nickname was *Judenzülz*.

Many of Zülz' Jews were artisans and merchants, renowned for their involvement in crafts such as furmaking, tanning and tailoring. Not surprisingly, in 1784, Zülz counted seven furriers, 16 tailors, 16 cobblers and 14 weavers, besides goldsmiths, bookbinders and carpenters as well as five annual markets.³¹ Since the 19th century, embroidery and lace making was typical too.³²



Above: Fur traders at the turn of the 20th century in a small town in Poland 'proper' (between Warsaw and Brest), called *Biala Podlaska* (Source: [Museum of the History of Polish Jews](#))

Jews were also experts in long-distance trade and commerce, shifting anything from food, leather and textile products (including readymade clothing) to rabbit skins, cattle and horses. Zülz was therefore also a recognized trade center, according to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.³³ It had strong contacts with *Breslau*, *Krakow* and other towns, and Jewish trade quickly brought its residents prosperity and fortune. In this way their activities were essential to the well-being of the neighbourhood.³⁴

As a youngster, Paul probably mixed with Jewish traders' and merchants' children, particularly on market day when his family brought their farm produce to Zülz. This will have exposed him to myriad experiences beyond the realm of the farm. The Jewish peddler for instance travelled constantly from village to village, to cities and markets, not only selling but buying local peasants' produce and exchanging it for town-based manufactured goods and cattle.

²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zulz>

²⁷ *The Polish Jewry – History and Culture*. Marian Fuks et al (1982). Pg 11

²⁸ [The Jewish population of Silesia in the 18th Century](#).

²⁹ An institution unique to classical [Judaism](#) for study of its traditional texts (Wikipedia: yeshiva)

³⁰ <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/de/article/biala/3,lokalgeschichte/>

³¹ [Geschichte der Stadt Zülz. J.Chrzaszcz, 1926](#).

³² Silesian Digital Library at: <http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=9111>

³³ <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/de/article/biala/5,geschichte/?action=view&page=8>

³⁴ Ruth Gay (1992). *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait*.

In fact Jews travelled so much that from the perspective of the town, rural Jews seemed like restless spirits, according to Ruth Gay in her book, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait*. This in turn made them effective intermediaries, because they brought news of political and social events in the great world, market prices, local gossip and “an inevitable breath of town life.”³⁵ Besides Breslau and Krakow, I suspect Leipzig will have gotten more than a passing mention too, given its growing attraction as Europe’s fur trade centre (see Chapter II).

4.2 The Furrier’s Trade

Fur has long been appreciated owing to its ability to insulate and the term “furrier” is closely related to “clothier.” A furrier works with one or more types of furs. While the exact work can vary, the idea in essence remains the same. He or she designs, creates, maintains, alters, cleans and repairs fur-based, -lined or -trimmed garments such as coats or shawls and accessories, for example scarves, muffs or hats.

People can enter this profession through apprenticeship with an experienced furrier, or by receiving training in a trade school (textbox 2.1 in Chapter II contains some interesting examples). Some individuals work specifically with one type of fur, thus providing further expertise on the subject; while others work with a variety, allowing them to provide more options to the consumer.

The furriers’ work was traditionally reckoned to be among the uncleanest of occupations because he had to skin dead animals, usually supplied by hunters and farmers (the image below shows a furrier at work in 1832 clamping a raw hide). These will have included fox, rabbit, mink, beaver, stoat (ermine) and maybe otter. In addition, the strong odours and noise that were intrinsic to processing meant furriers were often forced to settle at the edge of cities close to rivers. This is because they had to rely on running water to rinse the hides. A German saying originating from the trade goes: “*Jemandem schwimmen die Felle weg.*” Roughly translated this means “Don’t let this one get away.”

A furrier’s trade was a rather seasonal business: he would generate his greatest revenue as winter approached from October to December, while during the warm summer months he would dress (tan) the skins. This meant sulphurizing and airing them to give them better durability and resistance to pests. However, the continued exposure to dust could often lead to a condition known as ‘Furrier’s lung’ which resulted in weight loss, lung scarring and even respiratory failure. Yet European furriers remained among the most respected of craftsmen.



Besides those who worked directly with fur, there were also dealers who typically sold furs to consumers, wholesalers, or retailers. Dealers may also look to purchase enough furs to resell as a business venture, ensuring that consumers receive the cheapest pricing available.

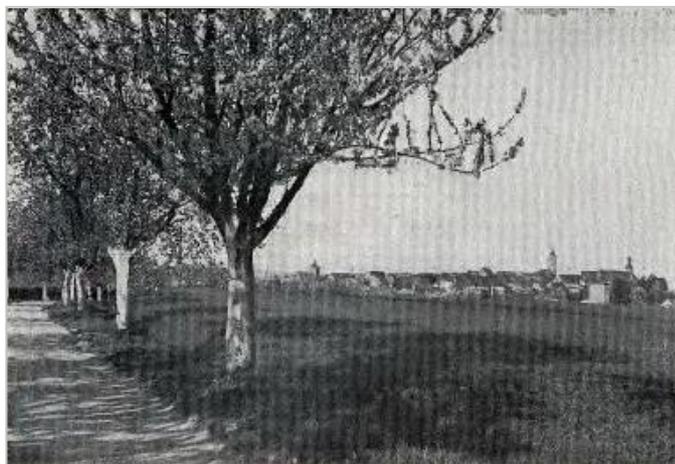
Due to their high expense, furs today are popular as collectors’ items, and are generally not worn as a ‘casual’ item. However, increasing concerns about the ethics of the fur trade have placed new demands on furriers. Some furriers have responded by altering the way in which they do business, priding themselves on ethically and humanely acquired furs, or putting energy into finding sources of fur which do not involve the trade of banned furs such as those of cats and dogs or fur from endangered species.

Summarised from www.wisegeek.com (*What Does a Furrier Do?*) and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furrier#Processing_of_fur and de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kürschmer

³⁵ Ruth Gay (1992). *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait*.

This steady recourse to town and market (which the peasant otherwise attended maybe only once a year) inevitably gave the Jews – and Paul – a keener sense of the world. It was often a Jew for instance who was the first in the village to try such innovations as the electric lightbulb, the telephone and even the automobile, adds Gay.

The road from Radstein to Zülz at Schönowitz (Chrzaszcz, 1926)



Other influences may have allied Paul with his Jewish brethren. For instance, both Jewish and Catholic communities bore the brunt of repression. For the Jews, anti-semitism in the country, while simpler there in content than in the cities, was steadier. This meant that the Jew always remained 'the other' in rural neighbourhoods, despite legal emancipation in 1871.³⁶ For the Catholics (including not just those in Silesia but also West Prussia, Warmia, and the Province of Posen) it wasn't much better. The State intended to combat the so-called enemies of the *Reich*: the Catholic Centre party, the social and the Christian democrats, namely those who drew their principal support from the Catholic proletariat of Silesia³⁷.

Bismarck's conflict with the Catholic Church and movement went as far as to trigger an 'internal preventive war' over the questions of school supervision and civil marriage. The 'May Laws' of 1873 placed the clergy under state supervision which meant it took responsibility for training and appointing parish priests.³⁸ A subsequent ban on them resulted in the closing of nearly half of the seminaries in Prussia by 1878.³⁹

The "*KulturKampf*" which began in the decade before Paul was born, saw the government begin vigorously introducing the German language and culture into the eastern provinces, targeting of course Polish Silesians too.⁴⁰ But Bismarck's attempts drew a mixed reaction. Amongst Poles he largely failed and only antagonised the locals (who returned a Polish nationalist to the *Reichstag* in 1903), despite the *Eastern Marches Association* publicly propagating a 'struggle against the Poles.'



Zülz' White Synagogue, built 1774 and later destroyed in 1938 (Wikimedia Commons: Biala)

³⁶ *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890-1933*. Marline Otte. CUP, 2006.pg. 281

³⁷ *Heart of Europe. A Short History of Poland*. Norman Davies, 1986.

³⁸ *Questions on Germany History*, pg. 178-9

³⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulturkampf>

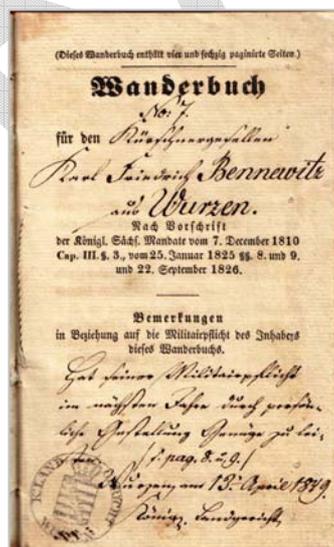
⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silesians#Modern_history

I imagine other aspects of Jewish life held sway with Paul too. While “the fundamental divider was religion” between Jews and Catholics, writes Ruth Gay, “there were edges where the boundaries between the gentile and Jewish communities merged and local custom overtook religious belief. In Catholic parts of the country, Jews adorned their houses with green branches for *Corpus Christi* as other villagers did.” She adds that “Jews ... lived side by side with the peasants in the rural villages, spoke their language, attended the same schools, and shared much of their way of life.” She adds that the Jews made great efforts to integrate, learning German and endeavouring to work alongside entrepreneurs and traders. Yet they still stood out as a third party, beyond both Polish and German ethnic groups, despite being culturally allied with the latter in language and education.⁴¹

After three or so years, Paul concluded his apprenticeship in Zülz. This means the time will have come for him to continue his education further afield. Becoming a journeyman was of course the natural extension of an apprentice’s training and I daresay he was more than ready for this. On the one hand Ruth Gay tells us that “friendly as the Jewish and gentile children may have been in their village schools, the Jews were often readier to send their children to another town for education and training.” But I wouldn’t be surprised if Paul’s mother (or if she was still alive even his grandmother) encouraged him to further his career, recalling migration was also a Hupka trait. And then there was Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf*, which looking back on Paul’s lifetime of movements, appears to have left a lasting impression on him.

Paul Tyralla’s next move then took him towards *Mitteldeutschland*, a step that probably occurred in mid-1899.

#####



Furriers Wanderbuch, 1849
(Wikimedia: wiki/Kürschner)

⁴¹ *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait*. Ruth Gay (1992).

The migrative trends of the time were probably also a critical factor behind Paul's eventual move. Norman Davies writing in 1986 in *Heart of Europe* notes the "march of the Polish peasants from the countryside to the new industrial towns began in Silesia and Posnania (north) at the end of the eighteenth century." He adds that with the end of the manorial system "The emancipation of the serfs... released a growing stream of rural migrants into the towns and factories to join the nascent working class." This resulted in a fall of the number of countryside dwellers such that while in 1871 they had represented almost 64 percent of the population, by 1890 this number had fallen to 57.5 percent, and by 1910 to 40 percent.⁴² In other words, a quarter of Germany's population moved from the countryside to the towns.

A great mass of the indigent peasantry continued to survive in the villages through the traditional methods of subsistence farming, but the number of self-employed began to fall with the decline of agriculture too.⁴³ Family members who assisted on farms, small shops or in small workshops carrying out tasks important for business survival (albeit poorly paid) greatly declined as well.



Dawn of a new era? Sunrise on Radstein's northern periphery.

The social and economic structure of Germany underwent a dramatic transformation after the 1880s, which Guinane affirms corresponded to a shift from agriculture to industry.⁴⁴ Improvement in the economy after 1897 contributed further such that by 1895, industry employed 34 percent of the German labour force.⁴⁵ Domestic migrants flocked to industrial zones such as those of Silesia's. As many as one third of those living in western Germany's *Rhineland* and *Westphalia* in 1907, had themselves migrated from Prussia's eastern provinces.

The trend to migrate westward affected all Jews too.⁴⁶ During the 1880s some 21,000 arrived in bustling Berlin. Industrial competition forced many to relocate, while Russian pogroms in the east besides mass persecution were also responsible.⁴⁷ Zülz' Jewish population declined too. From a high of 1,109 residents in 1825 (app. 45 percent of its population), come 1845, 591 (22 percent) remained. By the turn of the century there were just 36.⁴⁸ Other popular destinations besides Berlin were Leipzig, where for instance migrants from a place called *Brody* (50km beyond the eastern border of Silesia) contributed numbers from 1813⁴⁹ such that by 1910 as many as two thirds of Leipzig's Jewish population were immigrants. Another was Breslau.

⁴² A History of Germany, 1815-1990. W. Carr, 1991

⁴³ In fact 75 percent of the Empire's inhabitants continued to earn a living from agriculture in 1895, writes Benninghaus, Haupt and Requate in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, pg. 287.

⁴⁴ *Germany: A New Social and Economic History* O&O, pg. 50/1

⁴⁵ *Germany: A New Social and Economic History* (Tipton) Pg. 132

⁴⁶ Marian Fuks et al, 1982. *The Polish Jewry - History and Culture*.

⁴⁷ According to Ruth Gay more followed, with the *Kishinev* massacre of 1903 and the Russian revolution of 1905, which brought the number of Eastern Jews in Germany before WW1 to 90,000. *The Jews of Germany*, 1982.

⁴⁸ <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/de/article/biala/6,demografie/>

⁴⁹ *Jews in Leipzig: nationality and community in the 20th century*. RA Willingham. University of Texas. 2005. Pg.18

4.3 A Short History of Eastern Jews

Jews from Bohemia and Germany mostly settled in Silesia at the turn of the millennia. They were exempted from municipal and castellan jurisdiction and were subject only to princely courts. They were granted the right to free trade and to conduct money-lending operations. Similar privileges were granted to the Silesian Jews by local princes.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Jewish merchants gained the advantage over local merchants both in European and overseas trade. Until the end of the 15th century, agriculture as an income source played only a minor role among Jewish families. More important were crafts for the needs of both their fellow Jews and Christian population (fur making, tanning and tailoring).

In the 16th and first half of the 17th century, Jews played an outstanding role in the foreign trade of Poland for instance. They contributed to the expansion of contacts with both the east and the west and were instrumental in importing foreign commercial experience. Jews exported not only agricultural produce and cattle but also readymade products, particularly furs and clothing. Jewish wholesalers appeared at large fairs in Leipzig for instance.

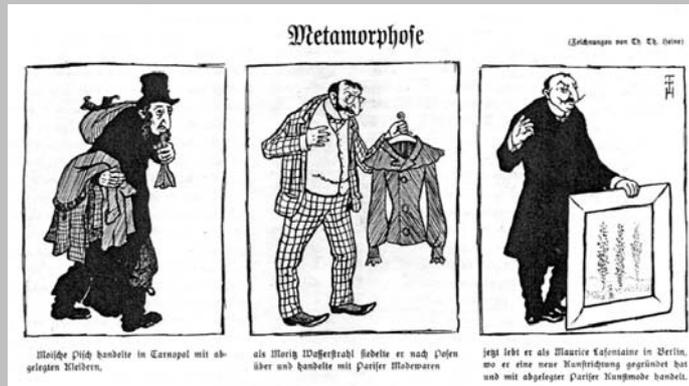
In the mid-17th century there were 500,000 Jews living in Poland, constituting some five percent of the total population (including the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). At this time they practiced over 50 trades and were represented in all branches of craftsmanship. The most numerous of them were those who made food, leather and textile products and clothing.

Yet even in the first decades of the 19th century, 90 percent of the Jews in Germany still lived in small villages, most of them in great poverty. But those who settled in German cities after the 1880s quickly took their place in the working class. They were artisans, tailors, furriers, shoemakers and cigar makers. Often they combined retail sales with their crafts and became proprietors of small shops. Their agglomeration in the big cities, particularly Berlin (where nearly a quarter of the Empire's immigrant Jews or some 21,000 were found in 1910) made the Eastern Jews a highly visible sector of the population. In Leipzig for instance, which had been a center for fur traders since the 17th century, half the registered firms were in Jewish hands by 1914.

By the end of the 19th century, nearly 120,000 German Jews had emigrated, many caught up in the drift overseas. In 1910 there were still 50,000 Jews in Silesia, however, their numbers steadily declined. Horse trading was a principal activity for those who remained, but the Jews here as elsewhere were also manufacturers, merchants, artisans and labourers, ranging from well-to-do businessmen to poor peddlars on the land who still bought and sold rabbit skins.

Summarised from: The Polish Jewry – History and Culture by Marian Fuks et al (1982) and The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait by Ruth Gay (1992).

Above: "Metamorphosis: Moische Piss deals in used clothes in Tarnopol. As Moritz Waterjet he emigrates to Posen, where he deals in fashionable clothing from Paris. Now he lives as Maurice LaFontaine in Berlin, where he has established a new artistic fashion and deals in second-hand Parisien art." Simplicissimus, June, 1903.



Although we know Paul himself eventually migrated to Leipzig, I wouldn't be surprised if he made Breslau his first port of call. Silesia's capital (which is today known as *Wrocław*), lies roughly 100km northwest of Zülz. Its own growth had seen its population more than triple between 1860 and 1910 to 510,000 residents. In 1905 Jews had constituted as many as five percent of the population (cca. 24,500), a number buoyed I suspect by the Jewish theological seminary there.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ According to: www.1911encyclopedia.org/Breslau, the remainder was Protestant (60%) and Catholic (35%).

But interestingly, while in 1910 almost 96 percent of the city's residents cited German as their mother tongue and another 3 percent indicated Polish, 0.67 percent (i.e. approximately 3,500 individuals) reported it to have been both Polish and German.⁵¹ Who were they? Well I think it's fair to say a good number of them will have been 'real' Silesians, much the same I imagine as Paul Tyralla would have answered.

By 1911, Breslau was second only to Berlin in terms of industrial development. But traditionally it had been a leading centre for the exchange of wares between east and west.⁵² The city's location and proximity to the Austrian and Russian frontiers and its position at the centre of a network of railways and deep waterway (the river *Oder*), facilitated its own transit and export trade in the products of the province and of the neighbouring countries. Since the 18th century, it had served for instance as a center for furs transported from Russia, Poland and Bohemia.⁵³



Breslau Ring, 1890-1900 (Wikimedia: Breslau)

Breslau's own local industries included furs too, besides cloth, carpets, cottons and more.⁵⁴ You, the reader may well recall the story from Chapter II of *Franz von Schachtmeyer*, a furrier who established his business in Breslau in 1894 and whose son later apprenticed there between 1919 and 1922 (for more, see text box 2.1).

Another town which served as a center for fur transport was *Glogau* (today *Głogów*) which lay downstream, 90km to Breslau's northwest. A lot smaller than the capital, in 1905, its population was about 23,500, mostly German. Not only did it lie on a river that was navigable but it was also at the junction of several railway lines, and therefore carried on an extensive trade of its own. This was fostered by a variety of local industries, which included among other things a celebrated wool market.⁵⁵ Since 1580 it had had a notable Jewish contingent too (see pg. 73), although in the second half of the 19th century many departed for Breslau and Berlin. Still, by the beginning of the 20th century, the Jews there remained responsible for a variety of fabric shops which played an important role in the town's economic development.⁵⁶

Assuming Paul also visited Glogau to broaden his knowledge of the wool industry, I suspect he will have departed around spring 1900 (assuming he spent between three and six months in any one place as a journeyman). There can be no doubt about his next stop, however, because *Waldenburg* is recorded in his Leipzig-based *Einwohnermeldekarte*. For this reason, I shall devote rather more attention to the town.

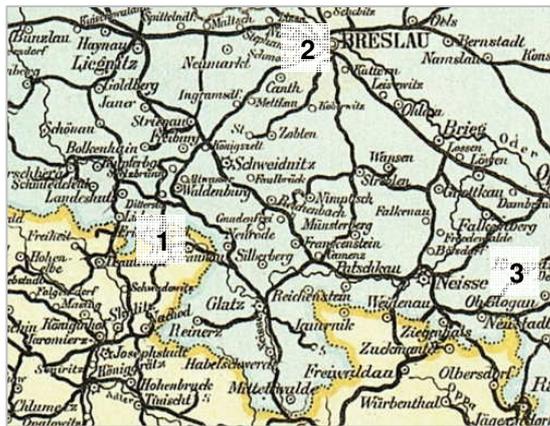
⁵¹ The remainder indicated their mother tongue was Czech. See: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breslau#Unter_den_Hohenzollern_und_im_Deutschen_Kaiserreich

⁵² Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911 online at: <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Silesia>
Reference missing!

⁵³ www.1911encyclopedia.org/Breslau

⁵⁴ <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Glogau>

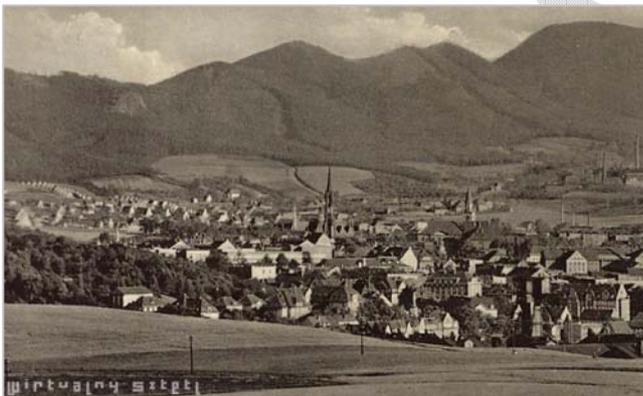
⁵⁶ <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/glogow/5,history/>



Waldenburg ('1') is situated about 65km southwest of Breslau ('2'). By rail, it was a straightforward enough routing, as the map left illustrates (the approximate location of Zülz, 100km to the east and therefore 'home' is marked '3' for reference). Of course, however, the journeyman was not typically allowed home until he had completed his waltz.

The German railway network by 1899

Known today as *Wałbrzych*, this small mainly Protestant town of about 14,000⁵⁷ mainly German inhabitants had its own small, but growing Jewish community too.⁵⁸ It lies in the *Polnitz (Pęcznica)* valley, around 500m above sea level and amidst peaks that rise from 850-936 metres, as the photo below reveals. Southwest and southeast sit two hill ranges known respectively as the *Riesengebirge* and *Eulengebirge*, which morph further south into the *Sudeten* mountains, thereby forming a natural boundary with Bohemia ten kilometers beyond.



Translated, Waldenburg means 'forest keep.' Today it is considered one of the greenest towns in Poland, with seven parks and several forested areas within its boundaries, besides over 52 kilometres of marked tourist trails.⁵⁹ At the turn of the 19th century it was a popular holiday destination; in winter with skiers for its long runs, and in summer for recovery.

Waldenburg (www.szettl.org.pl)

Long before Paul arrived, Waldenburg was renowned for its numerous flax-spinneries and linen-factories. Textiles "prevailed along the foot of the *Riesengebirge* and the southern mountain line,"⁶⁰ with weaving practised on a large scale since the 14th century. Silesia's linen had a strong reputation, perhaps in part because the local weavers staged a 'rebellion' in 1844, smashing machinery in the nearby textile factories shortly after the first mechanical mill had been introduced in 1839.⁶¹ Nevertheless, textile production benefited from urban growth, writes Breuille,⁶² and it's fair to say this side of the garment industry brought Paul to Waldenburg.

⁵⁷ In 1885, the town's population was approx. 13,000 according to a now defunct link:

www.calsky.com/lexikon/de/txt/w/wa/waa_brzych.php while www.1911encyclopedia.org/Breslau shows it was 16,435 by 1905. In 1910 it reached 20,000 (ulischubert.de). Today it has 130,000 residents (um.walbrzych.pl).

⁵⁸ Waldenburg's Jewish community numbered 300 by 1880 according to:

www.szettl.org.pl/de/article/walbrzych/5.geschichte/

⁵⁹ http://www.um.walbrzych.pl/en/stromy/nasze_miasto_historia.htm

⁶⁰ <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Silesia>

⁶¹ *Schlesien in 1440 Bildern*. Hausmann and Granzow. Geschichtliche Darstellungen. 1973. Pg. XLI

⁶² *Germany: A New Social and Economic History* O&O, Pg. 207

Among its other industries, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, one also found porcelain, pottery, and glassworks,⁶³ while the women of the mountainous districts made lace "somewhat resembling that of Brussels."⁶⁴

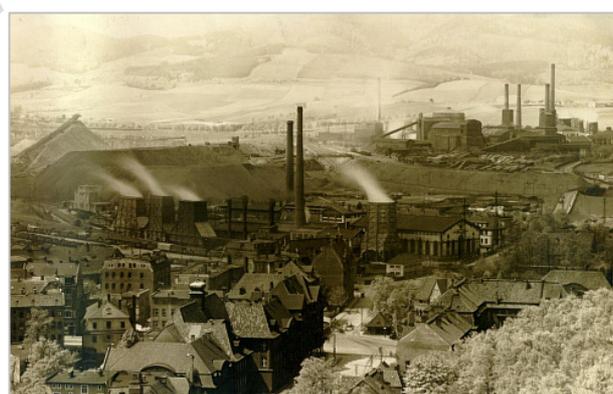
Waldenburg's rich landscape yielded geological dividends too that made it Silesia's third largest industrial and coal mining area by the turn of the century.⁶⁵ This meant most of its inhabitants were occupied in the mining industry,⁶⁶ which remained a key employer until the early 1990s when the town was described as 'an environmental disaster' and 'one of the most polluted...in the world.'⁶⁷ Small wonder *Hausmann and Granzow* wrote in 1973; "For the casual visitor Waldenburg was one sooty industrial town without tradition. The appeal...is not in itself, but in the area, in which it is embedded."⁶⁸

At the same time the geology of the district offered curative sources, including *Salzbrunn* (today *Szczawno-Zdrój*) a few kilometers north. By the end of the 19th century it was the most popular of all Silesian baths, for instance. Spa water was bottled and taken to Breslau. Other baths (e.g. *Bad Charlottenbrunn*, today *Jedlina Zdrój*) and healing spas (*Görbersdorf*, today *Sokołowsko*) were nearby, the latter with a sanatorium that dealt with lung healing (good for furriers!) and which was also a famous health resort (*ibid*).

Much urban development also took place, against a backdrop of smokestacks, towers and coke ovens (*ibid*).



Above and below: Tradition meets industry as both mountain weavers and spinners (*Hausmann and Granzow*) Try to make a living alongside Waldenburg's modern-day textile factories (um.walbrzych.pl)



Waldenburg's Mining districts (www.um.walbrzych.pl)

⁶³ <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Waldenburg>

⁶⁴ <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Silesia>

⁶⁵ Von Golitschek in his book "Schlesien, Land aus Gottes Hand."

⁶⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911 online at: <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Silesia>

⁶⁷ Poland: the Rough Guide. Salter and McLachlan, 1991

⁶⁸ *Schlesien in 1440 Bildern*. Hausmann and Granzow. Geschichtliche Darstellungen. 1973. Pg. XLI



Nevertheless, the town centre itself was a joy. Its square (which remains intact today) was surrounded by trade-structures and elegantly arcaded tenement houses that hosted a weekly market. Three of the oldest houses date back to the heyday of the town's linen trade: *The House Under and the Anchor*; *the House with Three Roses* and *the House Under the Atlantes* (the first of which is shown left). Famous wine bars were situated in some of them, which the famous writer *Goethe* is known to have visited in 1790.⁶⁹ And I suppose if Paul Tyralla ever needed a breath of fresh air beyond Waldenburg's smokestacks, there was always the nearby popular *Schillershöhe* to retreat to (see left).

Waldenburg's market square (above) and the *Schillerhöhe* (below) (www.um.walbrzych.pl)



As summer drew to a close, so too did time for Paul Tyralla in Waldenburg. Trade centres like Leipzig and Dresden had become increasingly popular magnets during the early years of the 20th century, especially Leipzig's now booming fur trade, writes Fuks. Timothy Guinnane notes that "some migrants to large cities came from smaller urban centres such as Waldenburg, while for others internal migrations corresponded to a movement from agriculture to industry."⁷⁰ Inevitably it was this wave of migration that Paul Tyralla rode all the way to Leipzig too.

He departed Waldenburg in early September 1900, now aged 18 and half and way through the next stage of his learning. He may have arrived in Leipzig still a journeyman and with all intents to pass through, perhaps with a view to heading beyond to fur centres in central Germany. But even if so, the burgeoning Saxon city went from being a waystation to a more permanent port of call. Germany was in desperate need of 'foreign' journeymen as Chapter II notes, and new opportunities were there for the taking.

Paul Tyralla

⁶⁹ http://www.um.walbrzych.pl/en/stroony/nasze_miasto_historia.htm

⁷⁰ O&O. pg. 50/1