

**On 10 August 1939 Cornelius von Berenberg-Gossler learns of the suicide
of a Jewish acquaintance who had emigrated¹**

Diary of Baron Cornelius von Berenberg-Gossler, Hamburg, entry for 10 August 1939

Thursday, 10 Aug.

Cornelia is travelling back to Travemünde. Tomorrow Frances and Heinrich are going into town with me. Dr Unna, whom I telephone, is quite satisfied with Heinrich. I have breakfast with Heinrich in the Patriotic [Society] building. We are quite distressed, because this morning a death notice for the wife of Professor Poll-Cords² arrived (which she herself had composed). She took her own life in Lund, on her husband's birthday. As Prof. Degkwitz,³ one of her best friends, told me on the telephone, she made provision in advance for the disposition of all her things. She had suffered too greatly as a result of the persecution of the Jews, to which her husband, among countless others, had also fallen victim. Walked from Hoheluft to Niendorf.⁴ Ellen Schmilinsky and daughter came for tea with Nadia. In the evening, we listen to the radio broadcast of a protest rally in Danzig against Poland; Gauleiter Forster⁵ delivered an inflammatory speech against Poland. As *The Times* reports,⁶ he came from Berchtesgaden from a meeting with Hitler. Heinrich at the Völkers' in Reinbek. Mrs von Stegmann (Schr[...]tern Manor⁷) has written me a card, saying she has had intestinal surgery and will return home from the hospital in Breslau the day after tomorrow. At midday, went to see Pape at Dresdner Bank with regard to taxes.

1 Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 622-1/9 Familie Berenberg, submitted in 1992, Tagebuch v. Cornelius Berenberg-Gossler 1939. This document has been translated from German.

2 Dr Clara Poll-Cords (1884–1939), gynaecologist; worked at the Johanniter Hospital in Bonn, 1915–1917; gynaecologist in Berlin, 1917–1924; in Hamburg, 1924–1934; from 1934 worked in Berlin again. Her husband was Dr Heinrich Poll (1877–1939), biologist; in 1922 appointed as a non-tenured professor in Berlin; professor of anatomy in Hamburg, 1924–1933; emigrated to Sweden in 1939, and died of a heart attack shortly afterwards.

3 Dr Rudolf Degkwitz (1889–1973), paediatrician; from 1918 assistant physician in Munich; from 1925 professor in Greifswald; at the University Hospital in Hamburg-Eppendorf, 1932–1948; his public protest against the NSDAP entering power led to a six-month suspension from office; in 1944 charged with subversion of the war effort and incarcerated until April 1945; in 1948 he changed employers, moving from the University Hospital in Hamburg to a chemical concern in the USA.

4 Neighbourhoods in Hamburg.

5 Albert Forster (1902–1952), banker; joined the NSDAP and the SA in 1923; head of the local NSDAP branch in Fürth, 1925; joined the SS in 1926; Reichstag member from 1930; Gauleiter in Danzig, 1930–1939; Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter of Danzig-West Prussia from 1939; SS-Obergruppenführer, 1943; sentenced to death in Danzig, 1948; executed in Warsaw, 1952.

6 'Danzig's Next Move', *The Times*, 10 August 1939, p. 12.

7 Here the original is illegible.