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PhD thesis

"The attempt to impose agrarian revolution in the morski / wejherowski and pucki districts, 1945-1956"

The following work concerns the territory of northern Kashubia, and more specifically the wejherowski and pucki districts, which for a considerable period of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century were one administrative and economic body. Wejherowski district was created in 1818 becoming part of the province of West Prussia. The territorial scope of then wejherowski district also covered the area of today's pucki district, which is why for the most of the nineteenth century it was called interchangeably the wejherowsko-pucki district. This had not changed until 1887, when pucki district was created from the north-eastern part of the wejherowski district. As soon as the Polish state was reborn, both districts became part of the Pomeranian province. In 1928 pucki district was liquidated and its territory incorporated into the neighboring wejherowski district. German authorities occupying Poland did not change this state of affairs. The post-war authorities also decided not to restore pucki district, territory of which became part of the morski district, which in turn in 1951, under an act, was given the name of wejherowski. Reinstatement of pucki district took place in 1954. From that moment on, the two districts once more followed independent paths to development. Therefore the examination of the post-war history of the region from the perspective of the wejherowo and pucki districts separately seems to be entirely valid.

Chronological framework covers the period 1945-1956. Initial turning point must be associated with the end of the German occupation and the start of the first stage of the revolution, i.e. the land reform, which caused the elimination of private property in the structure of both Polish and German manor houses. The year 1956 closing the narration was a year of political watershed, and one of its consequences was a process of disintegration of hated by the majority of the peasants agricultural production cooperatives modeled on Soviet collective farms (Kolkhoz).

The work consists of five chapters and has a chronological-problem arrangement. In the first of them the author tried to show the evolution of the agrarian program and rural development

idea formulated by the pre-war Polish communists gathered in the Communist Workers' Party of Poland / Polish Communist Party ideologically inspired by the principals from Moscow. Communist propaganda under the name of Polish Workers' Party in the rural community did not stop even during the period of II World War. The theme of this chapter is also the implementation of agricultural policy in Poland in the years 1944-1956. The chapter presents each of its stages such as agrarian reform, the system of compulsory deliveries and finally collectivization. Along with the political changes of 1956 in the country there is a wave of spontaneous and uncontrolled collapse of agricultural production cooperatives and return to agricultural circles, which, contrary to expectations of the peasants did not become an independent form of local agriculture. The author tried to describe the basic objectives and implementation of communists agricultural policy nationwide.

In the second chapter the author attempts to draw the socio-economic specifics of the title districts. The chapter describes natural conditions, demographics and the territorial-administrative transformation of both districts from the nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century. An important part of that chapter is to present the processes that contributed to the agrarian structure of the region recorded on the eve of liberation from German occupation. The following factors deserve recognition: the Prussian reform of enfranchisement, the activities of colonization committee and land reform implemented in the interwar period, as well as the conditions of daily life of peasants during the German occupation. The author tried to demonstrate that legislative changes in agriculture of both Prussian, German and Polish authorities had also the context of a national competition for ownership of agricultural estates.

Third chapter is an attempt to present in detail components of an agrarian revolution, which took place from 1945 until 1948. The author tried to illustrate the specificity of land reform, resettlement of German population and settlements of Polish displaced persons and returnees. The chapter does not omit the thread of harsh post-occupation conditions of Wejherowo village, which were affected, among other things by the presence and activities of units of the Red Army and the Polish Army. During this period a process was taking place of destruction of the regional structures of the independent peasant movement in the form of the Polish People's Party, openly opposing agricultural policy of PPR (Polish Worker's Party / Polska Partia Robotnicza). The author aimed at further illustrate illegal forms of extermination of the people's party and the displacement of agrarian ideology from public life, which was its core curriculum.

The fourth most extensive chapter, the author devoted to discussing of the specifics of changes in agriculture in the region in 1948-1955. The author drew special attention to Kashubian peasants ability to adapt. The author found it necessary to show the causes and effects of the behavior of the villagers especially against collectivization. The author's intention was also a detailed tracking of the construction process of agricultural cooperatives and identification of both economic and social conditions of their operation. Much space is devoted to the analysis of fiscal policy of the party-state apparatus in relation to the peasants. The author also made an attempt to characterize the tasks of youth organizations such as the Union of Polish Youth, the General Organization "Service to Poland" in terms of agricultural policy. These consisted mainly in supporting, organizing propaganda activities and physical help on state farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne, PGR) and production cooperatives in the period of intensive field work. In this chapter presented was also the role of the United People's Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe) in the implementation of agrarian policy of the communist state. The author attempts to describe the organizational development of party's structures and its extremely prudent or even marginal commitment to collectivization. Some space author decided to dedicate to the activities of State Farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne), including the characteristics of their extremely low productivity. An attempt was made of a profound analysis of the causes and consequences of inefficient system of state-owned enterprises whose daily functioning belied the idea of "economic superiority of collective over the individual."

In the fifth and last chapter of the dissertation the author tried to expose the consequences of October changes on agriculture in the region, and, above all, the rapid disintegration of production cooperatives and reduction of fiscal obligations towards the village. Along with declining cooperatives agricultural circles flourished. Their management however was quickly overrun by representatives of the Communist Party and conservative politicians of ZSL who did not allow the agricultural circles to become a tool to exert upward pressure on the authorities of the party and state. The author tried to demonstrate that any attempt of the above mentioned interference was received by the peasants as a re-try albeit very subtle of collectivization, which they never stopped to worry about. This section presents also a process of gradual political emancipation of ZSL district structures, which ultimately failed, although the Communists failed to fully eliminate the political thought of the independent peasant movement.