

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS “POLES IN LWÓW 1944-1959”

The case study is about Poles who stayed in Lwów after the end of the Second World War. Because of change of occupation in summer '1944, the beginning of my book is the day of 27th of July 1944, when the Red Army captured the city of Lwów. The temporary period, which lasted only two years, has ended in summer 1946, and it is only the entry to right theme of the case study. In fact, when last resettlement transports had gone, the way to a new order was clear. Since that time Poles in Lwów (only about 15 thousands of people) was a small part of the urban society of the Soviet city. Above all, they continued their struggle for tradition and – if it only was possible – they tried to show their difference. The only places where they were partly able to use Polish language, were a few Roman-Catholic churches and some schools where Polish language was admitted. Unfortunately, the schools I mentioned before was a part of Soviet education system, so – formally – there was not any possibility to cultivate there Polish tradition and culture. The another very important question is the daily life of Polish inhabitants of Soviet Lwów. Those people, who decided after the war to stay in their home city, often have lost all their fortunes, houses and flats. Often they were also victims of the communistic regime. So, they were not managed to be an important part of the Soviet social life. They also could not do any public role or responsible public job. However, a few of Polish scientists managed to continue their work at the high schools. Most of them worked in the Polytechnic Institute of Lwów, because of their achievements and world famous workings. But the afterwar Soviet reality was much worse to the humanists. Some of them has been employed in the Library of Stefanyk, where they have been persecuted in case of their nationality and past.

Over the years, the number of Poles in Lwów had increased. At the beginning of the fifties about 30 thousands of the city inhabitants was Poles. It was possible, because many of Poles resuspended from the GULAG camps came to the city and settled there. Only part of them lived in Lwów before the imprisonment. So, the Polish society in the city started to change. Some of Poles joined the communistic party, primarily to achieve a private goals and material benefits, mostly people with lower education and workers.

An interesting thing I mentioned in the case study, was the question of formal contacts between Soviet Lwów and a few cities of the Polish People's Republic, after Stalin's death. In the second half of the fifties those contacts raised a lot. In that time firstly from the war time, the Polish language was present – once again – in the public space of Lwów. Many famous Polish artists, sportsmen, students, writers and journalists came to Lwów in official delegations and business trips. For the inhabitants of the city became available some Polish mass-media like newspapers, books, movies. In fact, for many inhabitants of Lwów it was so called „an open window to the world” in the Soviet reality.

The caesura ending the case study is the year 1959. It was the date, when the second „repatriation” of Poles from Soviet Union has ended. Almost 40% of Poles living in Lwów have decided to leave the city and to resettle in afterwar Poland.

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