

*Polska Pod Reżymem Komunistycznym. Sprawozdanie Z Sytuacji W Kraju (1944-1949)*, by Jolanta Mysiakowska-Muszynska and Wojciech J. Muszynski. 2015. Warszawa

Reviewer: Mr. Jan Peczkis

### **The Soviet Puppet State in Poland in The First Years After WWII**

POLAND UNDER THE COMMUNIST REGIME. A REPORT OF THE SITUATION IN THE NATION (1944-1949), is the title of this Polish-language scholarly book. This comprehensive work covers the political and social aspects of the Soviet imposition of the Communist puppet government on Poland. However, the tens of thousands of Poles murdered, and hundreds of thousands imprisoned, during the Communist enslavement of Poland, are almost entirely beyond the scope of this book.

Biographical information is emphasized throughout. The reader can quickly learn about hundreds of personages associated with this time in Poland's history. A profuse index enables the reader to look up all the mentions of these personages throughout this book.

### **SELLING COMMUNIST RULE, OVER POLAND, TO AMERICANS**

The prestigious NEW YORK TIMES [which may deservedly be called the NEW YORK SLIMES] fed the Communist line, to the unsuspecting American public, about the situation in Poland. It smeared the non-Communist Poles as reactionaries, anti-Semites, fascists, etc. (pp. 9-10). [How little has changed! THE NEW YORK SLIMES continues to peddle much the same Stalinist propaganda, this time under the auspices of the well-named neo-Stalinists, notably Jan T. Gross and Anna Bikont.]

### **A HINT OF THE WARTIME DEVASTATION OF POLAND**

Poland's government rejected the aid offered by the Marshall Plan. (p. 206).

Of Poland's largest cities, Warsaw, Gdynia, Gdansk, and, to a lesser extent, Poznan, lay in ruins. (p. 195). Muszynska and Muszynski include some information on the state of the Recovered Territories. 95% of farm animals were gone. 40% of the buildings of all the towns had been destroyed. 63% of the railroad tracks were gone. (p. 265).

Two years after the "liberation" of Poland by the Red Army, the human suffering remained great. 2.5 million Polish children suffered from stunted growth caused by hunger, and another 5 million were malnourished. 1.2 million Polish children suffered from tuberculosis, and 1 million Polish children were orphans. (p. 286).

### **POPULATION MOVEMENTS DURING AND AFTER WWII**

The Muszynski authors, to their credit, do not uncritically accept the oft-quoted figure, based on Soviet archives, that admit to only 327,000 Kresy Poles deported into the interior of the USSR in 1939-1941. They realize that the figure is a grotesque underestimate, and they quote scholarly figures that affirm the actual total as 2-3 times the admitted Soviet figure. (p. 57).

Some 2.5 million Poles were deported into the interior of the Third Reich for forced labor. Of these, some 600,000 found themselves in Silesia and Pomerania, and they remained there when these territories became part of Poland after WWII. (p. 71).

Officially, 1,495,938 ethnic Poles were expelled, by the Soviets, from the Soviet-seized Kresy through sometime in 1948, and settled in Poland in her Yalta-imposed boundaries. (p. 62). The authors describe some of the privations faced by the Kresy expellees. They suffered the full force of Soviet repression while still living in the Kresy, and were robbed of most if not all of their belongings before crossing the Curzon line into postwar Poland. (pp. 60-61).

The figures for German population movement, in the latter stages of WWII and aftermath, are highly contradictory. (pp. 62-68). [German revanchists exploit the ambiguity of these figures. From this ambiguity, they invent the myth that 2 million German civilians perished during this time.]

## ORIGINS OF THE ODER-NEISSE (ODRA-NYSA) AS THE POSTWAR WESTERN BORDER OF POLAND

Communist propaganda had portrayed the postwar Polish acquisition, of formerly German territories up to the Oder-Neisse River, as some kind of generous and brilliantly-conceived Soviet gift to Poland. It was not. The USSR retained the eastern half of Poland (the Kresy), which it had seized while in alliance with Nazi Germany in the 1939 war that had dismembered Poland. The idea of the Oder-Neisse boundary originated not with the Communists but with the Endeks--as, for example, declared by Wojciech Wasiutynski in London in 1940. (p. 47).

## A REAL—BUT INDIRECT—SOVIET OCCUPATION

Unlike the case of the earlier Nazi German occupation of Poland, the local institutions were ostensibly Polish. However, the actual rulers were the Soviets. The authors compare the situation to that of the British colonial rule over India, wherein the institutions and personnel consisted of locals, but the real rulers were the British. (p. 7-8). However, this analogy is imperfect. The Red Army was a large-scale and long-term presence in post-WWII Poland. For example, the Red Army had garrisons in 13 named large Polish cities, and all of the airfields and ports in Poland were regularly used by the Soviet military. (p. 113).

Soviet rule over Poland was expressed in various ways. Jozef Cyrankiewicz thought it an accomplishment when he successfully persuaded the Soviets to confiscate 70%, instead of 80%, of Poland's production. (p. 287).

#### THE SOVIET-SERVING "POLISH" COMMUNIST TERROR APPARATUS: AN OVERVIEW

The majority of the leadership of the dreaded Communist security forces (U. B., or BEZPIEKA) was Jewish and Russian. (p. 134). Most of its lower-ranking members were low-class Poles, often from illiterate and criminal backgrounds. (p. 137). [This is commonly called the CHAMOKOMUNA, or boor Communism.]

#### THE POLISH FREEDOM FIGHTERS: A SAMPLING

The anti-Communist resistance (1944-on) encompassed over 200,000 Polish activists, including several hundred armed guerrilla groups. The largest of these was WiN (WOLNOSC I NIEZAWISLOSC), which had around 50,000 members. (p. 36).