

Summary

Education for national minorities in Western Pomerania

in the years 1945–1991

The work discusses topics that are not often represented in the current literature on the subject. The issue of education, despite the growing number of studies on national minorities in Western Pomerania, has never been addressed in a holistic manner, including at the same time all national groups that had educational establishments with native teaching languages.

Based on various archival sources, memories of students and teachers, nationality press and literature on the subject, the work describes the functioning of education for children of national minorities who lived in Western Pomerania after the end of World War II. Jewish, Ukrainian, German and Greek refugees communities had institutions with native languages of teaching or points of learning these languages in this area.

The work is divided into five chapters, the first of which contains a description of the diverse policy of state authorities towards national minorities in Poland in the years 1945–1989. The second part of this chapter discusses the resulting educational policy towards the children of groups who in these years were given the opportunity to benefit from learning their native languages at points organized at Polish schools or in institutions teaching in these languages. Education for national minorities in Western Pomerania was shaped in accordance with the state policy towards those groups, but it operated simultaneously with the Polish educational system and was subject to changes accordingly. Therefore, the scope and forms of education introduced in education for individual nationalities within the changing policy of the state towards these communities and changes in the Polish school system were compared.

Chapter Two presents the factors affecting the functioning of minority education in Western Pomerania. It characterizes those factors that are dependent on central education authorities (curricula, textbooks and methods of educating and acquiring teachers), as well as those resulting from attitudes of local authorities of various levels towards minority institutions. Attitudes which influenced the creation of material conditions of schools and providing them with teaching staff, but also influenced the approach of the Polish population to these schools, their students and teachers. The attitude of the political and administrative authorities of the Szczecin and Koszalin voivodships as well as the lower levels - poviats, districts and communal

- were compared. Those organs were by definition the implementers of the policy of central authorities, but in practice showed a large diversity of attitudes towards minority education.

The third chapter describes the first years of minority education in West Pomerania (1945–1949). The first part discusses the operation of the institutions created by the Germans remaining in the area of the then Szczecin Province and Polish Jews arriving from spring 1946. Education for German children usually operated in enclaves occupied by Red Army units outside the structures of Polish education. The Jewish community, primarily concentrated in Szczecin, also created their own schools of various types - religious, institutions with Hebrew lecture language, run by Zionist organizations, as well as primary schools created by the Provincial Committee of Jews in Poland and vocational schools organized by the the Society for Trades and Agricultural Labor among Jews in Poland (ORT). They operated on the outskirts of the state educational system and were treated differently by school authorities. The second part of the chapter presents the initial years of state institutions (1949–1955), taken over from their social organizers or newly created by the Polish educational authorities. Chapter also describes the functioning of the Jewish school, more than eighty German institutions (operating mainly in the Koszalin province), schools operating for the needs of Greek and Macedonian children located in 1951 in the State Educational Center in Police and a few Ukrainian language centers created at Polish primary schools since 1952.

The fourth chapter describes the development and fall of individual elements of minority education in Western Pomerania in 1955-1991. The chapter divided into two time periods (1955–1970 and 1971–1991) presents changes in German education caused by political changes in Poland and the German population leaving the country. It also includes the presentation of a rapid boom in the second half of the 1950s of Ukrainian education (over fifty points of language learning, three schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction, Ukrainian philology in the Teachers' College) and its progressive shrinking in subsequent decades, despite the creation of schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction and involvement in its functioning of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Association. The last years of operation of separate schools for Greek apatrids and the process of transforming the last one into a Polish institution teaching Macedonian and Greek were also analyzed, as well as the process of transforming the Jewish school into a "school for Jewish children" until its final closing after the events of March '68.

The last chapter is devoted to the specificity of minority institutions - showing the role they played in their nationalities and the attitude of these communities to their own education. In this part of the work, attempts were made to determine to what extent individual types of minority schools performed their ethnic functions and fulfilled the role of centers for maintaining national and cultural identity among students. An attempt was also made to compare the functioning of this type of education in Western Pomerania and other voivodships of western and northern Poland, primarily in the Wrocław voivodship, comparable in terms of the number of minority groups deployed on its territory.

The work is accompanied by extensive annexes including lists of minority school teachers, school listings and teaching points with basic data on years of activity, number of students, organizational level, teaching staff and indicating sources of information allowing to expand the scope of information.