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The parish of Łoniów and its inhabitants in the first half of the 20th century (1914-1945)

Summary

This dissertation depicts the parish of Łoniów in the period from 1914 to 1945. The initial date not only opens the new chapter in the political history of Poland but also is a distinct border in the history of both civil and church administration. The outbreaks of World War I and World War II had an enormous impact upon demographical changes such as migrations, epidemic diseases and birth rate. The date closing the period taken into consideration is 1945, when the responsibility of preparing vital records was transferred from church to the state. The research area covers the Roman Catholic parish of Mikołaj Biskup in Łoniów. The parish had a rural character, including the following localities: Łoniów, Świniary, Trzebieszawice, Suliszów, Chodków Nowy, Chodków Stary, Krowia Góra, Zawidza, Wnorów, Beszyce Dolne, Grabina, Otoka, Gągolin, Żurawica countryside and grange, Wygnanów, Wymysłów, Łązek, Piaseczno grange, Bogoria, Jasienica.

The work comprises of eight chapters. The first chapter embraces the characteristics of geographical environment, administrative, civil and church affiliation of the parish, its history, as well as the general conditions of living within the parish.

The second chapter depicts both the development of the said parish and the activity of its priests. This chapter could not exclude rich interior furnishings of church, especially the picture of St. Mikołaj Biskup, particularly as not enough works are addressing the information about the artistic values of this sacred building and the iconographic as well as the structural collections gathered there.

The third chapter implies the history of count Moszyński family, landowners of Łoniów, who were connected with the parish and inhabited Łoniów until 1944, i.e. the so-called agrarian reform whereby they were forced to leave their estate. Despite the fact that this dissertation assumes the portrayal of last owners' history, the time frame has been extended in order to connote especially those people who played a significant role in building the estate in Łoniów and to emphasise the importance of Moszyński family and their influence upon the shaping the image of both estate and church until the 18th century.

The fourth chapter features the social and occupational, religious structure and the grounds of people's livelihood. The meaning of the estate and granges in the parish of Łoniów has been delineated. The characteristics of a courtly and peasant community as well as the relation between these groups have been included. The estate and adjoining granges with agricultural output as well as the sources of the inhabitants' income and trade that took place during the weekly fair in Koprzywnica have been depicted.

The fifth chapter describes the institutions and social organisations, both secular and church, functioning in the area of parish and their impact upon the people living there. In this chapter are presented cultural and educational institutions as well as Catholic groups that inhabitants of the parish belonged to and actively attended. One should mention here school, fire station, Consumer Association *Fraternal Help*, Catholic Association of Female and Male Youth, including Catholic Association of Women and Men; and The Third Order of Saint Francis generally known as third order.

The sixth chapter presents demographical characteristics of people in the discussed historical period – its strength and vital statistics as well as factors determining it, i.e. epidemics, natural disasters, famine.

The seventh chapter attempts to show family life and is the key part of this work. It has been based upon the vast research material and depicts the life of a human being from birth, through marriage and family life until death. Several customs concerning awaiting a child, the conditions of labour, birth according to gender, stillborn, illegitimate children, seasonality of birth, customs to ensure good fortune to a child, the choice and meaning of given names, christening and the choice of god parents are presented. There are also wedding customs, structure of marriages according to marital status, age and seasonality of weddings. There have been described funerary customs in the parish of Łoniów, the level of health care, the age structure of deceased people, reasons of death in addition to passing ceremonial and the graveyard in Łoniów as a resting place for the deceased.

The last, eighth chapter depicts the village's religious life on the basis of a ritual year, typical for a parish. The delineated customs concern Advent, the tradition of Christmas, Lent, Easter, May devotions taking place in roadside shrines, Corpus Christi along with a harvest festival in the country and a very popular cult of the Virgin Mary Sulisławska in Sulisławice.

The Appendix comprises of multiple statistical comparisons shown in the tables, letters, fragments of interesting entries in the parish registers and chronicles. One of remaining scripts of a play presented in the first half of the 20th century by carol singers has been placed in the Appendix. In order to exemplify family relationships in count Moszyński family a genealogical trees have been prepared.

In the present dissertation various research methods have been applied, among others the descriptive one (allowing to keep the chronology of events), the inductive one, the deductive one and statistical one.

Applied historical sources are stored in the civil and church archives as well as in the private collections. The mentioned ought to be: parish registers, church records, proceeding documentation, notarial deeds, documents concerning economic history, memoirs and photographs. The complement of sources was oral history consisting of the interviews made with the witnesses of history by the Author of this work.

The past emerging from the compiled sources clearly defines the picture of this parish in the period of over 30 years (World War I and World War II). In the depicted history of this rural community from the first half of the 20th century the social structure of the parish, relations between the estate and the village, demographical processes, daily and festal life of the inhabitants of Łoniów along with a popular cult of the Virgin Mary Sulisławska are shown.

Key words: : Łoniów, 1914 to 1945, parish of Mikołaj Biskup, count Moszyński family, the social and occupational structure, granges in Łoniów, the estate, the institutions and social organisations, people, christenings, weddings, deaths, ritual year, a cult of the Virgin Mary Sulisławska, parish registers, oral history