Przekład tekstu *Historia* znajdującego się na stronie Urzędu Miasta i Gminy Poniec

Przekład wykonany przez Oskara Twardego w ramach praktyki tłumaczeniowej.

Eng. Translation of a text “History” from the official website of Poniec

Translation made by Oskar Twardy as a part of internship.

**History**

According to the archeologists, the first signs of human existence in the area of contemporary Poniec come from the Bronze Age (1850/1700 -650 B.C.). We also know that in the 10th century, near Gostyńska Street, there was a small, fortified hamlet. We don’t know the reason for its abandonment, but the raid of the Polan tribe could contribute to that, as they wanted to forcefully unite all Slavic tribes.

The first written source about Poniec comes from 1108; however, it is difficult to trace the development of Poniec in the 12th and 13th centuries. We assume that it had to be a significant town, as its contemporaneous owner— the Duke of Głogów— had appointed it as the capital of the district that comprised of around 70 towns and villages around. Soon after that, the king Władysław Łokietek took the town from the Duke and adjoined it to the Kingdom of Poland.

In the 15th century, the town had a dyke and two gates: the Wrocław one and the Poznań one. In the city centre, there was a wooden town hall, and at the neighboring street a church. Outside the walls, there was another Church of Saint Barbara, Saint Andrew, and the Holy Spirit. In the Middle Ages, the town could develop thanks to the law of compulsory traffic, which imposed an obligation on sellers to stop and sell their products in Poniec. The fact that in 1370 Poniec bought Smiłowo village confirms the prosperity of the town.

Craft and drapery were flourishing here, and newcomers and infidels from Silesia, Germany, as well as other countries, settled in Poniec. In the second half of the 16th century, the Unity of the Brethren (one of the branches of Protestantism) came to the town, and the contemporaneous owner of Poniec put the Catholic church into use for them. They weren’t removed from the town until 1606, wherefore they settled in Waszkowo.

Wars in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as the Deluge (1655-1660), disrupted the flourishing of Poniec. The town and its surroundings were ravaged by various armies in the next decades. In 1704, there was a battle between Saxon and Swedish troops, and in 1764, Prussian troops invaded Poniec, kidnapping 24 inhabitants.

After the second Partition of Poland, Poniec was under the Prussian occupation and had 1,463 inhabitants (40% Catholics, 45% Lutherans, and 15% other believers). In 1815-1817, the town belonged to the Duchy of Warsaw and then again to the Prussians.

Poniec was a private town until 1834, and throughout the centuries, it had numerous owners. One of them was the Chełmski family, who changed their surname to Poniecki.

In times of the occupation of Poland, the number of inhabitants was increasing systematically (1350 inhabitants in 1816 to 2888 in 1913). In that time, Poniec was a craft-trade centre for its neighborhood. In 1819, there were 186 masters and peons of all branches, and in 1849, their number increased to 232. It was also a time of development of the city infrastructure: main streets were cobbled, and gas lampposts were installed. In 1843, the new town hall was built, then a school, and in 1907, the gasworks were opened. The opening of the railway Leszno-Ostrów also contributed to the economic growth.

Poniec and its neighboring villages (mostly Waszkowo, Dzięczyna, and Miechcin) were highly Germanized. In 1848, Germans were 70% of the town’s inhabitants (3% Jews), but the percentage of Polish people successfully rose, and in the beginning of the 20th century, it was equal to the percentage of Germans (In 1913, Poles were 65% of the inhabitants).

Under the Prussian rule, Poles were highly Germanized. They opposed that by creating associations and institutions such as the Association of Industrialists (est. 1907), the People’s Bank (est. 1893), the People’s Library Society, or the Gymnastics Society “Sokół”. One of the manifestations of resistance to Germanization was the school strike in 1906. The clergy also stood up for Polish identity, and Professor Jan Respądek, who was a parish priest and political activist, was one of their main representatives.

After the bondage which lasted for more than a century, Poniec went back to revived Poland in 1919. Inhabitants contributed to that by joining the Uprising of Greater Poland, which one of the fronts, commanded by Bernard Śliwiński (born in Poniec), was near Poniec.

The regaining of independence enabled the development of socio-political life. Between 1919 and 1939 there were around 30 political, social, cultural, sport, and religious organizations. Poniec was being Polonized again because of Germans leaving the town, and before the Second World War they accounted for only 10% of the inhabitants. Education also thrived as there was a public school (which started functioning in 1924 as a result of joining a municipal school with a Catholic one), a refresher school, and a kindergarten (the only one in the district of Gostyń). There were also schools in the countryside: in Czarkowo, Drzewce, Dzięczyna, Janiszewo, Łeka Mała, Łęka Wielka, Rokosowo, Sarbinowo, Szurkowo, and Żytowiecko. Poniec was still a craft-trade centre, but unemployment was a major concern, and short-term jobs were created as well as social aid. So-called folk kitchens were distributing dinners for the poorer inhabitants.

Germans strafed Poniec on September 1st, 1939, and near Kaczkowo, the Polish army had minor battles with the German army. Polish forces had to leave the town, and on September 6th, 1939, German forces took Poniec. They appointed their own authority and caused terror by detaining Polish hostages in the town hall. On October 21st, three Poles were executed, and in December (as well as in the next few years), people were massively dislodged. The majority were taken to the General Government near Tarnów. Overall, around 300 people from Poniec and its neighborhood were dislodged. The abandoned houses and farms were taken by Germans from Bessarabia, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and bombarded German cities. Many inhabitants of Poniec died in concentration camps or at the front of World War II.

The intelligentsia (especially teachers and priests) were victims of repression. The clergy was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. The parish church was closed, and in April 1940, two statues of Saint Lawrence and Saint Stanislaus were destroyed. Polish schooling was prohibited.

As a sign of dominance over Poles, Germans were signing people on the nationality list called Deutsche Volkliste.

The occupation ended in January 1945 when the Red Army invaded the town.

Nowadays, Poniec is still considered a craft-service centre. In 1997, there were around 340 craft and service businesses, and a few bigger companies such as Huta Szkła “Gloss” (glass factory), “Woldrew” (carpentry), “Sierakowski I Syn” (coach production), “Mixt” (grain and milling enterprise), or “Łagrom” (meat production) were established.

Until the early 1990s, the retail network was predominantly in the hands of the Gminna Spółdzielnia, which owned more than 40 stores. Economic transitions changed its significance, and many commercial establishments became privately owned. In 1996, there were 159 shops in town.

In the 1950s, the town was electrified, and starting from the 70s, the infrastructure was being developed (most roads were paved with asphalt). Due to the transition to natural gas supply in 1977, the gasworks was modified. In the 80s, the town and villages were equipped with a water supply network. In 1997, a modern telephone network was installed, and since 2001, a sewage treatment plant was being built.

The town also gained numerous educational, cultural, and recreational facilities: a municipal library (opened in 1979), school buildings (1969, 1998), a firehouse housing in a cultural center (1975), a stadium (1990), and a health center (1987).