

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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The title of the dissertation: The cultural life of Bytom in the years 1945-1970, in the light of memories, press articles and archives.

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In the life of Upper-Silesian Bytom, 1945 was a time of a great breakthrough and sudden, sometimes violent changes. The city was formerly German, now it has become Polish. There was a population exchange. The vast majority of German residents passed away, Polish users came. In the following years, not only economic processes related to mining operations or the development of heavy industry took place. New Bytomians, who left their memories and hearts elsewhere, here created literature, art, and acted for the development of culture. Bytom became a city of a new record.

The aim of the dissertation is to describe the process of creating a new city record and to analyze the cultural life of Bytom in the post-war twenty-five years. Literary and paraliterary texts, egodocuments and cultural texts written in the years 1945-1970 were analyzed and interpreted. To complete the image of creating a new record of the city, memories of Bytomians who remember these times have been collected. These are the memories of various groups of inhabitants of Bytom at that time - newcomers from the Eastern Borderlands, Central Poland and Silesians (those who did not leave the city after World War II). The record of memories was attached to the dissertation in the form of an annex.

The thesis presented in the introduction to the dissertation and the nature of the analyzed issues made it possible to use the tools of cultural comparative studies (comparison of various cultural carriers, comparison of the cultural activities of German bytomans with the activities of new Polish city users), geopoetics (memory in literature, relations between place and users, identity). The concept of genius loci and the third place were used. Attention was drawn to the dependence of Bytom artists on the political censorship in the years 1945-1970.

Chapter I: Literary life of Bytom in the years 1945-1970.

The chapter presents the fates of the writers associated with Bytom in the years 1945-1970. An attempt was made to look at them not only as entangled in the political and

party system of the times discussed, but also as displaced people forced to live in a new place, bearing the trauma of the war past and the memory of lost places. The attention was paid to the changes in the perception of Bytom by successive generations of poets who created here. For comparison, the literary life of the pre-war period is outlined. The literary image of the city is complemented by analyzes of autobiographical notes and memories from the post-war period, which also show the attitude of the newcomers to the local population. The profiles of selected Bytom writers (very famous and unknown) were presented along with an analysis of their works (including autobiographical poems, lyrical landscapes). The texts of popular songs ("Piosenki o Bytomiu" and songs sung in Bytom) were analyzed. Extremely important aspects of the literary life of the period in question were the activity of the Literary Club headed by prof. Władysław Studencki from 1948 and the functioning of Bytom literary groups. It was emphasized that the literature of the Bytom authors of the discussed years was both a medium of memory and a chance to appear in the local community.

Chapter II: Libraries, reading, press in Bytom in 1945-1970.

The chapter is devoted to considerations on the importance of the book in the life of new post-war Bytomians and their access to literature and the press. To complete the picture of the phenomenon of reading in Bytom, the situation of libraries and book rentals in the pre-war period is briefly presented. Memoirs, revealing the attitude of the new inhabitants of the city to the books left by their predecessors, were presented. The process of creating city-, work places- and school- libraries in the post-war twenty-five years is presented. The role of the Municipal Public Library for the development of post-war cultural life in Bytom was shown. The importance of libraries in the building of the Upper Silesian Museum in Bytom was indicated. Attention was paid to the very wide access of Bytom citizens to the press, not only nationwide (including propaganda and cultural), but also to local press (city or even work places).

Chapter III: Theatrical life of Bytom in the years 1945-1970.

The theater life of Bytom has been shown in many aspects. Theater was presented as a place and as people (artists and spectators). The chapter discusses the development of interest in theater, the urban theater movement and its transformations in the twenty-five years in question. For comparison, a historical outline of pre-war theater life is presented. Based on information scattered in the press and memoirs, the rich activities of amateur theaters in Bytom were presented. The special role of the Silesian Opera was noticed. Attention was drawn to the undeniable importance of this cultural center for the

sense of identity of a group of new Bytomians, who came to the city from the Eastern Borderlands.

Chapter IV: Fine Arts in Bytom in 1945-1970.

The chapter highlights the role of fine artists in the process of creating a new city record. It was pointed out that the vast majority of Bytom painters and sculptors of the post-war period were a group of artists who had been displaced or who had come to the city from elsewhere. It was noticed that they created a fairly compact artistic environment. Among them were painters and sculptors of national fame. It was noted that the outdoor sculptures created in the analyzed period still adorn the city squares. Few valuable paintings are in the collections of the Upper Silesian Museum. An artist, who not only painted with a brush, but also wrote poetry, was noticed. The flourishing of the fine arts of the studied period was compared with the pre-war period. Numerous sculptures and monuments erected by previous Bytomians were destroyed, some survived, but their authors were forgotten. It was emphasized that apart from art, architecture gave the city a new character.

Chapter V: Other places important for the development of cultural life in Bytom in the years 1945-1970.

The chapter highlights the importance of cinemas, community centers, cafes, sports centers, parks in the cultural life of new Bytomians. For comparison, the situation from before World War II is presented. The role of the Upper Silesian Museum and the music scene in creating a new record of the city were emphasized. A great interest of the inhabitants in the cultural offer was presented (although it was shaped by top-down assumptions and political recommendations). The value and importance of "third places" in the life of Bytom in the post-war twenty-five years was noticed, especially their connection with literary and cultural activity.

Bytom was not the most eminent cultural center of post-war Upper Silesia. It is a place with the stigma of Germanness, a city of coal and steel, without a university, a city of workers. However, the cultural life in the years 1945-1970 flourished here very colorfully. The generation of new residents, as well as the Silesians who remained here, made a new record of the city, learning to live in it, facing their own post-war losses and memories. What the previous users of the city had left behind (buildings, cafes, cinemas, theaters, museums, squares, parks, stadiums) were used and new ones were created. The issues discussed in this dissertation are part of the current discourse on the identity of Bytomians.