

REVIEWS

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BOOK REVIEW: POLISH MINORITY IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CONDITIONS, CURRENT STATUS AND PROSPECTS [MNIEJSZOŚĆ POLSKA W FEDERACJI ROSYJSKIEJ]: UWARUNKOWANIA, STAN AKTUALNY I PERSPEKTYWY]

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The book *Mniejszość polska w Federacji Rosyjskiej: uwarunkowania, stan aktualny i perspektywy* [Polish minority in the Russian Federation: conditions, current status and prospects] was written by Sergiusz Leończyk and published in the series „Prace Instytutu Europy Środkowej”, no 13/2021 (Leończyk, 2021). The author of this publication is a professor and lecturer at the Institute of History at the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce. In his research work, he specializes in the history of Poles in Russia in the 19th and 20th centuries, with particular emphasis on their life in Siberia. He is the author of several books and over 100 articles devoted to these issues, including the monograph *Polskie osadnictwo wiejskie na Syberii w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku* [Polish rural settlement in Siberia in the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century] (Leończyk, 2017). In addition, Prof. S. Leończyk is a long-time activist of the Polish minority in the Russian Federation, in the years 2007–2012 he was the vice-president of the FPNKA “Congress of Poles in Russia” (Federalna Polska Narodowa Kulturalna Autonomia “Kongres

Polaków w Rosji” [Federal Polish National Cultural Autonomy “Congress of Poles in Russia”]), as well as the main editor of the “Congress” quarterly entitled: *Rodacy* [Compatriots] (‘O gazecie’, 2023) and the portal <http://rodacynasyberii.pl> (*Rodacy...*, 2023) as well as a member of the Polish Association of Authors, Journalists and Translators in Europe based in Paris.

The reviewed book is divided into several parts consisting of the assumed theses, as well as an introduction, three chapters, a summary and a bibliography. The publication begins with theses relating to the emergence and functioning of Poles in Russia over the centuries. In the introduction, the author focuses on the information on the current number of settlements in the Russian Federation by Poles living in it and explains the assumptions of this publication.

The first chapter, *An outline of the history of Polish minorities in the Russian Federation*, has been divided into five subchapters relating to different regions of the country and the arrival of Poles throughout history, and they are 1.1. *Siberian Polonia*, 1.2. *Poles in Saint Petersburg*, 1.3. *Activities of the Polish House in Moscow*, 1.4. *Poles in Soviet Russia*, 1.5. *The revival of Polishness and the emergence of Polish community organizations in the 1980s–1990s*. In the 1920s, Poles came to the Russian Empire for various reasons, which is why the proper division of the functioning of the Polish minority in time and space was applied.

In the second chapter, the author focuses on the *Organizational structures of the Polish minority in the Russian Federation*, describing the history and the formation of Polish community associations in Russia. The outlines of the creation of the ten most important organizations operating both in St. Petersburg and Moscow, as well as in Siberia, including Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Tomsk, as well as in Abakan in the Republic of Khakassia, Minusinsk in Krasnoyarsk Krai and Barnaul in Altai Krai and Ulan Ude in the Republic of Buryatia. Statutory goals and successes of the above associations are also listed, focusing primarily on teaching the Polish language and history, as well as cultivating folklore traditions and promoting national culture towards other minorities living in the Russian Federation. Also mentioned are the founders of the unions, as well as people currently actively involved in the activities of the Polish diaspora in this area.

In the last chapter, the author focuses on the subject of *The basic directions of activity of Polish community organizations in the Russian Federation*. This chapter is divided into three research areas, among which the fol-

lowing can be distinguished: 3.1. *Polish community education in the Russian Federation in 1991–2021*, 3.2. *Polish community media in the Russian Federation*, 3.3. *Polish community folklore groups*. In each of the subchapters, the researcher focuses on the specificity of a given topic. The first part presents information on the state of Polish education in Russia and its most important goals. The previous achievements and cooperation with institutions in Poland are also explained. The second subchapter presents the current state of the Polish minority media in the Russian Federation, which consists of both published magazines and online media. They play an important role as a transmitter of information, as well as integration of Polish cultural and educational circles. The Polish radio station “Rodacy” was also mentioned. The last of the subchapters focuses on a very important part of the life of the Polish minority, which are the numerous folklore groups that have been established and operating since the early 1990s. The author mentions five groups operating both in St. Petersburg and in Siberia, describing both their activities stage, as well as the impact on spreading knowledge about Polish creators of music, songs and national poetry.

In summary, Prof. S. Leończyk focuses on presenting conclusions regarding the creation and functioning of Polish community organizations in the Russian Federation. It explains the problems that Polish associations faced at the beginning of their existence, which were solved thanks to closer contacts with the home country. At the same time, the author points to the contemporary problems in the functioning of associations, resulting both from the authoritarian rule of Russia and the ineffective support of the Polish authorities.

This book is of great scientific value and can be a model textbook useful in the education of people specializing in the subject of Poles and people of Polish descent living in the Russian Federation. The advantages of this publication are mainly evidenced by the timeliness of the subject matter, a wide selection of scientific sources, both Polish and Russian, as well as the appropriate division into parts, which facilitates navigating through it. This publication is an important voice in the difficult history of the Polish minority in the Russian Federation and should be included in the library of every research institution dealing with this subject.

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