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## **SILESIAN: FROM GWARA TO LANGUAGE AFTER 1989<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Silesian was accepted as a language by most of its speakers in Poland, and also by linguists and IT specialists outside Poland. The use of Silesian in speech and writing is spreading rapidly, especially through cyberspace which is as yet not controlled by the majority of the world's nation-states (the rare exceptions to this rule of thumb being China or North Korea). From the perspective of the number of speakers, Silesian is the second most widely spoken language in Poland after the country's sole official and national language of Polish. Poland recognizes and supports such minority languages as Belarusian, German, Lithuanian, Romani or Rusyn, each used by several tens of thousands of speakers. This protection is generously extended to the ten or so Karaim-speakers<sup>2</sup> and to the actually non-existent (in Poland) minority speech communities of the languages of Armenian and Tatar<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that the Polish

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Catherine Gibson for her useful comments and suggestions for improvement. Obviously, I am responsible for any remaining infelicities.

<sup>2</sup> M. Németh, *Przeszłość, terażniejszość i przyszłość karaimskiej działalności kulturalno-językowej*, in: B. Machul-Telus (ed.), *Karaimi*, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warszawa 2012, p. 53–72.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna. Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2013, p. 96. Poland's recognized traditional minority of Armenians used to speak Kipchak, *not* Armenian; while the Tatar minority since its inception in the 14th century adopted their Slavophone

authorities actually only pay lip service to the protection of minorities and their languages. Typically, in today's Poland, such protection is lavished on non-existent or rapidly diminishing speech communities, while on the other hand it is strenuously withheld from over half a million Silesian-speakers. The sole exception to this hypocritical trend is the minority-style protection conferred, since 2005, on the 100,000 speakers of the Kashubian language<sup>4</sup>.

The explanation for this paradoxical hypocrisy lies in the Central European model of nation-state, which invested heavily in language as the basis of statehood and nationhood formation, legitimation and maintenance. Ethnolinguistic homogeneity (so highly atypical in the history of Poland-Lithuania and interwar Poland, and achieved only during World War II and the communist period<sup>5</sup>) appears to the majority of ethnic Poles to be the sole guarantee of their state's very existence. Hence, Poland's civil service and citizenry at large share a knee-jerk reaction to protect this homogeneity, be it through law or extralegal measures. Hardly anyone notices that this approach makes Silesian-speakers into second-class citizens, which does not bode well for the quality of Polish democracy<sup>6</sup>. To put this into perspective, the speakers of this unrecognized Silesian language are as numerous as the entire population of Luxembourg and are substantially more numerous than all of the Maltese. I propose that democratic Poland cannot afford to exclude half a million or more of its citizens from full and unrestricted participation in the country's political life. It can be done only at peril to democracy itself and pluralism guaranteed by it.

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neighbors' dialects. Nowadays, both, Polish Armenians and Tatars, speak Polish alone. See: Hadzy Seraja Szapszał, *O zatraceniu języka ojczystego przez Tatarów w Polsce*, „Rocznik Tatarski” 1932, vol. 1, p. 34–48; S. Stachowski, *Polonizacja języka ormiańsko-kipczackiego*, „LingVaria” 2010, vol. 5, no 2, p. 213–227.

<sup>4</sup> 10 lat ustawy o języku regionalnym na Kaszubach. 2015. Kaszubi.pl. 3 Apr. www.kaszubi.pl/media/medius/id/480 (accessed: October 6, 2015); Egzamin maturalny. Język kaszubski jako język regionalny (poziom rozszerzony). 2015. cke.edu.pl/index.php/egzamin-maturalny-left/96-matura-2015/464-jezyk-kaszubski-jako-jezyk-regionalny-poziom-rozszerzony-em (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *Germanization, Polonization, and Russification in the Partitioned Lands of Poland-Lithuania*, „Nationalities Papers” 2013, vol. 41, no. 5, p. 815–838.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Idem, *Repolonizacja trwa*, „Opolska Jaskółka” (insert in *Jaskółka Śląska*) 2007, no. 5, p. 1, 5–6; Idem, *Schlonszka ostuda, abo polski wstyd?*, „Ślůnsko Nacyjo” 2007, vol. 1, no. 5, p. 28–30.

By way of an introduction, this article reflects on the political dynamics of ethnolinguistic nationalism in Central Europe, before turning to the history of Upper Silesia's multilingual inhabitants during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the context of the rise of nationalism and the processes of nation-state building. Nevertheless, the main focus is on the postcommunist period, which has seen a growing acceptance of Silesian as a language and an increase in the production of books, periodicals, websites and films in this language, alongside radio, television and multimedia programs. I take note of the main trends in recent Silesian cultural production, alongside the discourse on the status of Silesian. Hopefully, the wealth of bibliographical information gathered here will help other interested researchers probe in greater depth into the various topics connected to contemporary Silesian language and culture.

## **Ethnolinguistic Nationalism in Central Europe**

The idea of the normative equation of the demographic unit of 'a nation' with the similarly normative unity of 'a language' emerged across the lands of the former Holy Roman Empire under the onslaught of Napoleonic attack at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It became a new 'modern' norm to postulate that speakers of a language constitute a nation, and that a territory compactly inhabited by such a speech community should be made into a nation-state. This norm was tried out during the 1860s and 1870s when Italy and Germany were founded as ethnolinguistic nation-states. Subsequently, in the wake of the Great War, the political shape of Central Europe (understood as the vertical mid-section of Europe from Scandinavia to the Balkans) was reorganized in line with this principle. Ethnolinguistic nation-states were erected in place of the erased empires of the Habsburgs, the Ottomans and in the western borderlands of the erstwhile Russian Empire, alongside some eastern territories detached from the German Empire. Furthermore, during the Balkan Wars and World War I, the ideologically ethnoreligious character of the Balkan nation-states became increasingly ethnolinguistic. The novel organizational logic of the postwar geopolitical space was accepted by the United States

and gradually 'naturalized,' as evidenced by the following quote from an influential 1917 tome on the subject, perused at the Paris Peace Conference, 'the growing coincidence of linguistic and political boundaries must be regarded as a normal development'<sup>7</sup>. Even earlier, the Bolsheviks had accepted this logic as part of their program<sup>8</sup>, though they had a chance to implement it in any meaningful manner only after 1922, when the Soviet Union was established<sup>9</sup>.

As a result, for better or for worse, in Central Europe language remains the basis of state making, legitimation and maintenance to this day. In this region, the widely accepted normative belief is that a polity to be legitimate, it must be an officially *monolingual* nation-state, with such a national-cum-official language that is *not* shared with any other polity in this function. According to this line of political thinking, for instance, if someone speaks Polish, he must be a Pole, a member of the Polish nation, and as such should enjoy citizenship of the Polish nation-state. Therefore, from the vantage point of ethnolinguistic nationalism, it does not make sense that an Austrian speaks German, and not some 'appropriately' named Austrian language. Likewise, the Americans may not be a 'real' nation, because the United States does not have a national or official language. The normative hold of ethnolinguistic nationalism is so strong in Central Europe that when Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, it was declared to be the national polity of the Czechoslovak nation, speaking and writing the Czechoslovak language. By the same token, when Yugoslavia broke up in the 1990s, the successor nation-states had to be endowed with their own specific languages, not shared with any other polities or nations. Hence, Serbo-Croatian split into Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian.

The politicization of languages and their names is so deeply entrenched in Central Europe that its dynamics can impact on a state's domestic and international relations. For example, Bulgaria recognizes Macedonia as a state but not its Macedonian language, which Sofia

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<sup>7</sup> L. Dominian, *The Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe*, Constable, London – Henry Holt, New York 1917, p. 342.

<sup>8</sup> I.V. Stalin, *Natsionalnyi vopros i marksizm*, Priboi, St. Petersburg 1914.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. S. Blank, *The Sorcerer as Apprentice: Stalin as Commissar of Nationalities, 1917–1924*, Greenwood Press, Westport CN 1994.

claims to be just another 'literary standard' of the Bulgarian language. The official Bulgarian stance is that there is no Macedonian nation either, because from Sofia's perspective citizens of Macedonia speak 'Bulgarian' and as such constitute part of the (ethnolinguistic) Bulgarian nation<sup>10</sup>. In 1991 in independent Moldova the official Moldovan language was renamed as Romanian. The Russophone part of the country's population feared a union with Romania, which led to a war and the rise of the de facto polity of Transnistria. In order to placate the fears and to lure Transnistria back, in 1994 Chişinău changed the name of its official language back to Moldovan<sup>11</sup>. In the post-Soviet Baltic nation-states of Estonia and Latvia, citizenship has been withheld from Russian-speaking residents who failed or decided not to take the qualifying test in the national languages of Estonian and Latvian, respectively<sup>12</sup>. As a result, over a tenth of both countries' populations is composed of non-citizens for whom the oxymoronic Estonian and Latvian aliens' passports were introduced<sup>13</sup>.

During the last three decades since the publication of the seminal volume edited by Eric J Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in 1983<sup>14</sup>, it has become part of received knowledge that it is people alone who thought up the notion of the nation, and create and maintain nations established in line with this concept. Hence, nations are *not* phenomena of nature,

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, McFarland, Jefferson NC 1997, p. 352; Diletanti polititsi, izpelniteli na chuzhda volia suz-dadokha edin vuzel v dvustrannite otnosheniia sus Skopie, Blog.bg, 25 September 2012, [kostas.blog.bg/politika/2012/09/25/1-priznahme-li-makedoniia-ili-omazahme-konstitu-ciiata-i-mejd.1003277](http://kostas.blog.bg/politika/2012/09/25/1-priznahme-li-makedoniia-ili-omazahme-konstitu-ciiata-i-mejd.1003277) (accessed: August 9, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ch. King, *The Ambivalence of Authenticity, or How the Moldovan Language Was Made*, „Slavic Review” 1999, vol. 58, no. 1, p. 117–142; M.H. Ciscel, *The Language of the Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and Identity in an Ex-Soviet Republic*, Lexington Books, Lanham 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. G. Feldman, *The Trap of Abstract Space: Recomposing Russian-Speaking Immigrants in Post-Soviet Estonia*, „Anthropological Quarterly” 2008, vol. 81, no. 2, p. 311–342; K. Krūma, *Checks and Balances in Latvian Nationality Policies: National agendas and international frameworks*, in: R. Bauböck, B. Perchinig, W. Sievers (eds.), *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2009, p. 67–96.

<sup>13</sup> On ethnolinguistic nationalism in Central Europe see: T. Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe*, Palgrave, Basingstoke 2015.

<sup>14</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983.

or sent to earth by god(s), but products of man-made culture. A similar *denaturalization* of languages and states (and their territories) has not yet taken place. Apart from specialists dealing with these issues, the public at large tends to believe that languages are part of nature. They may concede that it is humans who build states, yet in Europe the penchant is for insisting that 'our nation-state' is at least a millennium old, if not actually eternal. For example, it is commonly believed that the Polish nation-state was founded in 966, not in 1918; while its German counterpart in 800 or 962, not in 1871. School education and politicians perpetuate these myths since they are useful for social and political cohesion.

In reality, it is humans and their groups in Europe who invented and initially implemented the concept of 'a language' (*Einzelssprache*) as a discrete entity, before colonization and imperialism spread this political standard to elsewhere in the world. With the use of the technology of writing and printing, the continuous linguistic was divided and apportioned to this or that language. The languages were defined, produced and finally made 'tangible' and manipulable through dictionaries, grammars, school textbooks, and official academies tasked with developing and protecting ('cultivating') national languages. With the rise and the actualization of the ideal of popular education and full literacy, schools and state offices spread the official or national (standard) language across the entire territory of a given nation-state at the expense of other languages and non-standard variants of the official (national) language. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, radio and television accelerated this process of ethnolinguistic homogenization, nowadays deepened (and sometimes subverted) by the ubiquitous internet<sup>15</sup>.

The concept of the state and entities fashioned in accordance with it are also products of human creativity. A group of humans claim a piece of territory as theirs to the exclusion of outsiders. They develop methods to police the perimeter (construed as a boundary) that ensure the intensification of contacts among the members of the in-group residing in the polity, while limiting the opportunity, number and intensity of contacts between this in-group and outsiders. Mathematics,

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *Creating Languages in Central Europe During the Last Millennium*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2015.

statistics, geodesy or cartography allow for measuring and representing the territory of the state, as deemed necessary in light of changing economic, demographic, military, ideological or other needs. As a result, the state and its territory are created (invented) and become 'normal' or even 'natural' to the state's populace<sup>16</sup>.

## Upper Silesia in Nationally-Inflected Modernity

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the historical region of Upper Silesia was located in Prussia's then largely forgotten southeasternmost corner with its overwhelmingly rural inhabitants<sup>17</sup>. The rapid development of coal mining and metallurgical industry in the region during the second half of this century brought Upper Silesia to the attention of the powers that be. The region evolved into the second largest industrial basin in continental Europe after the Ruhr. Nowadays, from the 'normal' ethnolinguistic perspective, it is popular to stress the mixed, Germanic-Slavic, character of Upper Silesia. But this approach is anachronistic, as at that time the main locus of people's identity was religion, estates and loyalty to the monarchical ruler. From the religious vantage, Upper Silesia was homogenously Catholic, with Protestants (many of them conscripts from without Upper Silesia) accounting for a tenth of the population. However, the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw also the rise of the ethnolinguistic map as a new genre of political cartography, while on the other hand, it was decided to include in censuses the question about one's language as the indicator of one's nationality. The technologies of inventing (creating) nations, languages and nation-states were combined into a mutually reinforcing nexus that characterizes Central Europe's socio-political modernity<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. S. Elden, *The Birth of Territory*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2013.

<sup>17</sup> For the sake of simplicity and given the required brevity of this article, I do not discuss the 18<sup>th</sup>-century division of Silesia between Prussia and Vienna; or the Habsburgs' crownland of Austrian Silesia, composed from the southernmost area of historical Upper Silesia and, in the west, of a tiny bit of historical Lower Silesia.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. C.T. Dunlop, *Mapping a New Kind of European Boundary: The Language Border Between Modern France and Germany*, „Imago Mundi: The International Journal of the History of Cartography" 2013, vol. 65, no. 2, p. 253–267.

When probing into and using a given ethnolinguistic situation for nation-building, designers of census and map makers usually disregarded the phenomenon of multilingualism in standard languages and non-standard variants. State administration and elementary education for all, as increasingly geared to the model of ethnolinguistically defined national polity, required 'a clarity' on language use. It was decided that a person could fluently speak only a single language as his 'mother tongue.' The bilingual, Slavophone and German(ic)-speaking populations in northern West Prussia, southern East Prussia and in the borderland between Brandenburg and Saxony were thus classified as speaking, respectively, the languages of Kashubian, Mazurian and Sorbian. The similarly bilingual population in Upper Silesia was registered in official statistics as speaking either Polish or Moravian. This is the bureaucratic-cum-scholarly origin of the classificatory tradition that to this day defines Silesian as a dialect (*gwara*) of the Polish language and Moravian as a dialect (*nářečí*) of Czech.

In reality what underlies this understanding of the sociolinguistic situation in Upper Silesia is the largely arbitrary decision on the medium of education in elementary school. Until 1918 the Catholic and Protestant Churches ran the educational system in Prussia. The Breslau (Wrocław) bishop controlled schools in northern and central Upper Silesia, while the Moravian archbishop in the region's southernmost area. In 1849–50 the former hierarch's administration settled on Polish in their schools for Upper Silesia's Slavophones, while the latter's officialdom for the same purpose selected the local Slavic dialect that was printed in Fraktur (that is, Gothic script) and thus made into a separate language of Moravian. Obviously, these statistical 'Polish- and Moravian-speakers' of Upper Silesia usually spoke the very same dialect, only they happened to live on the different sides of the diocesan border that transected their region. Although the use of Polish and Moravian in Upper Silesia's schools was largely discontinued after 1872–76, a tradition developed to label the bilingual population's Slavophone speech in the Breslau Diocese as 'Polish', despite the fact that the majority of them never identified either with the Polish language or the then nascent Polish national movement. They rather saw themselves as (Upper) Silesians, Catholics, Prussians



and / or Germans<sup>19</sup>. To the eye of Upper Silesia's Slavophone, Poles lived across the border in Russia (that is, the Congress Kingdom of Poland) or in Austria (that is, Galicia)<sup>20</sup>.

After 1918, at the Paris Peace Conference, ethnolinguistic nationalism was accepted as *the* basis for the political reorganization of Central Europe. In line with this ideology, Upper Silesia was divided among Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, following the civil strife, the internationalization of the region and the plebiscite (1919–21). After the all too short period of relative democracy and, autonomy for Upper Silesia in Poland (1922–26) or democracy and self-rule in Germany (1922–33), relentless ethnolinguistic homogenization set in without much respect for the concerned populations' wishes. Polish was purged from public life, official use and education in Germany's section of Upper Silesia, while German from Poland's share of the region<sup>21</sup>. Germanization was facilitated by emphasizing that despite its Slavic character, Silesian was not a dialect of Polish. Rather, it was construed that the Silesians' centuries-long participation in 'German culture and civilization' made their speech into a 'culture dialect' (*Kulturmundart*) of the German language, a Slavic (or Slavic-Germanic) dialect united with this language through shared German culture and values<sup>22</sup>. During World War II, all of Upper Silesia reincorporated into Germany, the policy of Germanization was extended to the formerly Polish part of

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *Narody i grupy etniczne w stosunkach niemiecko-polskich, czyli anachronizm oglądu przeszłości w perspektywie nacjonalistycznej historiografii*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 2000, vol. 44, no. 1, p. 101–112; J. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor MI 2008; T. Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918*, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette IN 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *Niemcy i Polacy w oczach Górnolązaków*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 1997, vol. 41, no. 1; K. Hannan, *Borders of Language and Identity in Teschen Silesia*, Peter Lang, New York 1996, p. 77; T. Kamusella, *The Upper Silesian's Stereotypical Perception of the Poles and the Germans*, „East European Quarterly” 1999, vol. 33, no. 3, p. 395–410.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. K. Popiołek, W. Sobański, *The Last Attempt to Germanize Opole Silesia*, The Western Press Agency, Poznań 1959; M.G. Gerlich, „Śląska krzywda” – przejaw zbiorowego poczucia poniżenia wśród górnośląskiej ludności rodzimej (okres międzywojnia), „Etnografia Polska” 1994, vol. 38, no. 1–2, p. 6–24.

<sup>22</sup> C. Eichenberger, *Die Deutschen in Polen. Von der verleugneten Minderheit zur anerkannten Volksgruppe*, Bukowina-Institut, Augsburg 1994, p. 35.

the region. The classificatory niceties were conveniently forgotten and Silesian was treated then as part of the Polish language that needed to be eradicated from German soil. After 1945, when most of the *deutsche Ostgebiete* (or 'Recovered Territories' in the language of Polish politics) passed to Poland, the entire Upper Silesia found itself within the Polish boundaries. Subsequently, wholesale Polonization replaced Germanization<sup>23</sup>. The process was facilitated by the expulsion of the local elite defined as 'indubitable Germans'<sup>24</sup>.

Until the fall of communism Silesian was officially perceived as a dialect of Polish that in the process of modernization would finally disappear and be replaced by standard Polish<sup>25</sup>. However, in practice, as was the case during the interwar period<sup>26</sup>, teachers and officials saw Silesian as a 'corrupt Polish'<sup>27</sup> or even as a 'dialect of German'<sup>28</sup>. Hence, for the sake of Polonization, until the mid-1990s, in school during Polish lessons, Silesian-speaking children were taught to speak and write 'correct Polish' with the use of special textbooks for Silesian-speakers, which in their methodology and approach eerily reminded textbooks of Polish as a foreign language for Czech or Slovenian-

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. M. Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien. Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache in den Jahren 1921–1998*, Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa, Dortmund 1999; B. Linek, *Próba eliminacji języka niemieckiego na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1950*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 2001, vol. 57, no. 1, p. 81–102; M.G. Gerlich, „My prawdziwi Górnioślązacy...”. *Studium etnologiczne*, DiG, Warszawa 2010; P. Polak Springer, *Recovered Territory: A German-Polish Conflict Over Land and Culture, 1919–1989*, Berghahn, New York 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Z. Boda-Kreżel, *Sprawa volkslisty na Górnym Śląsku. Koncepcje likwidacji problemu i ich realizacja*, Instytut Śląski, Opole 1978; J. Misztal, *Weryfikacja narodowościowa na Śląsku Opolskim 1945–1950*, Instytut Śląski, Opole 1984; S. Siebel-Achenbach, *Lower Silesia from Nazi Germany to Communist Poland, 1942–49*, St Martin's Press, New York 1994; B. Linek, *Polityka antyniemiecka a Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1950*, Instytut Śląski, Opole 2000; H. Service, *Germans to Poles: Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. S. Rospond, *Polszczyzna śląska*, Ossolineum, Wrocław 1970.

<sup>26</sup> E. Kopeć, *Z zagadnień integracji językowej śląskich kresów Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*, in: J. Chlebowczyk (ed.), *Z zagadnień integracji i unifikacji II Rzeczypospolitej*, Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 1980, p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> L. Pallas, *Jazyková otázka a podmínky vytváření národního vědomí ve Slezsku*, Profil, Ostrava 1970, p. 19–20.

<sup>28</sup> B. Wyderka, *O konieczności nowych badań gwar śląskich*, „Śląsk Opolski” 1998, no. 3, p. 4.

-speakers<sup>29</sup>. During the communist times, as a concession to Silesian's linguistic differences (but nevertheless from the ideological-cum-classificatory standpoint, it was still safely encased within the broader bracket of Polishdom), some collections of regional fairy-tales, stories and anecdotes were published with the use of elements of Silesian or in a strongly Polonized variant of this language or dialect, in both cases invariably with the employment of the standard Polish spelling<sup>30</sup>. To my knowledge, the full lexical, syntactic and phonemic difference of Silesian was reflected only in a single scholarly publication that never entered the popular discourse<sup>31</sup>. The sole book resembling everyday spoken Silesian that was more readily accessible was the 1974 Polish translation of the German-language novel on Upper Silesia by Janosch (pseudonym of Horst Eckert). He stems from Upper Silesia and became the most beloved children writer in West Germany. All the dialogs in the Polish edition of his book, though originally written in German, were translated into Silesian, *not* into Polish<sup>32</sup>. At the very end of the communist period, the high official of the Polish central judiciary coming from Upper Silesia, Józef Musioł, published a volume of stories from the Katowice courtroom during Stalinism, written with the ample use of Silesian<sup>33</sup>. Both, in this book and in the Polish translation of Janosch's novel, passages in Silesian are rendered in the Polish-style standard orthography.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. B. Cząstka, H. Synowiec, *Kształcenie sprawności językowej. Ćwiczenia dla uczniów środowiska śląskiego*, Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego, Kraków 1990; H. Synowiec, *Sprawność językowa uczniów w śląskim środowisku gwarowym. Problemy, badania, konsekwencje dydaktyczne*, Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 1992; eadem, *Kształcenie sprawności komunikacyjnej uczniów w środowisku gwarowym*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole 1994; B. Cząstka-Szymon, H. Synowiec, *Polszczyzna w szkole śląskiej* (vol. 1: *Ćwiczenia dla uczniów*; vol. 2: *Przewodnik dla nauczycieli*). Śląsk, Katowice 1996.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. J. Ondrusz, *Godki śląskie*, Sekcja Literacko-Artystyczna, Český Těšín 1956; D. Simonides, *Bery śmieszne i uciészne. Humor śląski*, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Opola, Opole 1969; B. Strzałka, *Godki i bojki śląskie*, Opolskie Towarzystwo Kulturalno-Oświatowe, Opole 1976.

<sup>31</sup> W. Lubaś (ed.), *Teksty języka mówionego mieszkańców miast Górnego Śląska i Zagłębia* (2 vols in 3 parts), Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 1978–1980.

<sup>32</sup> Janosch, *Cholonek czyli Dobry Pan Bóg z gliny* [translated from the German by Leon Bielas], Śląsk, Katowice 1974.

<sup>33</sup> J. Musioł, *Chachary. Sceny sądowe w Stalinogrodzie*, Śląski Instytut Naukowy, Katowice 1989.

## 1989: Democracy and Its Discontents

The end of communism and the subsequent systemic transformation in Poland, Germany and across the entire former Soviet bloc also brought a change to Upper Silesia. In the 1991 Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Warsaw and Berlin jointly recognized the German minority in Upper Silesia. Previously the Polish stance had been that only 3,000 Germans had lived in Poland<sup>34</sup>, although between 1950 and 1989, 1.23 million ethnic Germans (*Aussiedlers*, or 'resettlers') had left Poland for West Germany<sup>35</sup>. The most substantial part of this forced emigration (ethnic cleansing)<sup>36</sup>, from 1950 to 1990, was composed of around 0.8 million Silesians (meaning here, indigenous inhabitants of Upper Silesia). The biggest waves of their departures to West Germany occurred in the late 1970s and the late 1980s<sup>37</sup>.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, availing of the rapidly regained freedom of travel, Silesians began visiting relatives back in their old *Heimat* and in (West) Germany. The reestablished grassroots relations allowed for the swift development of economic, employment and cultural links. Bonn, having to deal with the sudden influx of *Aussiedlers* from the post-Soviet states and Romania, hoped that Silesians (especially from Opole Province, coterminous with the western half of Upper Silesia) would *not* follow suit. Warsaw also wanted to retain them in order to prevent an imminent demographic collapse in the area. To this end, in 1991 the German Consulate in Wrocław began issuing qualifying Silesians with German citizenship and passports, without the necessity of leaving for Germany, which earlier had been the basic requirement of this process. The applicants were not compelled to give up their Polish citizenship, either, which then was in blatant breach of both, German

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<sup>34</sup> J. Byczkowski, *Mniejszości narodowe w Europie 1945–1974 (wybrane zagadnienia)*, Instytut Śląski, Opole 1976, p. 164.

<sup>35</sup> G. Dallinger (ed.), *Datenreport 1997. Zahlen und Fakten über die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn 1997, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. A. Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012.

<sup>37</sup> T. Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing in Silesia 1950–89 and the Ennationalizing Policies of Poland and Germany*, „Patterns of Prejudice” 1999, vol. 33, no. 2, p. 70.

and Polish, law. As a result, about a quarter of a million Silesians living in Upper Silesia now hold dual German and Polish citizenship. This largely unreported development cushioned the postcommunist deindustrialization of Upper Silesia, especially in predominantly rural Opole Province. Tens of thousands of laid-off miners and steel mill workers immediately found seasonal work in Germany, and after the founding of the European Union in 1993, also farther afield, for example, in the Netherlands.<sup>38</sup>

The blooming of German minority organizations and their wide-ranging activities in Opole Province during the 1990s did not translate into any German-medium minority educational system. Hence, the use of German as a language of everyday communication was not revived even in the smallest Upper Silesian village, let alone in any urban neighborhoods. The oldest generation of Upper Silesia's Germans who had finished several years of German school before 1945 could at long last freely converse and read in this language, alongside singing German hymns in church. Middle-aged seasonal workers acquired some working knowledge of German, but as many as two-thirds of Upper Silesia's Germans see Silesian as their 'mother tongue' (first language), and almost all speak it on an everyday basis, unlike German or Polish. Hence, amongst family and in their ethnic neighborhoods, Upper Silesia's Germans speak Silesian and only switch to (standard or Silesian- and German-inflected) Polish in office, school or when travelling outside their region<sup>39</sup>.

Due to the vagaries of history and German law, indigenous Upper Silesians from Katowice (Silesian) Province, that is, the eastern half of Upper Silesia, in most cases, were unable to acquire German / EU citizenship. It was they who felt the full brunt of the unemployment

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<sup>38</sup> Idem, *Dual Citizenship in Opole Silesia in the Context of European Integration*, „Facta Universitatis” 2003, no. 10, p. 699–716.

<sup>39</sup> D. Berlińska (ed.), *Niemcy w województwie opolskim w 2010 roku. Pytania i odpowiedzi. Badania socjologiczne członków Towarzystwa Społeczno-Kulturalnego Niemców na Śląsku Opolskim*, Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej, Gliwice–Opole 2011, p. 53; T. Kamusella, *A Language That Forgot Itself (An Essay on the Curious Non-Existence of German as a Recognized Minority Language in Today's Poland)*, „Sprawy Narodowościowe” 2014, vol. 45, <https://ispan.waw.pl/journals/index.php/sn/article/view/sn.2014.021/554> (accessed: October 3, 2015).

triggered by the postcommunist deindustrialization of their region synonymous with communist Poland's heavy industry<sup>40</sup>. The country's mainstream parties showed no interest in their problems either. Warsaw left Upper Silesia and its inhabitants to their own devices. This led to the coalescence of the grassroots movement that aspires to (re)gain autonomy for Upper Silesia and official recognition for the Silesians as a minority and for their Silesian language<sup>41</sup>. The initial timeline of this process may be schematically sketched as leading from the founding of the Silesian Autonomy Movement (RAŚ, *Ruch Autonomii Śląska*) in 1990 to the establishment of the Association of People of Silesian Nationality (ZLNŚ, *Związek Ludności Narodowości Śląskiej*) six years later. The Polish authorities' repeated refusal of register the ZLNŚ led to a case against Poland in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which was adjudicated twice, in 2001 and 2004. This refusal of registration was not deemed technically illegal (though three judges issued a concurring opinion in which they enumerated their reservations on this subject)<sup>42</sup>, but the Council of Europe obliged the Polish state to undertake a meaningful dialog with Silesian organizations and activists<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. R. Gliński, [Feature film]. *Benek*. Warsaw: Apple Film Productions, [www.film-polski.pl/fp/index.php?film=1218065](http://www.film-polski.pl/fp/index.php?film=1218065) (accessed: October 4, 2015).

<sup>41</sup> M. Dembinska, *Adapting to Changing Contexts of Choice: The Nation-Building Strategies of Unrecognized Silesians and Rusyns*, „Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique” 2008, vol. 41, no. 4, p. 915–934; P. Kocyba, *Die »Bewegung für die Autonomie Schlesiens« und ihre Transformationskritik Anfang der 1990er Jahre*, in: D. Bingen, M. Jarosz, P.O. Oliver Loew (eds.), *Legitimation und Protest. Gesellschaftliche Unruhe in Polen, Ostdeutschland und anderen Transformationsländern nach 1989*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 96–114.

<sup>42</sup> Grand Chamber Judgement in the Case of Gorzelik and Others vs Poland. 2004. Strasbourg: European Court of Human Rights. [www.pict-pcti.org/news\\_archive/04/feb04/ECHR\\_021704d.htm](http://www.pict-pcti.org/news_archive/04/feb04/ECHR_021704d.htm) and [www.legislationline.org/documents/id/18445](http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/18445) (accessed: October 3, 2015); A. Roczniok, *ZLNS, Związek Ludności Narodowości Śląskiej w dokumentach / Ślōnsko nacyjo w dokumentach* (3 vols), Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2006–2014.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities – Opinion on Poland, 27 November 2003, ACFC/INF/OP/I(2004)005, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2003, p. 9, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/447ee05f4.html> (accessed: October 20, 2015); Council of Europe: Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities – Third Opinion on Poland adopted on 28 November 2013, 7 February 2014, ACFC/OP/III(2013)004, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2013, p. 9–11, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/52f891254.html> (accessed: October 20, 2015); Komitet Doradczy Konwencji Ramowej o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych.

The Polish authorities have yet to embark on such a dialog<sup>44</sup>, leaving just a few Polish scholars attempting a deepened analysis of the current Silesian national / ethnic / linguistic movement<sup>45</sup>. Instead, at present a similar story of the Polish authorities' refusal to register any national or ethnic Silesian organization is repeated in the case of the Association of Persons of Silesian Nationality (SONŚ, *Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej*). Established in 2011, initially SONŚ did not encounter any problems with registration because its founders, mindful of the EHCR's aforementioned judgement, resigned in the organization's charter from participating in any elections. However, already in 2013, SONŚ was declared illegal on the account of the use of the term 'Silesian nationality' in its name<sup>46</sup>. According to the Polish authorities such entities as the

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Dруга Опinia dotycząca Polski, przyjęta w dniu 20 marca 2009 r., Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2009, p. 10–12, [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\\_fcnmdocs/PDF\\_2nd\\_OP\\_Poland\\_pl.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_fcnmdocs/PDF_2nd_OP_Poland_pl.pdf) (accessed: October 18, 2015); Komitet Doradczy Konwencji Ramowej o Ochronie Mniejszości Narodowych. Trzecia opinia odnośnie Polski, przyjęta 28 listopada 2013, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2013, p. 12, [http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mac.gov.pl/download/86/13443/TekstIIIRaportu\\_KR.pdf](http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mac.gov.pl/download/86/13443/TekstIIIRaportu_KR.pdf) (accessed: October 19, 2015); Re: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Council of Europe. 2013, [slonzoki.org/files/CouncilofEurope2013.pdf](http://slonzoki.org/files/CouncilofEurope2013.pdf) (accessed: October 18, 2015); E. Godlewska, *National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland in the Opinions of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 2014, no. II, p. 66, 73; Silesian Issues and the Council of Europe. 2014. [slonzoki.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/UNO\\_SONS.pdf](http://slonzoki.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/UNO_SONS.pdf) (accessed: October 18, 2015).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. List stowarzyszenia Ślązaków do Parlamentu Europejskiego, *Onet. Wiadomości*, 30 June, 2011, [wiadomosci.onet.pl/slask/list-stowarzyszenia-slawakow-do-euoparlamentu/8x9lc](http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/slask/list-stowarzyszenia-slawakow-do-euoparlamentu/8x9lc) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>45</sup> M.W. Wanatowicz, *Od indyferentnej ludności do śląskiej narodowości? Postawy narodowe ludności autochtonicznej Górnego Śląska w latach 1945–2003 w świadomości społecznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2004; A. Sakson (ed.), *Ślązacy, Kaszubi, Mazurzy i Warmiacy – między polskością a niemieckością*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 2008; F. Kołodziejski, *Identyfikacje etniczne autochtonicznych mieszkańców śląska. Naród śląski in statu nascendi? / Ethnical identifications of native inhabitants of Silesia: Silesian nation in statu nascendi?*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2008; K. Dolińska, *Potoczny i ideologiczny poziom doświadczenia śląkości. Ślązacy w poszukiwaniu odrębności?*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2009; E.A. Sekuła, *Po co Ślązakom potrzebny jest naród? Niebezpieczne związki między autonomią i nacjonalizmem*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2009; E.A. Sekuła, B. Jałowiecki, P.M. Majewski, W. Żelazny, *Być narodem? Ślązacy o Śląsku*, Scholar, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>46</sup> M. Dembinska, *Ethnopolitical Mobilization without Groups: Nation-Building in Upper Silesia*, „Regional and Federal Studies” 2013, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 47–66; K. Ogiolda, *Sąd zdecydował o likwidacji Stowarzyszenia Osób Narodowości Śląskiej*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 9 January 2015, [www.nto.pl/wiadomosci/opole/art/4648614,sad-zdecydowal-o-likwidacji-stowarzyszenia-osob-narodowosci-slaskiej,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/wiadomosci/opole/art/4648614,sad-zdecydowal-o-likwidacji-stowarzyszenia-osob-narodowosci-slaskiej,id,t.html) (accessed: October 8, 2015); Sto-

Silesian nation (nationality, ethnic group or minority) or the Silesian language do not exist, hence organizations aspiring to represent the former or to cultivate the latter cannot be registered<sup>47</sup>. Most probably the case of SONŚ will be referred to the EHCR in late 2015 or 2016<sup>48</sup>.

During the communist period it was assumed that Poland, from the ethnolinguistic vantage point, was fully homogenous and the population was not asked about their national membership (nationality) or home/family language ('mother tongue')<sup>49</sup>. This approach changed radically after 1989, particularly due to the official recognition of several national minorities, especially the German minority that concentrates in Upper Silesia. Hence, the questions on nationality and language were included in the Polish postcommunist censuses of 2002<sup>50</sup> and 2011 (despite *not* being required by the European Union's Eurostat statistical office, as is sometimes incorrectly maintained). Ironically, the returns showed that Silesians, numbering 0.85 million, are the largest minority

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warzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stowarzyszenie\\_Osób\\_Narodowości\\_Śląskiej](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stowarzyszenie_Osób_Narodowości_Śląskiej) (accessed: October 3, 2015); Wniosek kasacyjny do Sądu Najwyższego, 2015, [slonzoki.org/2015/09/wniosek-kasacyjny-do-sadu-najwyzszego/](http://slonzoki.org/2015/09/wniosek-kasacyjny-do-sadu-najwyzszego/) (accessed: October 3, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. L.M. Nijakowski (ed.), *Nadciągają Ślązacy. Czy istnieje narodowość śląska?*, Scholar, Warszawa 2004; *SN nie przyjął skargi kasacyjnej Stowarzyszenia Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, „Rzeczpospolita”* 16 October 2015, [www4.rp.pl/Fundacje-i-stowarzyszenia/310169869-SN-nie-przyjal-skargi-kasacyjnej-Stowarzyszenia-Osob-Narodowosci-Slaskiej.html](http://www4.rp.pl/Fundacje-i-stowarzyszenia/310169869-SN-nie-przyjal-skargi-kasacyjnej-Stowarzyszenia-Osob-Narodowosci-Slaskiej.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Oświadczenie SONŚ po kolejnej decyzji SN, *Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej*, 19 October 2015, [slonzoki.org/2015/10/oswiadczenie-sons-po-kolejnej-decyzji-sn/](http://slonzoki.org/2015/10/oswiadczenie-sons-po-kolejnej-decyzji-sn/) (accessed: October 20, 2015); P. Guzik, *Ślązacy idą do Strasburga. Czekali na to pół roku*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 23 October 2015, [opole.wyborcza.pl/opole/1,35114,19071639,slazacy-ida-do-strasburga-czekali-na-to-pol-roku.html](http://opole.wyborcza.pl/opole/1,35114,19071639,slazacy-ida-do-strasburga-czekali-na-to-pol-roku.html) (accessed: October 29, 2015).

<sup>49</sup> The questions on the population's nationality, language and religion was included in Poland's first postwar census of 1946 with an eye to identifying Germans who were to be expelled from Poland in line with the decisions of the Potsdam Agreement (see: P. Eberhardt, *Między Rosją a Niemcami. Przemiany narodowościowe w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w XX w.*, PWN, Warszawa 1996, p. 127).

<sup>50</sup> The United Nations criticized Poland for irregularities in the 2002 census, when citizens were prevented from recording their declared nationality and language. See: International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination: Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention: Nineteenth Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 2006: Poland, 19 February 2008, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Geneva 2008, p. 8, [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/POL/19&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/POL/19&Lang=en) (accessed: October 20, 2015).



in today's Poland, while the more than half a million speakers of Silesian make it the largest minority language in the country<sup>51</sup>. However, the Polish authorities disregard the results and 'reinterpret' (or rather falsify) all the declarations of Silesian nationality as declarations of Polish nationality, because the official doctrine is that Silesians are at most a regional branch of the Polish nation<sup>52</sup>. A similar 'reinterpretation' (falsification) is applied to the declarations of Silesian as a home / family language, which are counted as declarations of Polish on the basis that officially Silesian is classified as a dialect of the Polish language<sup>53</sup>.

This persistently negative attitude of the Polish state administration (including, quite menacingly, the security forces) toward the Silesians and their aspirations<sup>54</sup> amounts to a denial of the status of a subject of politics

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Ślązacy to ludność czy już naród? 46% badanych chce zadeklarować narodowość śląską*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 29 January 2011, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/362189,slazacy-to-ludnoscczy-juz-narod-46-badanych-chce,id,t.html](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/362189,slazacy-to-ludnoscczy-juz-narod-46-badanych-chce,id,t.html) (accessed: February 9, 2012). P. Popieliński, *Etniczność i narodowość rdzennych mieszkańców Górnego Śląska po 1989 roku*, „Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne” 2015, vol. 8, p. 142–143.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. L. Nowak, *GUS nie używa w dokumentach pojęcia narodowość śląska*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 13 January 2011, <http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/356225,gus-nie-uzywa-w-dokumentach-pojecia-narodowosc-slaska,id,t.html?cookie=1> (accessed: October 4, 2015); T. Kamusella, *Ślązacy a zasada jednego procenta. Nieuświadamiane mechanizmy polskiego nacjonalizmu*, „Silesia-Schlesien-Slask” 2015, [www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=493:prof-tomasz-kamusella-lzacy-a-zasada-jednego-procenta-nieuwiadamiene-mechanizmy-polskiego-nacjonalizmu-w-roku-1997-polskie-sdy-zdelegalizoway-zwizek-ludnoci-narodowoci-lskiej-zln-od-roku-2013-sdy-te-na-wniosek-prokuratury-opolskiej-b&catid=37:artykuy](http://www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=493:prof-tomasz-kamusella-lzacy-a-zasada-jednego-procenta-nieuwiadamiene-mechanizmy-polskiego-nacjonalizmu-w-roku-1997-polskie-sdy-zdelegalizoway-zwizek-ludnoci-narodowoci-lskiej-zln-od-roku-2013-sdy-te-na-wniosek-prokuratury-opolskiej-b&catid=37:artykuy) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> T. Kamusella, *Uwag kilka o dyskryminacji Ślązaków i Niemców górnośląskich w postkomunistycznej Polsce*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2007; T. Kamusella, M. Nomachi, *The Long Shadow of Borders: The Cases of Kashubian and Silesian in Poland*, „The Eurasia Border Review” 2014, vol. 5, no. 2, Fall, [http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/eurasia\\_border\\_review/ebr\\_v5n2/EBR\\_v5n2\\_35.pdf](http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/eurasia_border_review/ebr_v5n2/EBR_v5n2_35.pdf); T. Kamusella, *Warszawa wie lepiej, Ślązaków nie ma. O dyskryminacji i języku śląskim*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2014; idem, *Ö rechtsztat a echte demokracyjo we Schlönzsku / For Democracy and the Rule of Law in Upper Silesia*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *„Musisz być albo Niemcem albo Polakiem”: Polityka ennacjonalizacji a retoryka wielokulturowości na Górnym Śląsku po roku 1989*, „Sprawy Narodowościowe” 1999, no. 14–15, p. 113–124; K. Kawalec, *Rewizjonizm historyczny w internetowej propagandzie śląskiego ruchu separatystycznego*, „Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka” 2004, vol. 59, no. 3, p. 483–496; Raport Urzędu Ochrony Państwa dotyczący zagrożeń dla bezpieczeństwa państwa w aspekcie wewnętrznym i zewnętrznym oraz ujawnionych w tym zakresie przestępstw w 1999 roku, 2000, [ooczynna.pl/STALE/Raport\\_UOP.htm](http://ooczynna.pl/STALE/Raport_UOP.htm) and <http://www.videofact.com/mark/uop/uop1.html> (accessed: October 5, 2015); T. Semik, *Po śląsku, czyli nasz separatyzm*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 28 August 2008, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/40211,po-slasku-czyli-nasz-separatyzm,id,t.html?cookie=1](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/40211,po-slasku-czyli-nasz-separatyzm,id,t.html?cookie=1) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

to this group of Polish citizens who see themselves to be speakers of their own Silesian language and members of their own (ethnic, ethnolinguistic) national minority (nation). This denial pushes the Silesians into a position of a passive object of politics, just as during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I propose that this denial is in breach of the Polish Constitution and the basic principles of democracy. Not surprisingly, many Silesians dislike the situation and express their displeasure by joining RAŚ, SONŚ or the ZLNŚ. Some participate in numerous Silesian and Silesian-language forums on the web<sup>55</sup>. A few authors also undertook the task of reinterpreting the past of Silesia from a Silesian national perspective<sup>56</sup>. Their attempt at building a Silesian national master narrative<sup>57</sup> is criticized as ‘unprofessional’, because it follows the tenets of the ‘19<sup>th</sup>-century ethnonational model’<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Zasady pisowni poprawnyj słonszczyzny... 2006, [www.ponaszymu.fora.pl/kultura-i-tradycjo,5/zasady-pisowni-poprawnyj-slonszczyzny,45-60.html](http://www.ponaszymu.fora.pl/kultura-i-tradycjo,5/zasady-pisowni-poprawnyj-slonszczyzny,45-60.html) (accessed: October 8, 2015); hanysy laczmy sie, slonsko godka. 2009. [f.kafeteria.pl/temat/f1/hanysy-laczmy-sie-slonsko-godka-p\\_4075672](http://f.kafeteria.pl/temat/f1/hanysy-laczmy-sie-slonsko-godka-p_4075672) (accessed: October 8, 2015); Sąd zdecydował o likwidacji Stowarzyszenia Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, *Forum. nto.pl*, 9 January 2015, [forum.nton.pl/sad-zdecydowal-o-likwidacji-stowarzyszenia-osob-narodowosci-slaskiej-t110016/page-10](http://forum.nton.pl/sad-zdecydowal-o-likwidacji-stowarzyszenia-osob-narodowosci-slaskiej-t110016/page-10) (accessed: October 8, 2015); Slazacy. 2015. *Gazeta.pl. Forum*, [hasla.forum.gazeta.pl/szukaj/forum/slazacy](http://hasla.forum.gazeta.pl/szukaj/forum/slazacy) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. D. Jerczyński, *Historia narodu śląskiego. Prawdziwe dzieje ziem śląskich od średniowiecza do progu trzeciego tysiąclecia*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2003 (2nd edition in 2006); idem, *Historia narodu śląskiego. Prawdziwe dzieje ziem śląskich od średniowiecza do progu trzeciego tysiąclecia*, Instytut Ślůnskiej Godki, Łędziny 2013 (3rd edition, much enlarged and fully referenced); idem, *Orędownicy niepodległości Śląska. Rys biograficzny wybitnych śląskich książy oraz działaczy i badaczy opowiadających się za językową, narodową lub państwową odrębnością Śląska*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2005; idem, *Śląski ruch narodowy pod naciskiem polskiego i niemieckiego nacjonalizmu na tle politycznej historii Górnego Śląska w latach 1848–1947 / Ślůnskie nacyjne pochani pode presům polskiego a niemieckiego nacyjonalizmu we łobrozie geschichte polityki Wyrchnego Ślůnska ve rokach 1848–1947*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2006; idem, *Józef Koźdoń (1873–1949) przywódca Śląskiej Partii Ludowej, a kwestia narodowości śląskiej na Śląsku Cieszyńskim i Opawskim w XIX i XX stuleciu / Zefel Koźdoń (1873–1949) reskirok Ślůnskiej Ludowej Partyje, a kwestyjo ślůnskiej nacyje we Cieszyńskim a Ópawskim Ślůnsku bez XIX a XX stolecie*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2013; A. Faruga, *Czy Ślązacy są narodem? Przemilczana historia Górnego Śląska*, „Rococo” – Jarosław Krawczyk, Radzionków 2004; idem, *W trójkacie narodów / We drajoku nacyjóf*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2007; R. Kołodziejczyk, P. Helis, *Naród śląski. „Wszelka władza musi pochodzić z woli narodu” / Ślůnsko nacyjo, „Koždy reskirung musi być podug kcyinio nacyje”*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. D. Jerczyński, *Historia Narodu Śląskiego*: Book, 2013, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/HistoriaNaroduSlaskiego> (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Jak RAŚ fałszuje historię, 2003, *Forum. Gazeta Wyborcza*, [http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,423,8588125,8588125,Jak\\_RAS\\_falszuje\\_historie.html](http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,423,8588125,8588125,Jak_RAS_falszuje_historie.html) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

However, to a degree this nascent Silesian national master narrative is a mere mirror reflection of the Polish national master narrative that is unreflectively taught in school and widely accepted in public discourse to this day<sup>59</sup>.

## Silesian Language?

Many Silesians take offence that what they speak should be officially referred to in Polish as a *gwara*, associative of *gwar*, or Polish for 'din' or 'noise'<sup>60</sup>. Obviously, they do not see their own speech to be 'unintelligible noise,' though it may appear as such to a speaker of standard Polish from central Poland who may prefer not to make an effort to comprehend Silesian. What is more, the Polish term *dialekt* (dialect) is commonly employed to refer to the regional speech of Poland's other regions, be it in Mazovia or Wielkopolska (Great Poland). Inexplicably, journalists and even scholars prefer the term *gwara* instead of the more neutral *dialekt* to speak about the 'Silesian dialect'. In Polish linguistic terminology *gwara* denotes the language form of a village or town (*not* of a region), that is, a 'subdialect.' Unfortunately, the term *gwara* is used also in the title of the large multivolume dialectal dictionary of the Silesian dialect that began publishing in 2000<sup>61</sup>.

Just as there is no linguistic definition of 'a language' (*Einzelssprache*), linguists are unable to define the dichotomy of language and dialect either<sup>62</sup>. Similar to the Western (in its origin) concept of *Einzelssprache*, the aforementioned dichotomy also evolved as an element of (initially European) politics. It is part and parcel of the power game, especially

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<sup>59</sup> Obviously, many ethnic Silesians are not interested in Silesian language and nationalism, and accept the status quo as it is. For them sometimes religion or other loci of identity are more important, while yet others prefer to side with German or Polish nationalism. Cf. T. Zahra, *Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis*, „Slavic Review” 2010, vol. 69, no. 1, p. 93–119; T. Kamusella, *Upper Silesia in Modern Central Europe: On the Significance of the A-National / Non-National in the Age of Nations*, in: J. Bjork, T. Kamusella, A. Novikov, T. Wilson (eds.), *Creating Nationality in Central Europe, 1880-1950: Modernity, Violence and (Be)- Longing in Upper Silesia*, Routledge, London 2016, p. 1–51.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. B. Cząstka-Szymon, J. Ludwig, H. Synowiec, *Mały słownik gwary Górnego Śląska*, Leksem, Katowice 1999.

<sup>61</sup> B. Wyderka (ed.), *Słownik gwar śląskich* (12 vols), Instytut Śląski, Opole 2000–2011.

<sup>62</sup> A.F. Majewicz, *Języki świata i ich klasyfikowanie*, PWN, Warszawa 1989, p. 12–13.

in Central Europe, where language continues to be the very basis of statehood and nationhood. The concepts of *Einzelssprache* and dialect belong to the realm of politics, alongside the rife belief that dialects are somehow 'lower' than languages, and as such dialects 'must belong to' languages, not the other way around. It is a clear (ab)use of language for furthering political ends. Obviously, the decision as to which language form (lect) is a dialect and which is a language is entirely arbitrary. It remains in the hands of those (governments, rulers, that is, political elites) who happen to hold power over a territory ('state') and its population ('nation'). As a result, those whose lect is elevated to the status of a language speak 'correctly', while the language of speakers of other lects is downgraded to the status of 'dialects', perceived from above as 'corrupted' and 'incorrect'. To be fully accepted as 'civilized' and 'educated', 'speakers of dialects' have to master the elite group's lect, seen as a 'proper language'<sup>63</sup>. The dynamics are not so insidious in polities where language does not constitute the basis of statehood legitimation, but in Central Europe it condemns 'dialect-speakers' to the unenviable position of second-class citizens.

Faced with this high political and social value placed on languages, apart from leaving for a non-ethnolinguistic polity (such as Britain), dialect-speakers have two basic options when wishing to gain full enjoyment of political rights in an ethnolinguistic nation-state. Firstly, they may acquiesce to the prevailing ethnolinguistic norm by acquiring the official (national) language (in addition to their first or community language). On the other hand, they may seek official recognition for their lect as a language. The former solution is more viable under authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, while the latter seems to be favored in democracies, where constitutions commonly forbid discrimination on the basis of language, race or religion<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> T. Kamusella, *Classifying the Slavic Languages, or the Politics of Classification*, in: N. Langer, S. Davies, W. Vandebussche (eds.), *Language and History, Linguistics and Historiography: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Peter Lang, Oxford 2012, p. 147–174; idem, *The History of the Normative Opposition of 'Language versus Dialect: From Its Greco-Latin Origin to Central Europe's Ethnolinguistic Nation-States*, „Colloquia Humanistica” 2015 [Forthcoming], vol. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1997, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/Download?id=WDU19970780483&type=2> (accessed: October 4, 2015, Art. 32 and Art. 35).

During the systemic transition after the end of communism, Silesians, in their region forgotten by the Polish government and the mainstream parties, initially decided to join the German minority. But soon the project of regional autonomy became more attractive to those who were unable to acquire German / EU citizenship. Next, in the late 1990s, in line with the ethnolinguistic model of gaining legitimacy in Central Europe, Silesian was proposed to be a language in its own right.

Some scholars noticed this tendency<sup>65</sup>, but it took some time before a wider discussion emerged on the subject of Silesian as a language<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. N. Reiter, *Sozialer Status und Funktion des Wasserpolnischen innerhalb der ober-schlesischen Industriegesellschaft*, „Oberschlesisches Jahrbuch“ 1985, vol. 1, p. 188–206; M. Błaszczak-Waławik, W. Błasiak, T. Nawrocki, *Górny Śląsk. Szczególny przypadek kulturowy*, Uniwersytet Warszawski (Instytut Gospodarki Przestrzennej), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Jan Szumacher, Warszawa–Kielce 1990; K. Wódz (ed.), *Regional Identity – Regional Consciousness: The Upper Silesian Experience* (Seria: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, vol. 1478), Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 1995; T. Kamusella, *Das ober-schlesische Kreol: Sprache und Nationalismus in Oberschlesien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* [translated from the Polish by M. Krzoska], in: M. Krzoska, P. Tokarski (eds.), *Die Geschichte Polens und Deutschlands im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Ausgewählte Beiträge*, Osnabrück 1998, fibre p. 142–161; W. Lubaś, *Czy powstanie śląski język literacki?*, „Język Polski” 1998, vol. 68, no. 1–2, p. 49–56; K. Frysztański (ed.), *Polacy, Ślązacy, Niemcy. Studia nad stosunkami społeczno-kulturowymi na Śląsku Opolskim*, Universitas, Kraków 1998; M. Szmeja, *Silesian National Identity in the Opole Region. A Case of a Borderland Group*, „Polish Sociological Review” 1999, no. 3 (127), p. 397–408; T. Kamusella, *Jak mówią Ślązacy? Pidżyny, subdialekty i kreole*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 25 November 1999, no. 275, p. 10; G. Hentschel, *Regionalsprachen in Polen – zum Schlesischen und Kaschubischen*, in: B. Panzer, A. Teutsch (eds.), *Die sprachliche Situation in der Slavia zehn Jahre nach der Wende*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p. 155–164; M. Szmeja, *Niemcy? Polacy? Ślązacy! Rodzimi mieszkańcy Opolszczyzny w świetle analiz socjologicznych*, Universitas, Kraków 2000; T. Kamusella, *Podstawowe parametry do konstrukcji historii regionu Śląsk Opolski*, „Śląsk Opolski” 2001, no. 3, p. 10–24; G. Hentschel, *Schlesisch*, in: G. Krenn, M. Okuka (eds.), *Lexikon der Sprachen des Europäischen*, Wieser, Klagenfurt 2002, p. 437–441; idem, *Nation-Building and the Linguistic Situation in Upper Silesia*, „European Review of History / Revue européenne d’histoire” 2002, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 37–62; J. Tambor (ed.), *Gwara śląska – świadectwo kultury, narzędzie komunikacji*, Śląsk, Katowice 2002; T. Kamusella, *Na marginesie pierwszego tomu „Słownika gwar śląskich”*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 2002, vol. 58, no. 3, p. 159–171; B. Wyderka, *Śląskie myślenie o języku? (Odpowiedź Tomaszowi Kamuselli)*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 2003, vol. 59, no. 2, p. 220–230; idem, *Czy gwara śląska w nowej roli?*, „Rozprawy Komisji Językowej” (Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe) 2003, vol. 48, p. 149–157; A. Czesak, *Ślązacy w poszukiwaniu języka*, „Przegląd Polonijny” 2004, vol. 30, no. 3, p. 105–111; T. Kamusella, *Upper Silesia 1870–1920: Between Region, Religion, Nation and Ethnicity*, „East European Quarterly” 2004, vol. 38, no. 4, p. 443–462.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *Schlonsko: Horní Slezsko, Oberschlesien, Górny Śląsk. Esej o regionie i jego mieszkańcach*, Elbląska Oficyna Wydawnicza, Elbląg 2001, Poland; A. Czesak, *Czy możliwa jest Biblia po śląsku? Stereotypy Ślązaków i ich mowy*, in: U. Kropiwiec, M. Filipowicz-Rudek, J. Konieczna-Twardzikowa (eds.), *Stereotyp a przekład*, Księgarnia Akademicka,

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the continuing disagreement over the status of Silesian led to the following three basic ways of defining it in an ethnonational manner. Firstly, those who identify themselves as Silesians (that is, members of the ethnolinguistic nation by this name) see Silesian as a (Slavic) language in its own right. Secondly, Silesians who identify themselves as Poles (and/or members of the Silesian regional group of the Polish nation) perceive Silesian as a dialect of the Polish language. And last but not least, Silesians who identify themselves as Germans mostly use Silesian as a badge of their un-Polishness, while

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Kraków 2003, p. 69–78; T. Kamusella, *The Szlonzoks and Their Language: Between Germany, Poland and Szlonzokian Nationalism*, European University Institute, Florence 2003, Working Papers Series of the Department of History and Civilization (HEC 2003/1), <http://cadmus.iue.it/dspace/bitstream/1814/1351/1/HEC03-01.pdf> (accessed: January 23, 2009); B. Wyderka, *Język, dialekt czy kreol?*, in: L.M. Nijakowski (ed.), *Nadciągają Ślązacy. Czy istnieje narodowość śląska?*, Scholar, Warszawa 2004, p. 187–215; idem, *Szlonzoska mowa. Język, Górny Śląsk i nacjonalizm* (2 vols), Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2005–2006; T. Nawrocki, *Trwanie i zmiana lokalnej społeczności górniczej na Górnym Śląsku na przykładzie Murcek* (Ser.: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, vol. 2457), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2006; K. Wódz, J. Wódz, *Dimensions of Silesian Identity* (Ser.: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, vol. 2499), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2006; J. Tambor, *Mowa Górnoszlązaków oraz ich świadomość językowa i etniczna*, Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 2006; K. Hannan, *Borders of Identity and Language in Silesia*, „The Polish Review” 2006, vol. 51, no. 2, p. 131–145; A. Czesak, *Góralski i śląski – mikrojęzyki literackie in statu nascendi?*, in: A.D. Dulichenko, S. Gustavson (eds.), *Slavianskie literaturnye mikroiazyki i iazykovye kontakty*, Tartu University Press, Tartu 2006, p. 360–384; B. Wyderka, *Prof. Wyderka: Oddzielmy gwara od polityki*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska” 2008, [www.nto.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080729/OPINIE/578482301](http://www.nto.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080729/OPINIE/578482301), February 9, 2012; P. Kocyba, *Śląski dyskurs językowy*, „Kwartalnik Opolski” 2009, vol. 50, no. 4, p. 3–14; T. Kamusella, *Codziennosc komunikacyjno-jezykowa na obszarze historycznego Gornego Slaska*, in: Robert Traba (ed.), *Akulturacja/asymilacja na pograniczach kulturowych Europy Srodkowo-Wschodniej w XIX i XX wieku* (vol. 1: *Stereotypy i pamiec*), Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa 2009, p. 126–156; W. Lubaś, *Czy możliwe jest podniesienie „polszczyzny śląskiej” do statusu języka regionalnego i pomocniczego?*, in: K. Kossakowska-Jarosz, M. Iżykowska (eds.), *Kalejdoskop tematów śląskich. Zbiór studiów filologicznych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole 2011, p. 63–68; T. Kamusella, *Silesian in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Language Caught in the Net of Conflicting Nationalisms, Politics, and Identities*, „Nationalities Papers” 2011, vol. 39, no. 5, p. 769–789; J. Tambor, *Oberschlesien – Sprache und Identität*, Olms, Hildesheim 2011; *Language: T. Kamusella, Talking or Trading Blows in the Upper Silesian Industrial Basin?*, „Multilingua” 2011, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 3–24; M. Smolorz, *Śląsk wymyślony*, Antena Górnoszlaska Studio Programów i Filmów Telewizyjnych, Katowice 2012; idem, *The Upper Silesian Creole*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2014; idem, *Ślōnska godka*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2014; M. Choroś, *Język, dialekt, gwara, godka*, in: B. Linek, A. Mularczyk (eds.), *Leksykon mitów, symboli i bohaterów Górnego Śląska XIX-XX wieku*, Instytut Śląski, Opole 2015, p. 69–72.

some, though more rarely, also perceive it possibly as a Germanic-Slavic dialect of the German language. But the German minority organizations and activists prefer to sideline the issue of Silesian, focusing fully on the German language, and at most on German-Polish bilingualism. Obviously, these three groups of Silesian-speakers are not hermetic, and their members often shift from one to another or may simultaneously identify with more than one group.

At present, the political-cum-ideological quarrel over the status of Silesian is limited to Silesians and Silesian Poles. The former hope for an official recognition of Silesian at least as a 'regional language' in emulation of such status that, in 2005, was already conferred on Kashubian in 2005 in line with the provisions of the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages. On the contrary, Silesian Poles and Poland's mainstream parties prefer that Silesian remains a dialect of Polish. Furthermore, in accordance with the logic of Central Europe's ethnolinguistic nationalism, they see the other camp's efforts to elevate Silesian to the status of a language as 'seditious' and 'in breach of Polish *'raison d'état'*<sup>67</sup>. Notwithstanding the fact that the Polish Constitution defines the Polish nation purely in civic terms as all the Polish citizens<sup>68</sup>, the Polish authorities seem to agree with this position and continue withholding recognition from both the Silesian language and nation<sup>69</sup>.

Faced with the state's unfavorable attitude, the Silesians began developing their language and culture at the grassroots level as they saw fit. They could do so, unlike before 1989, because the Polish

<sup>67</sup> Cf. A. Klich, *Kutz: Antyśląską atmosferę nakręcają politycy*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 17 December, 2008, wyborcza.pl/1,75968,6071106,Kutz\_\_Antyślaska\_atmosfera\_nakrecaja\_politycy.html (accessed: October 8, 2015); *Czyich interesów bronią polskie sądy w Opolu?, czyli wokół rejestracji Stowarzyszenia Osób Narodowości Śląskiej*, „Wierni Polsce, Wierni Ojczyźnie” 2012, 13 February, <https://wiernipolsce.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/czyich-interesow-bronia-polskie-sady-w-opolu-czyli-wokol-rejestracji-stowarzyszenia-osob-narodowosci-slaskiej/> (accessed: October 8, 2015); Piotr Semka dla Fronda.pl: PO popierając RAŚ lekceważy polską rację stanu, Fronda.pl. 16 June 2015, [www.fronda.pl/a/piotr-semka-dla-frondapl,52910.html](http://www.fronda.pl/a/piotr-semka-dla-frondapl,52910.html) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>68</sup> Preambuła, in: *Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. M. Haładewicz-Grzelak, *Silesian and Cashubian Ethnolects as Contrasting Types of Ethnic Identity Strengthening*, „Polish Sociological Review” 2006, no. 3 (156), p. 425–447; R. Rudnik, *Zagrożenie dla spójności Polski? Ślązak oka nie wykole*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 9 April 2011, [www.nto.pl/magazyn/reportaz/art/4202829,zagrozenie-dla-spoistosci-polski-slazak-oka-nie-wykole,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/magazyn/reportaz/art/4202829,zagrozenie-dla-spoistosci-polski-slazak-oka-nie-wykole,id,t.html) (accessed: October 4, 2015).

administration largely observes the rule of law and basic principles of democracy. Between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, several popular Silesian-Polish dictionaries were published, some of which were quite extensive. Initially, they referred to Silesian as a *gwara* (dialect) but then increasingly termed it a language<sup>70</sup>. In 2006, a modest dictionary appeared in which, for the first time ever, Silesian is paired with German and English<sup>71</sup>. But it was the publication of the multivolume dictionary of the Silesian dialect (thus far covering words from A to H), between 2001 and 2011 that decisively encouraged aspiring lexicographers and standardizers of the Silesian language in their efforts<sup>72</sup>. Recently, this newly regained confidence created a positive interest in Silesian elsewhere in Poland, which is catered for with popular dictionaries and conversation books of Silesian targeted mainly at Polish-speakers<sup>73</sup>.

In 1998 Marek Szołtysek began successfully publishing his own books on Silesian history language and culture in the form of lavishly illustrated albums. His albums are frequently purchased by tourists and locally in Upper Silesia as first communion and birthday presents. The main attraction is that the author writes in Silesian, but in a slightly Polonized variety and mainly with the use of standard Polish spelling, which makes the books immediately intelligible to non-Silesian-speakers<sup>74</sup>. Recently, he also translated into Silesian the most

<sup>70</sup> A. Czajkowski, *Słownik gwary śląskiej*, Columb, Katowice 1994; idem, *Słownik gwary śląskiej*, Columb, Katowice 1996; B. Czastka-Szymon, J. Ludwig, H. Synowiec, *Mały słownik gwary...*; B. Paździor, *Słownik etymologiczny gwary śląskiej*, Wydawnictwo Niezapominajka, Siemianowice Śląskie 2007; B. Kallus, *Słownik górnośląskiej godki. Nowa propozycja zapisu „szkryft ślōński”*, Firma Wielobranżowa Koral, Pszczyna 2007; A. Rocznik, *Zbornik polsko-ślōński / Słownik polsko-śląski* (2 vols: A-K and L-P), Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2007–2008; M. Szołtysek, *Słownik śląskiej godki*, Polska Presse, Sosnowiec 2013.

<sup>71</sup> A. Czajkowski, L. Schröder, S. Schröder, *Wielki słownik śląsko-niemiecko-angielski*, Kaga-Druk, Katowice 2006.

<sup>72</sup> B. Wyderka (ed.), *Słownik gwar śląskich...*

<sup>73</sup> M. Szołtysek, *Ilustrowany słownik gwary śląskiej*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 1999; B. Podgórska, A. Podgórski, *Słownik gwar śląskich. Godomy po naszymu, czyli po śląsku*, KOS, Katowice 2008; M. Szołtysek, *Rozmówki śląskie. Podręcznik do nauki śląskiej godki*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2008; D. Kortko, L. Jodliński, *Antologia najpiękniejsze śląskie słowa*, Muzeum Śląskie, Katowice 2010; J. Furgalińska, *Ślōnsko godka. Ilustrowany słownik dla Hanysów i Goroli*, PWN, Warszawa 2011; eadem, *Achim godej. Ślōnsko godka dla Hanysów i Goroli*, PWN, Warszawa 2014.

<sup>74</sup> M. Szołtysek, *Śląsk – takie miejsce na ziemi (opisanie Ojcowizny Górnoślązaków)*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 1998; idem, *Żywot Ślązoka pocziwego*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 1999; idem, *Biblia Ślązoka*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2000; idem, *Śląskie podróże*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2000;



beloved collections of Polish children poems by Julian Tuwim and Jan Brzechwa<sup>75</sup>.

During the 1990s, the Polish authorities still decisively influenced the cultural production available in Silesian. They continued to treat Silesian culture in a folkloristic (that is, colonial<sup>76</sup>) manner, or at best portrayed the Silesian language as a 'funny lingo' good only for telling jokes and anecdotes<sup>77</sup>. This attitude was inherited from the communist times, when for instance, feature films with the use of Silesian had to be either brashly patriotic or focus on low life comedy<sup>78</sup> (though there were some rare exceptions even prior to 1989, especially during the liberalization of the Solidarity period in 1980-81<sup>79</sup>). Unfortunately,

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idem, *Ślązoki nie geśi czyli Kanski nojfajnijszych ksiązek na świecie przelonacone na śląsko godka*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2002; idem, *Kuchnia śląska. Jodło, historia, kultura, gwara*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2003; idem, *Dzieje Śląska, Polski i Europy*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2004; idem, *Papież na Górnym Śląsku*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2005; idem, *Ślązoczki piykne są!*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2005; idem, *Bojki śląskie, czyli Uczymy sie... bojąc śląskie bojki, czytać po śląsku, bawić śląskimi graczkami, malować i kryklać*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2006; idem, *Ślonsk je piykny / Śląsk jest piękny*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2007; idem, *Górny Śląsk. Trzy epoki / Górny Ślonsk. Trzy epoki*, Pascal, Bielsko-Biała 2007; idem, *Graczki. Zabawki i zabawy śląskie*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2009; idem, *Rok śląski*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2010; idem, *Śląski elementarz / Ślonski elemyntorz*, Polska Presse, Sosnowiec 2012; idem, *Śląsk dla dzieci*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2012; idem, *Historyjo Ślonska po ślonsku / Historia Śląska po śląsku*, Polska Presse, Sosnowiec 2013; idem, *Ewangelie śląskie*, Śląskie ABC, Rybnik 2013; idem, *Bajki po śląsku / Bojki po Ślonsku*, Polskapresse, Sosnowiec 2014.

<sup>75</sup> J. Tuwim, *Nojpiyknijsze wierszowanki dlo dziecek (na ślonsko godka przelonaconoł Marek Szottyssek)*, Oskar, Gdańsk 2013; J. Brzechwa, *Brzechwa dlo dziecek (na ślonsko godka przelonaconoł Marek Szottyssek)*, Oskar, Gdańsk 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Z. Zblewski, *Katanga (polska Katanga)*, in: *Dlaczego...chrupią bułeczki?*, 18 November 2000, [niniwa22.cba.pl/leksykon.htm](http://niniwa22.cba.pl/leksykon.htm) (accessed: October 8, 2015); Na Śląsku wciąż czuje oddech polskiego kolonializmu, *Śląsk oczami Łukasza Tudzierza*, 12 January, 2015, [tuudi.net/2015/01/12/na-slasku-wciaz-czuje-oddech-polskiego-kolonializmu/](http://tuudi.net/2015/01/12/na-slasku-wciaz-czuje-oddech-polskiego-kolonializmu/) (accessed: October 8, 2015); I. Salamon, *Żeby Śląsk nie był traktowany jak Katanga*, „Nowiny”, 25 February, 2015, [www.nowiny.rybnik.pl/artukul,37249,kukuczka-slask-dalej-jest-traktowany-jak-katanga.html](http://www.nowiny.rybnik.pl/artukul,37249,kukuczka-slask-dalej-jest-traktowany-jak-katanga.html) (accessed: October 8, 2015).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. J. Musioł, *Chachary czyli dzieje Franciszka Kopca od ławy oskarżonych do ławy poselskiej*, Edytor, Katowice 1997; M. Bielecki, D. Goczał, *Święta wojna* [TV series], Telewizja Polska, Poznań 1999–2008; M. Pańczyk-Pozdziej, *Godomy, rządzymy, rozprawiomy. W 20. edycję Konkursu „Po Naszymu, czyli, Po Śląsku”*, Księgarnia św. Jacka, Katowice 2010; M. Lipińska (ed.), *W kręgu śląskiej kultury, tradycji i dialektu. Materiały z konferencji z okazji 20. edycji konkursu „Po naszymu, czyli po Śląsku”*, Kancelaria Senatu, Warszawa 2010.

<sup>78</sup> K. Kutz, *Sól ziemi czarnej* [Feature film], Zespół Filmowy Wektor, Łódź 1969; K. Kutz, *Perła w koronie* [Feature film], Zespół Filmowy Wektor, Łódź 1971; J. Kidawa, *Grzeszny żywot Franciszka Buły* [Feature film], Zespół Filmowy Silesia, Katowice 1980.

<sup>79</sup> K. Kutz, *Paciorki jednego różańca* [Feature film], Studio Filmowe Kadr, Warszawa 1980.

Jan Kidawa Błoński's stunning fresco on the fate of the Silesians from the 1930s through the early 1990s, with the participation of Poland's then most popular actors has failed to register both with the Polish and Silesian public. The film is not even available on DVD<sup>80</sup>. Only a decade later, Lech Majewski's movie of ethereal beauty, but safely removed from the political reality of present-day Silesia and Poland, gained a considerable following<sup>81</sup>. Meanwhile, the doyen of Polish filmmaking, Kazimierz Kutz, who stems from Upper Silesia, continued writing his region and the Silesians into the Polish postcommunist national master narrative<sup>82</sup>. But importantly, in the television series of 22 conversations with renowned figures from Upper Silesia, he did introduce Silesian as the medium of discussion. (Tellingly, the broadcasting of this series was limited to the territory of Upper Silesia)<sup>83</sup>. And in his retirement, Kutz reinvented himself as a politician championing, at the state level (namely, in the Polish Senate) Silesian culture and language, if not Silesian nationalism. But the Polish political establishment just keeps ignoring his principled pronouncements on the issues<sup>84</sup>. Interestingly, the Upper Silesian Catholic Church, which in the 1990s stood up for the use of German in liturgy and pastoral services for the German

<sup>80</sup> J. Kidawa-Błoński, *Pamiętnik znaleziony w garbie* [Feature film], Gambit Production and Westmount QC: Les Productions d'Amérique Française Inc., Warszawa 1992.

<sup>81</sup> L. Majewski, *Angelus* [Feature film], Filmcontract Ltd., Warszawa 2001.

<sup>82</sup> K. Kutz, *Śmierć jak kromka chleba* [Feature film], Społeczny Komitet Realizacji Filmu Fabularnego o Tragedii w Kopalni „Wujek”, Studio Filmowe Tor, Telewizja Polska, Warszawa 1994; K. Kutz, *Zawrócony* [Feature film], Telewizja Polska, Warszawa 1994.

<sup>83</sup> K. Kutz, *Wesoło czyli smutno. Kazimierza Kutza rozmowy o Górnym Śląsku* (22 parts) [Television series], Antena Górnośląska. Studio Programów i Filmów Telewizyjnych, Katowice 1993–1995, [www.agfilm.pl/portfolio/wesolo-czyli-smutno-kazimierza-kutza-rozmowy-o-gornym-slasku/](http://www.agfilm.pl/portfolio/wesolo-czyli-smutno-kazimierza-kutza-rozmowy-o-gornym-slasku/) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *Dlaczego Śląsk jest dupowaty. Rozmowa z Kazimierzem Kutzem*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 1 April 2010, [www.nto.pl/opinie/art/4146689,dlaczego-slask-jest-dupowaty-rozmowa-z-kazimierzem-kutzem,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/opinie/art/4146689,dlaczego-slask-jest-dupowaty-rozmowa-z-kazimierzem-kutzem,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Kazimierz Kutz: Śląskowi coś się od Polski należy*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 30 October 2010, [www.nto.pl/magazyn/wywiady/art/4168355,kazimierz-kutz-slaskowi-cos-sie-od-polski-nalezey,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/magazyn/wywiady/art/4168355,kazimierz-kutz-slaskowi-cos-sie-od-polski-nalezey,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); A. Minorczyk-Cichy, *Rząd: Nie róbcie języka z dialektu. Kazimierz Kutz: To zdrada!*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 28 July 2011, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/432272,rzad-nie-robicie-jezyka-z-dialektu-kazimierz-kutz-to-zdrada,id,t.html](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/432272,rzad-nie-robicie-jezyka-z-dialektu-kazimierz-kutz-to-zdrada,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); Kazimierz Kutz: *Ślązacy wszystkich krajów łączcie się*, *Onet*, 13 December 2013, [wiadomosci.onet.pl/slask/kazimierz-kutz-slazacy-wszystkich-krajow-laczcie-sie/xp224](http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/slask/kazimierz-kutz-slazacy-wszystkich-krajow-laczcie-sie/xp224) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

minority<sup>85</sup>, now keeps its distance from the Silesian language, though some sermons are infrequently delivered in Silesian<sup>86</sup>.

The 1990s marked the rise of *Geschichtspolitik* ('politics of history') across postcommunist Europe as an important basis for legitimizing politics. The Silesians and most Upper Silesia's Germans and indigenous Poles rejected the new centralist and homogenized Polish national narrative, which did not espouse the specificity of the postwar fate of their parents and grandparents. In 1945 tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Upper Silesia had been rounded up and sent to the Soviet Union or incarcerated across their own region, despite the official view that they were ethnic Poles hidden 'behind the thin veneer of imposed Germanness'. Numerous books appeared on these event and on the turning of former Nazi concentration camps into Soviet and Polish camps for Upper Silesians, including the infamous Auschwitz / Oświęcim extermination camp<sup>87</sup>. Whatever the differences might split asunder indigenous Silesians of various identity, national and linguistic

<sup>85</sup> Cf. D. Matelski, *Niemcy w Polsce w XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1999, p. 310; K. Świdorski, *Msze w „języku serca” mają ćwierć wieku*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 20 June 2014, [www.nto.pl/serwisy/heimat/art/4621487,msze-w-jezyku-serca-maja-cwierc-wieku,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/serwisy/heimat/art/4621487,msze-w-jezyku-serca-maja-cwierc-wieku,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. K.P. Bąk, *Śląskie kazania ks. Sitki: Pon Bócek Wom przaje*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 6 July 2008, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/16934,slaskie-kazania-ks-sitki-pon-bocek-wom-przaje,id,t.html](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artykul/16934,slaskie-kazania-ks-sitki-pon-bocek-wom-przaje,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Pierwsze kazanie po śląsku w Mysłowicach!*, Mysłowicki Portal Mieszkańców, 2 July 2008, [www.myslowice.celniej.pl/?pierwsze-kazanie-po-slasku-w-myslowicach!,134](http://www.myslowice.celniej.pl/?pierwsze-kazanie-po-slasku-w-myslowicach!,134) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Bytom: Msza z kazaniem po śląsku*, *EKAI.pl*, 17 June 2010, [ekai.pl/diecezje/gliwicka/x30343/bytom-msza-z-kazaniem-po-slasku](http://ekai.pl/diecezje/gliwicka/x30343/bytom-msza-z-kazaniem-po-slasku) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Śląskie kazania trafiają do ludzi*, „Nowiny” 2011, no. 22, [www.nowiny.rybnik.pl/artykul,22257,slaskie-kazania-trafiaja-do-ludzi.html](http://www.nowiny.rybnik.pl/artykul,22257,slaskie-kazania-trafiaja-do-ludzi.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. J. Sack, *An Eye for an Eye*, BasicBooks, New York 1993; idem, *Oko za oko. Przemilczana historia Żydów, którzy w 1945 r. mścili się na Niemcach* (translated by R. Palewicz), Apus, Gliwice 1995; Z. Woźniczka, *Z Górnego Śska do sowieckich łagrów*, Śląsk, Katowice 1996; G. Gruschka, *Zgoda, miejsce grozy. Obóz koncentracyjny w Świętochłowicach*, Wydawnictwo „Wokół nas”, Gliwice 1998; K. Miroszewski, *Obozy pracy przymusowej na terenie Katowickiego i Chorzowskiego Zjednoczenia Przemysłu Węglowego 1945–1950*, Śląsk, Katowice 2002; E. Nowak, *Rozrachunki z przeszłością. Śledztwa i procesy oraz inne następstwa funkcjonowania powojennych obozów na Górnym Śląsku*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole 2012; G. Gruschka, *Pieśń zapomnianej krainy. Zgoda – miejsce zgrozy. Jako czter-nastolatek w powojennym polskim obozie koncentracyjnym* [translated from the German by I. Bomba], Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2013; S. Rosenbaum, D. Węgrzyn, *Wywózka. Deportacja mieszkańców Górnego Śląska do obozów pracy przymusowej w Związku Sowieckim w 1945 roku. Faktografia, konteksty, pamięć*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Katowice 2014.

persuasions, soon an agreement emerged that the events amounted to an 'Upper Silesian Tragedy,' that must be commemorated, so that it is never repeated again. The Upper Silesian Tragedy became their shared basis of the regional remembrance of the Dark 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>88</sup>. Warsaw seems to have accepted this development and recently even began espousing it<sup>89</sup>. This is as much at present (that is, in 2015) the Polish authorities are ready to concede to the Silesians' wishes and needs. The Silesian language, let alone the Silesian (national) minority, remains outside the pale of the Polish political correctness nowadays.

It is worth noting that, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, authors writing in Silesian began to express their views and concerns through the genre of plays<sup>90</sup>. The Silesian-speaking public at large replied enthusiastically to this novel trend, writing more plays for popular radio competitions<sup>91</sup>. Stanisław Mutz's Silesian-language play *Polterabend* was successfully

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. E. Ochman, *Commemorating the Soviet Deportations of 1945 and Community-Building in Post-Communist Upper Silesia*, „Contemporary European History” 2009, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 217–234; R. Kaczmarek, *Polacy w Wehrmachcie*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2010; *Tragedia górnośląska. Rosjanie mordowali, gwałcili, grabili*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 28 January 2012, [www.nton.pl/magazyn/reportaz/art/4477277,tragedia-gornoslaskarosjanie-mordowali-gwalcili-grabili,id,t.html](http://www.nton.pl/magazyn/reportaz/art/4477277,tragedia-gornoslaskarosjanie-mordowali-gwalcili-grabili,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); W. Gielzok, J. Pawleta, *Tragedia Górnośląska jako barometr współczesnego dyskursu o Polakach i Niemcach. Publikacja pokonferencyjna / Oberschlesische Tragödie als Barometr des eigenwörtigen Diskurses über Polen und Deutsche. Konferenzbeiträge*, Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej, Gliwice–Opole 2012; E.S. Pollok, *Legendy, manipulacje, kłamstwa a prawda o Śląsku i powojennej dyskryminacji jego mieszkańców*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2013; A. Roczniok, *Polskie obozy koncentracyjne*, „Silesia” 2014, [www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=242:andrzej-roczniok-polskie-obozy-koncentracyjne&catid=37:artykuy](http://www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=242:andrzej-roczniok-polskie-obozy-koncentracyjne&catid=37:artykuy) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Tragedia Górnośląska*, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/Tragedia-Górnośląska-209703199119270/> (accessed: October 20, 2015); „Fabryka Silesia” 2015, Special Issue: *Tragedia Górnośląska*, vol. 4, no. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. G. Zielińska (ed.), *Tragedia Górnośląska 1945*, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warszawa 2015,

<sup>90</sup> Cf. A. Bartylla-Blanke, *Ród. Przyczynek w sprawie śląskiej*, At author's expense, Krapkowitz 2000; S. Bieniasz, *Stary portfel i inne utwory dramatyczne* (ed. by K. Karwat), Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej w Gliwicach, Gliwice 2003; idem, *Wasserpolek 2004 oder ein Drama mehr. Eine Tragikomödie*, Ulica Wszystkich Świętych, Lublin 2004.

<sup>91</sup> W. Szymczyk (ed.), *Bysuch s Reichu. Jednoaktówki po śląsku*, Imago Public Relations, Instytucja Kultury Katowice – Miasto Ogrodów, Katowice 2012; idem, *Rajzyntasza. Jednoaktówki po śląsku*, Imago Public Relations, Instytucja Kultury Katowice – Miasto Ogrodów, Katowice 2013; idem, *Freeland. Jednoaktówki po śląsku*, Imago Public Relations, Instytucja Kultury Katowice – Miasto Ogrodów, Katowice 2014.

staged in Katowice and televised for country-wide consumption<sup>92</sup>. In 2008 the lecturer at the University of Silesia, Zbigniew Kadłubek, published an excellent personal essay in Silesian<sup>93</sup>. Between 2008 and 2010 Alojzy Lysko followed with his sprawling four-volume novel based on the wartime fate of his father. In 2014, he added another volume to it, this time paying attention to the fate of his mother who had waited for the return of her husband until her death<sup>94</sup>. The full variety of genres used for writing in Silesian also includes poetry<sup>95</sup>. Strangely, poetry is not of utmost importance in this case, though the genre tends to dominate among writers in other minority and regional languages across Europe.

In 2003, the former Solidarity dissident, Andrzej (Andrzej) Roczniok, founded the Narodowa Oficyna Śląska / Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, or the first-ever publishing house that specializes in books on Silesia and *in Silesian*. Two years later he translated a popular graphic novel into Silesian<sup>96</sup>, and in 2007 he began publishing the *Ślůnsko Nacyjo* (Silesian Nation), which is the first-ever bilingual, Polish and Silesian, periodical<sup>97</sup>. The regional authorities in Katowice noticed the growing attraction of the Silesian language and allowed Roczniok and a linguist from the University of Silesia, Jolanta Tambor, to organize two ground-breaking high-profile conferences on the standardization of this language in 2008 and 2009 with the participation of regional and

<sup>92</sup> M. Węgiel, *Stanisław Mutz zrobił „Polterabend”*. Teraz szykuje trzy teatry, po śląsku też, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 14 December 2011, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artukul/483068,stanislaw-mutz-zrobil-polterabend-teraz-szykuje-trzy-teatry-po-slasku-tez,id,t.html](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artukul/483068,stanislaw-mutz-zrobil-polterabend-teraz-szykuje-trzy-teatry-po-slasku-tez,id,t.html) (accessed: October 5, 2015); T. Bradecki, *Polterabend* [Televised play production], Telewizja Polska, Katowice 2013.

<sup>93</sup> Z. Kadłubek, *Listy z Rzymu*, Księgarnia św. Jacka, Katowice 2008.

<sup>94</sup> A. Lysko, *Duchy wojny. Dziennik żołnierski* (vol. 1: *W koszarach pod szczytami Alp*, vol. 2: *W bunkrach Wału Atlantyckiego*, vol. 3: *W okopach Frontu Wschodniego*), Śląsk, Katowice 2008–2010; idem, *Duchy wojny. Dziennik żołnierski* (vol. 4: *W objęciach śmierci*), Rodnia, Cieszyn 2011; idem, *W ud ręce nadziei. Wspomnienia Wichty Ochmanowej 1944–1966*, Rodnia, Cieszyn 2014.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. K. Gwóźdź, *Mysli ukryte*, Wydawnictwo „Hologram”, Śymjanowice Ślůnskje [that is, Siemianowice Śląskie] 2010.

<sup>96</sup> J. Christa, *Szkoła furganio* [translated from the Polish by A. Roczniok], Egmont Polska, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>97</sup> A. Roczniok, *Encyklopedia Solidarności*, 2015, [www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=Andrzej\\_Roczniok](http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=Andrzej_Roczniok) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

state politicians<sup>98</sup>. The hope was that, like Kashubian, Silesian would be soon recognized as a regional language in Poland, but as yet to no avail<sup>99</sup>. Meanwhile optimists proposed the introduction of lessons of Silesian language and culture to schools across Upper Silesia as part of the regional education package<sup>100</sup>. The program was readily supported by two organizations established in 2007 for the sake of protecting and cultivating the Silesian language, namely, Danga ('Rainbow' in Silesian) and Pro Loquela Silesiana ('For the Sake of Silesian' in Latin)<sup>101</sup>. In 2009 the standardized spelling of Silesian was adopted<sup>102</sup>, and two primers of Silesian for children were swiftly published with its use<sup>103</sup>. Interestingly, only at this moment do writers and publishers of Silesian-language books begin to use Silesian in the titles of their works. Earlier, almost exclusively Polish had been employed in this function. The standardization of other elements of Silesian continues as an important project that attracts attention and efforts of many Silesian and Silesian-

<sup>98</sup> A. Rocznik, *Ślōnsko godka – jeszcze gwara czy jednak już język. Materiały z konferencji w dniu 30 czerwca 2008 r / Ślōnsko godka mundart jeszcze eli już jednak szpracha? Materiały ze kōnferenycje 30 czerwca 2008 r.*, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Zabrze 2009; J. Tambor (ed.), *Śląsko godka. Materiały z konferencji „Śląsko godka – jeszcze gwara czy jednak już język” z 30 czerwca 2008 roku*, Gnome, Katowice 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Katowice: konferencja dotycząca statusu śląskiej mowy, 2010, Wikinews, [http://pl.wikinews.org/wiki/Katowice:\\_konferencja\\_dotycz%C4%85ca\\_statusu\\_%C5%9B1%C4%85skiej\\_mowy](http://pl.wikinews.org/wiki/Katowice:_konferencja_dotycz%C4%85ca_statusu_%C5%9B1%C4%85skiej_mowy) (accessed: May 9, 2010); Posłowie chcą ustanowienia dla języka śląskiego statusu języka regionalnego, 2010, Wikinews, [http://pl.wikinews.org/wiki/Pos%C5%82owie\\_chc%C4%85\\_ustanowienia\\_dla\\_j%C4%99zyka\\_%C5%9B1%C4%85skiego\\_statusu\\_j%C4%99zyka\\_regionalnego](http://pl.wikinews.org/wiki/Pos%C5%82owie_chc%C4%85_ustanowienia_dla_j%C4%99zyka_%C5%9B1%C4%85skiego_statusu_j%C4%99zyka_regionalnego) (accessed: May 9, 2010); Druk nr 3835. O zmianie ustawy o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym, a także niektórych innych ustaw, 2010, tuudi.net/wpcontent/uploads/2011/02/projekt.ustawy.pdf (accessed: February 8, 2012); M. Pańczyk-Pozdziej, *Po naszymu. Czy istnieje język śląski?*, „Gość Niedzielny”, 3 June 2012, [www.danga.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/panczyzka\\_gosc.jpg](http://www.danga.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/panczyzka_gosc.jpg) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>100</sup> Nie wystarczy edukować o śląskiej mowie – czas zacząć jej uczyć!, 2010, <http://folwark.org/2010/11/danga/index.php> (accessed: November 15, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> Tōwarzistwo Piastowaniō Ślōnskij Mōwy Danga, 2015, [http://www.danga.pl/?page\\_id=137](http://www.danga.pl/?page_id=137) (accessed: October 5, 2015); Pro Loquela Silesiana, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro\\_Loquela\\_Silesiana](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro_Loquela_Silesiana) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>102</sup> *Kanōna szrajbowania ślōnskij godki*, „Ślůnsko Nacyjo” 2009, vol. 3, no. 8, p. 1–9.

<sup>103</sup> B. Grynicz, A. Rocznik, *Ślabikorz ABC. Buch szrajbniōny podug programa piyrwy klasy podstawōwki*, Przymierze Śląskie, Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, Tarnowskie Góry – Zabrze 2010; *Gōrnoślōnski ślabikōrz*, Pro Loquela Silesiana Towarzystwo Kultywowania i Promowania Śląskiej Mowy, Chorzów 2010.

-language activists to this day<sup>104</sup>. However, the journalist and writer who is now jostling for a political career, Dariusz Dyrda, promotes his own Silesian spelling, which in 2009, he propounded in a textbook of the Silesian language<sup>105</sup>. The influence of Dyrda's orthography continues, as two years later he began publishing the second bilingual, Silesian and Polish, periodical the *Ślůnski Cajtůng* (Silesian Newspaper) using his spelling<sup>106</sup>. He promotes his orthographic conventions in books, too<sup>107</sup>.

2008 was a year of high hopes for recognizing Silesian as a language also on account of two further events. A year earlier, in 2007, in reply to Andrzej Rocznik and Grzegorz Kozubek's (initially, the editor of *Ślůnsko Nacyjo*) application<sup>108</sup>, SIL (tasked with registering the world's all languages in line with the ISO 639-3 standard<sup>109</sup>) recognized Silesian and conferred the *szl* code on it<sup>110</sup>. News about this development began to spread a year later, in 2008. This code makes it possible to employ Silesian in cyberspace as any other fully-fledged language. For instance, at present, the Silesian-language interface is prepared for Facebook and for Samsung smartphones<sup>111</sup>. However, thus far, the most important outcome of the international recognition of Silesian has been the founding of the Silesian-language Wikipedia (*Ślůnsko Wikipedyjo*) in 2008<sup>112</sup>. Two

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Standaryzacja ślōnskij godki. Community, 2015, *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/standaryzaciaslonskijgodki> (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>105</sup> D. Dyrda, *Rýchtig Gryfno Godka (porěncznik ślůnskij godki)*, Mega Press II and Instytut Ślůnskij Godki, Tychy 2009.

<sup>106</sup> *Ślůnski Cajtůng*, 2015, *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/Ślůnski-Cajtůng-315090261847264/timeline/> (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. E. Kosmała (Ojgyn z Pnioków), *Pniokowe łozprówki... abo Pnioki na wyrymbowisku*, Instytut Ślůnskij Godki, Łędziny 2012.

<sup>108</sup> ISO 639-3 Registration Authority Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3. 2007, [www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr\\_files/2006-106\\_szl.pdf](http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr_files/2006-106_szl.pdf) (accessed: October 7, 2015).

<sup>109</sup> Cf. T. Kamusella, *The Global Regime of Language Recognition*, „International Journal of the Sociology of Language” 2012, vol. 218, p. 59–86.

<sup>110</sup> Language: Silesian, 2015, *Ethnologue*, <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/szl> (accessed: October 5, 2015); OLAC Resources in and about the Silesian Language, 2015, [www.language-archives.org/language/szl](http://www.language-archives.org/language/szl) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>111</sup> *Ślůski Facebook*. *Możesz pomóc mu powstać!*, „Jaskółka Ślůska”, 24 May 2015, [www.jaskolkaslaska.eu/2015/05/24/slaski-facebook-mozesz-pomoc-mu-powstac/](http://www.jaskolkaslaska.eu/2015/05/24/slaski-facebook-mozesz-pomoc-mu-powstac/) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>112</sup> Language Committee/Archives/2008-05: J. Plamondon-Willard, T. Kamusella, Silesian-Language Wikipedia, *Wikimedia: Meta-Wiki*. 8 May and 15 May 2008, <https://>

years later, in 2010, this Silesian Wikipedia adopted the 2009 standard spelling of Silesian, though many of its articles still remain in the old spelling. As a result the Ślůnsko Wikipedyjo is bi-orthographic<sup>113</sup>.

With 3,628 articles under its belt, the Silesian Wikipedia ranks as the 176<sup>th</sup> largest Wikipedia among the total of the world's 291 Wikipedias in various languages. As such the Ślůnsko Wikipedyjo is a middling resource but, for instance, bigger than the Maltese Wikipedia<sup>114</sup>. However, out of the world's 7,100 recognized languages, Silesian belongs to the extremely small group of as few as 300 languages (or a mere 4 per cent of the globe's languages) in which a considerable array of publications and audiovisual language resources are available<sup>115</sup>. Taking into consideration the number of speakers, Silesian is a member of the category of 1,336 languages with more than 100,000 speakers. Hence, about 5,800 languages have fewer speakers than Silesian<sup>116</sup>. These examples amply show that it is politics (that is, ethnolinguistic nationalism) only which prevents the recognition of Silesian as a language in Poland. To take at the face value the Polish administration's claims that Silesian cannot be recognized as a language, due to its underdevelopment in the sphere of grammar standardization and writing, this stance entails a proposal that in the world there are not more than about 200 languages meriting status as 'a language'<sup>117</sup>. Perhaps, the Polish authorities would rather not

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meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Language\_committee/Archives/2008-05 (accessed: October 19, 2015); Language Committee: Status of the Silesian Wikipedia, 2008, *Wikimedia: Meta-Wiki*, [https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Language\\_committee/Status/wp/szl](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Language_committee/Status/wp/szl) (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Ślůska Wikipedia juŹ dziůła*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2008, [technologie.gazeta.pl/technologie/1,82008,5248211.html](http://technologie.gazeta.pl/technologie/1,82008,5248211.html) (accessed: January 24, 2012); Silesian Wikipedia, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silesian\\_Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silesian_Wikipedia) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Ślůska Wikipedia, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ślůska\\_Wikipedia](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ślůska_Wikipedia) (accessed: October 5, 2015); Wikipedyjo: ŚlůbikůrŹowy szrajbůnek, 2012, [szl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedyjo:ŚlůbikůrŹowy\\_szrajbůnek](http://szl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedyjo:ŚlůbikůrŹowy_szrajbůnek) (accessed: February 9, 2012).

<sup>114</sup> List of Wikipedias, 2015, *Wikimedia: Meta-Wiki*, [https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Wikipedias#All\\_Wikipedias\\_ordered\\_by\\_number\\_of\\_articles](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List_of_Wikipedias#All_Wikipedias_ordered_by_number_of_articles) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>115</sup> Summary by World Area, 2015, *Ethnologue*, [www.ethnologue.com/statistics](http://www.ethnologue.com/statistics) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>116</sup> Summary by Language Size, 2015, *Ethnologue*, [www.ethnologue.com/statistics/size](http://www.ethnologue.com/statistics/size) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. T. Semik, Nie ma Źyzyka ślůskiego. Jest tylko 13 růżnych gwar?, *NaszeMiasto.pl*, 18 February 2011, [cieszyn.naszemiasto.pl/artukul/nie-ma-zyzyka-slaskiego-jest-tylko-13-](http://cieszyn.naszemiasto.pl/artukul/nie-ma-zyzyka-slaskiego-jest-tylko-13-)



stand by this logical – though highly paradoxical – conclusion of their line of thinking on the issue of the Silesian language. Some scholars and legal experts already take note of the problem and propose that the current situation with the obstinate non-recognition of Silesian as a language appears to be an unwarranted imposition from above, in breach of the constitutional and democratic rights of the Silesian-speaking citizens of Poland<sup>118</sup>.

Perhaps the undeclared hope on the part of the Polish authorities is that with time, the Silesian language and Silesian national minority (nation) activists, alongside their supporters, will tire in the face of the cold shoulder repeatedly given to them by state offices and courts of law. It is hoped that they will eventually desist, while the ECHR and other European institutions will keep looking the other way. Although it must be noted that some leading politicians' offensive statements on

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roznych-gwar,782402,art,t,id,tm.html (accessed: October 6, 2015); A. Markowski, *Opinia o projekcie ustawy o zmianie ustawy o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym, a także niektórych innych ustaw* (druk nr 567), Biuro Analiz Sejmowych, Warszawa 2012, orka.sejm.gov.pl/RexDomk7.nsf/0/.../i2207-12A.rtf (accessed: October 7, 2015); Stanowisko Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec poselskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym, a także niektórych innych ustaw (druk nr 567), Rząd RP, Warszawa 2012, [https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CFsQFjAHahU-KEwiXtO\\_\\_yLDIAhXFWRoKHfUeD7c&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmac.bip.gov.pl%2Ffobjec ts%2Fdownload%2F3076%2Fprojekt-27-08-12-pdf.html&usg=AFQjCNGQ30Q4F6tETd RPW0tpPUHRCKehEA&sig=2=yqUjeyTydjGu2Uek344GsQ](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CFsQFjAHahU-KEwiXtO__yLDIAhXFWRoKHfUeD7c&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmac.bip.gov.pl%2Ffobjec ts%2Fdownload%2F3076%2Fprojekt-27-08-12-pdf.html&usg=AFQjCNGQ30Q4F6tETd RPW0tpPUHRCKehEA&sig=2=yqUjeyTydjGu2Uek344GsQ), (accessed: October 7, 2015); B. Cząstka-Szymon, *List otwarty językoznawcy przeciwko pomysłom Ruchu Autonomii Śląska, „Polityka”, 27 August 2012*, [wpolityce.pl/spoleczenstwo/263517-list-otwarty-jezykoznawcy-przeciwko-pomyslom-ruchu-autonomii-slaska](http://wpolityce.pl/spoleczenstwo/263517-list-otwarty-jezykoznawcy-przeciwko-pomyslom-ruchu-autonomii-slaska) (accessed: October 7, 2015); P. Kościelny, *Opinia prawna do obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym, a także niektórych innych ustaw* (druk sejmowy nr 2699), Biuro Analiz Sejmowych, Warszawa 2014, [https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=10&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CGsQFjAJahUKEwiXtO\\_\\_yLDIAhXFWRoKHfUeD7c&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpplura.pl%2Fmedia%2Fppliki%2F0ca38bb62646053f4eca3bea0de1f4f8def50af3.doc&usg=AFQjCNHELj\\_yIo\\_zTXQAFCoD04Fifh--0w&sig=2=TJlzhuuVVliFucXuj9ywNQ](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=10&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CGsQFjAJahUKEwiXtO__yLDIAhXFWRoKHfUeD7c&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpplura.pl%2Fmedia%2Fppliki%2F0ca38bb62646053f4eca3bea0de1f4f8def50af3.doc&usg=AFQjCNHELj_yIo_zTXQAFCoD04Fifh--0w&sig=2=TJlzhuuVVliFucXuj9ywNQ) (accessed: October 7, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> M. Myśliwiec, *Śląskø godka – przāsny folklor czy język regionalny?*, „Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego” 2013, no. 3 (15), p. 99–120; Relacja ze spotkania w Sejmie – 3.04.2014. 2014. [slonzoki.org/2014/04/relacja-ze-spotkania-w-sejmie-3-04-2014/](http://slonzoki.org/2014/04/relacja-ze-spotkania-w-sejmie-3-04-2014/) (accessed: October 7, 2015); Oświadczenie SONŚ po decyzji Sądu Okręgowego w dniu 18 czerwca 2015, 2015, [slonzoki.org/2015/06/oswiadczenie-sons-po-decyzji-sadu-okregowego-w-dniu-18-czerwca-2015/](http://slonzoki.org/2015/06/oswiadczenie-sons-po-decyzji-sadu-okregowego-w-dniu-18-czerwca-2015/) (accessed: October 7, 2015).

the Silesians and their language are not really helpful in this regard<sup>119</sup>. (On the other hand the Polish Prime Minister's 2015 referral to the Silesians as a nation turned out to be a mere slip of the tongue<sup>120</sup>), Among others, this hope is derived from the example of the trajectory of the Moravian and Silesian national and linguistic movement(s) across the border in the Czech Republic. These movements enjoyed a brief heyday in the 1990s, but rapidly declined into near-obscure at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>121</sup>. However, the difference is that Prague never mounted any problems with the registration of Moravian and Silesian parties, whose representatives were successfully elected to the Czech Parliament<sup>122</sup>. Afterward the novelty of ethnically non-Czech parties soon waned. But in the Polish case, it is the proverb 'the forbidden fruit is the sweetest' that more aptly encapsulates the nature of the current stalemate.

## Conclusion: The Standard Silesian Language Nowadays

In 2009 Andrzej Roczniok published the first-ever book in standard Silesian spelling. It happened to be a collection of poems by the famous poet Óndra Łysohorsky (pseudonym of Erwin Goj), who during the 1930s in Czechoslovakia, singlehandedly had forged a literary language<sup>123</sup> from

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Kaczyński: *Twierdzenie, że istnieje naród śląski, to zakamufLOWANA opcja niemiecka*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 2 February 2011, wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,9365374,Kaczyński\_\_Twierdzenie\_\_ze\_istnieje\_narod\_slaski\_.html (accessed: October 7, 2015).

<sup>120</sup> *Ślązacy to naród – tak mówi Premier Ewa Kopacz*, „Gazeta Polska”, 30 June 2015, vod.gazetapolska.pl/10450-slawzacy-narod-tak-mowi-premier-ewa-kopacz (accessed: October 19, 2015).

<sup>121</sup> Cf. O. Bláha, *Moravský jazykový separatismus. Zdroje, cíle, slovanský context*, in: E. Gilk (ed.), *Studia Moravica* (vol. 3), Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, Olomouc 2005; *Ústav jazyka moravského*, 2012, <http://ujm.szm.com/uvod.htm> (accessed: February 6, 2012); *Historie*, 2012, <http://moravane.eu/historie-strany/> (accessed: February 5, 2012).

<sup>122</sup> Cf. P. Daněk, *Moravian and Silesian Nationalities: A New Phenomenon in the Ethnic Map of the Czech Lands?*, „GeoJournal” 1993, vol. 30, no. 3, p. 249–254; M. Mareš (ed.), *Etnické a regionální strany v ČR po roce 1989*, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, Brno 2003; T. Siwek, *Moravianie i Ślązacy w Republice Czeskiej: mniej niż naród, więcej niż region*, in: M.W. Wanatowicz (ed.), *Józef Chlebowczyk – badacz procesów narodotwórczych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2007, p. 145–155; idem, *Inner Divisions of the Czech Republic*, „Geographia Polonica” 2012, vol. 85, no. 1, p. 23–31.

<sup>123</sup> K. Hannan, *The Lachian Literary Language of Óndra Łysohorsky*, „The Slavic and East European Journal” 1996, vol. 40, no. 4, p. 726–743; idem, *The Historical and Linguistic Back-*

the Slavic dialect spoken in the Moravian-Upper Silesian borderland. Łysohorsky named this language Lachian. With this new edition of Łysohorsky's poems, Rocznik potentially claimed the literary tradition of Lachian for standard Silesian<sup>124</sup>. The following year, in 2010, Rocznik brought out the third and final volume of his Polish-Silesian dictionary, which is the first-ever one in the standard Silesian spelling<sup>125</sup>. Although some other publishers produced a couple books in standard Silesian (especially the SONŚ leader, Pejter [Piotr] Długosz)<sup>126</sup>, for better or worse, Rocznik's publishing house is still leading the way<sup>127</sup>.

Perhaps fittingly, the first academic article in Silesian that appeared in 2011 is devoted to the standardization of this language<sup>128</sup>. However,

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*ground of Lachian Regionalism and „Separatism”, in: W.J. Burszta, T. Kamusella, S. Wojciechowski (eds.), Nationalisms Across the Globe (vol. I: Europe), Wyższa Szkoła Nauk Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa, Poznań 2005, p. 471–496; idem, Citizen of the Borderlands: Óndra Łysohorsky (1905–1989), in: M.W. Wanatowicz (ed.), Józef Chlebowczyk – badacz procesów narodotwórczych w Europie XIX i XX wieku, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2007, p. 123–144.*

<sup>124</sup> Óndra Łysohorsky (sic) (Erwin Goj), *Spiwajuco piasć*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2009.

<sup>125</sup> A. Rocznik, *Zbornik polsko-ślōnski III R-Z podug normy ISO 639-3 szl / Słownik polsko-ślōnski III R-Z według normy ISO 639-3 szl*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2010.

<sup>126</sup> M. Syniawa, *Ślabikōrz niy dlō bajtli, abo lekcye ślōnskiej gōdki*, Pro Loquela Silesiana, Chorzów 2010; M. Melon, *Kōmisorz Hanusik*, Silesia Progress, Kotōrz Mały 2014; A. Wątroba, *Ślōnzok fikcjōm. Tragikōmedyje*, Benigier Media, Ruda Śląska 2012; *Dante i inksi. Poezycjō w tłumaczeniach Mirosława Syniawy*, Silesia Progress, Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, Kotōrz Mały 2014; M. Melon, *Kōmisorz Hanusik. We tajnyj suźbie ślōnskiej nacyje*, Silesia Progress, Kotōrz Mały 2015.

<sup>127</sup> A. Stroncsek, *Bojki ślōnskie*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2010; M. Makula, *Głos się zrywo, dusza śpiywo*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2011; idem, *Kabareciosz ślōnski. Wybrane felietōny i wiersze Mariana Makuli*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2011; S. Ptaszyński, *Ôszkubek – utopek spod Rudy. Godki starzika z Rybnika. Ino do majoryntnych*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2011; A. Stroncsek, *Sodōma i Gōmora na ślōnsku. Gawyn-dy śmiyszne a ucieszne*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2011; eadem, *Za gōrami za lasami*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2011; A. Gorczek, *Kej niy urok to utropa*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2012; A. Rocznik (ed.), *Sziler na szpas, niy ino*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2012; F. Steuer, *Steuer na dwa knify szrajbunka*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2012; A. Stroncsek, *Zocno ślōnsko pierzina*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2012; A. Kiełkowski, *Mój Kochany Śląsk*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2012; I. Czaja, *Biblijo – poczōntek*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2013; R. Gatyś, *Krzest Ślōnska 863 r.*, Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno, Zabrze 2015.

<sup>128</sup> T. Kamusella, A. Rocznik, *Sztandaryzacyjo ślōnski godki / Standaryzacja języka śląskiego*, in: I.V. Abisigomian (ed.), *Lingvokul'turnoe prostranstvo sovremennoi Evropy cherez prizmu malykh i bolshikh iazykov. K 70-letiiu professor Aleksandra Dimitrievicha Dulichenko* (Ser: Slavica Tartuensis, vol. 9), Universitas Tartuensis, Tartu 2011, p. 288–294.

regarding scholarly texts in this language, the pride of place belongs to the Silesian-language abstract of Dariusz Jerczyński's monograph on the politician Józef Koźdoń (who made his career by establishing and leading popular Silesian national parties during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Austria-Hungary and Czechoslovakia). In reality, this abstract amounts to a proper learned article on the volume's subject<sup>129</sup>. In 2009 Silesian Wikipedists developed the first-ever map of Europe in Silesian<sup>130</sup>, which six years later was joined by another in the standard Silesian spelling<sup>131</sup>. Significantly for the development of the Silesian language, in 2013, Zbigniew Kadłubek's Silesian translation of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* was published in standard spelling<sup>132</sup>. In the same year the world-renowned journal of Slavic studies *Die Welt der Slaven* brought out a comprehensive article on the Silesian language, its history and standardization<sup>133</sup>. Also in 2013, the new regional periodical *Fabryka Silesia*, founded in Katowice by the recently deceased Jan Lewandowski<sup>134</sup>, triggered a broad public discussion on the Silesian language, its status and use<sup>135</sup>. Two years later, in 2015, SONŚ supported the publication of a history of Western philosophy in Silesian<sup>136</sup>. Aleksandr Dulichenko, the most prominent authority on 'Slavic micro-languages'<sup>137</sup>, who used to teach at Opole University in

<sup>129</sup> D. Jerczyński, *Józef Koźdoń (1873–1949) przywódca Śląskiej Partii Ludowej*, 2013, p. 241–246.

<sup>130</sup> Karta Ojropy we ślůnskij godce, 2009 [Map], *Wikimedia Commons*, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe\\_countries\\_map\\_szl.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe_countries_map_szl.png) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>131</sup> A. Rocznik, T. Kamusella, 2015 [Map], *Mitelojropa w 2009*, in: Facebook: Standaryzacja ślůnskij godki, <https://www.facebook.com/standaryzacjaślonskijgodki/photos/a.276120705890615.1073741827.270743809761638/417047025131315/?type=3&theater> (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>132</sup> Ajschylos [that is, Aeschylus], *Průmytyjos przibity* [translated from the Ancient Greek by Z. Kadłubek], Silesia Progress, Kotůrz Mały 2013.

<sup>133</sup> T. Kamusella, *The Silesian Language in the Early 21st Century: A Speech Community on the Rollercoaster of Politics*, „Die Welt der Slaven” 2013, vol. 58, no. 1, p. 1–35,

<sup>134</sup> K. Karwat, Nie żyje Jan F. Lewandowski, 12 June 2015, <https://www.fabrykasilesia.pl/aktualnosci/nie-zyje-jan-f-lewandowski,74.html> (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>135</sup> „Fabryka Silesia” (leading topic: Kłopoty z Językiem), 2013, vol. 2, no. 2, <https://www.fabrykasilesia.pl/numer/czytaj-online/fabryka-silesia-242013-kłopot-z-jezykiem,4.html> (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>136</sup> M. Kik, *Filozofjo po ślůnsku, czyli heft do historje filozofje Dziadka Kika*, Silesia Progress, Kotůrz Mały 2015.

<sup>137</sup> A.D. Dulichenko, *Slavianskie literaturnye mikroiazyki. Voprosy formirovaniia i razvoitiia*. Valgus, Tallinn 1981.

Upper Silesia, considers Silesian to be a language of this type<sup>138</sup>. Polish students of pedagogy – who earlier, in an eerily colonial fashion, insisted on teaching ‘correct Polish’ to Silesian-speaking schoolchildren and often encouraged them to despise their own language – now take care to espouse Silesian as a valuable element of the educational process<sup>139</sup>. However, this new reconciliatory attitude is rarely acted upon; I have not heard of any schools where primers of the Silesian language are in official use.

During the first half of the 2010s, the playwright and director, Ingmar Villqist (pseudonym of Jarosław Świerszcz), began probing into the difficult postwar period in Upper Silesia with the realistic use of Silesian, German and Polish on the stage<sup>140</sup>. A similar effect of Upper Silesian multilingualism was achieved by Stefan Twardoch in his popular novels (significantly, he uses the standard Silesian orthography in *Drach*)<sup>141</sup>. This renowned author, whose opinions are readily reported in state-wide newspapers and periodicals, does not mince words when criticizing Poland for not recognizing the Silesians and their language<sup>142</sup>. And on the basis of the 2012 campaign to encourage the use of Silesian in public and local self-governmental offices<sup>143</sup>, in 2014, Pro Loquela Silesiana (led by Mirosław Syniawa) with the use of a grant from the European Economic Area funds carried out a program aimed at counteracting the ‘soft discrimination’ suffered in

<sup>138</sup> Idem, *Fenomen slavianskikh mikrofilologii v sovremennom slavianovedenii*, „Poznańskie Studia Sławistyczne” 2015, no. 8, p. 48.

<sup>139</sup> H. Synowiec, *Śląska ojczyzna polszczyzna z perspektywy edukacyjnej. Wybór zagadnień*, Sapientia, Katowice 2013; H. Synowiec, M. Kubarek, *Odmiany polszczyzny w szkole. Teoria i praktyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2013.

<sup>140</sup> Miłość w Königshütte, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miłość\\_w\\_Königshütte](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miłość_w_Königshütte) (accessed: October 6, 2015); Miłość w Königshütte, 2015, [www.teatr.bielsko.biala.pl/spektakle/milosc-w-koenigshuette.html](http://www.teatr.bielsko.biala.pl/spektakle/milosc-w-koenigshuette.html) (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>141</sup> Sz. Twardoch, *Morfina*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2012; idem, *Drach*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2014.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. P. Jedlecki, *Szczepan Twardoch: „Pier...l się, Polsko”. Jest doniesienie*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 17 January 2014, [wyborcza.pl/1,75475,15290994,Szczepan\\_Twardoch\\_\\_\\_Pier\\_\\_\\_l\\_sie\\_\\_\\_Polsko\\_\\_\\_Jest\\_doniesienie.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,15290994,Szczepan_Twardoch___Pier___l_sie___Polsko___Jest_doniesienie.html) (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>143</sup> Gōdomy po ślōnsku, *Chorzowianin.pl*, 12 October 2012, [www.chorzowianin.pl/gdomy-po-slonsku,n-3403.html](http://www.chorzowianin.pl/gdomy-po-slonsku,n-3403.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); Akcja „Godomy po ślonsku” – naklejki do odbioru w opolskim biurze RAŚ, Ruch Autonomii Śląska. Region Opole, 1 October 2012, [rasopole.org/2012/10/akcja-godomy-po-lonsku-naklejki-do-odbioru-w-opolskim-biurze-ra/](http://rasopole.org/2012/10/akcja-godomy-po-lonsku-naklejki-do-odbioru-w-opolskim-biurze-ra/) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

Poland by Silesian-speakers<sup>144</sup>. The program's main outcome is a series of video clips in Silesian<sup>145</sup> that embolden and urge Silesian-speakers to use their language in all situations of public life<sup>146</sup>. I only wish that the Polish administration would take note. Warsaw's persistent denial of the existence of the Silesians and their language definitely does not constitute a good democratic practice<sup>147</sup>.

This staunchly negative official attitude toward the Silesian language caused many enterprises across Upper Silesia to explicitly forbid their employees from communicating with customers in Silesian<sup>148</sup>. This recent development follows the broader practice of de facto banning German from public spaces across the region<sup>149</sup> (even including the localities where ethnic Germans constitute the absolute majority of the inhabitants<sup>150</sup>), despite the fact that it is officially recognized as a minority language in

<sup>144</sup> Przeciwdziałanie miękkiej dyskryminacji osób mówiących po śląsku, 2014, [www.ngofund.org.pl/projekt/?project=E1/2381](http://www.ngofund.org.pl/projekt/?project=E1/2381) (accessed: October 5, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej!, 2015, [godej.pl](http://godej.pl) (accessed: October 5, 2015).

<sup>145</sup> Poradzisz? Gödej! We biurze, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwEXXVK-DvY> (accessed: October 6, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej! Z bajtlym na kole, 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOq4\\_143Ras](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOq4_143Ras) (accessed: October 6, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej! Egzamin, 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eR6xQnTQTo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eR6xQnTQTo) (accessed: October 6, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej! Rajd, 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wCePFXE8cc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wCePFXE8cc) (accessed: October 6, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej! Z bajtlym na kole. Z polskimi napisami, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAY7YyASQP8> (accessed: October 6, 2015); Poradzisz? Gödej! W drodze na biznesowy tref, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmHR7Ys4duY> (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>146</sup> Godomy po slonsku, 2013, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNG9mpO4\\_Lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNG9mpO4_Lc) (accessed: October 6, 2015).

<sup>147</sup> Cf. *Poland and the Silesians: Minority Rights à la carte?*, „Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe” 2012, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 42–74, [http://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/2012/Vol\\_2\\_Dezember\\_2012/4.\\_JEMIE\\_Kamusella.pdf](http://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/2012/Vol_2_Dezember_2012/4._JEMIE_Kamusella.pdf) (accessed: January 3, 2013).

<sup>148</sup> Czy śląski nadal na liście języków zakazanych?, Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej, 13 October 2015, [slonzoki.org/2015/10/czy-slaski-nadal-na-liscie-jezykow-zakazanych/](http://slonzoki.org/2015/10/czy-slaski-nadal-na-liscie-jezykow-zakazanych/) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>149</sup> Cf. *Śpiew młodych Niemców przeszkadzał przechodniom. Interweniowała policja*, 24 *Opole.pl*, 23 August 2013, [www.24opole.pl/12596,Spiew\\_mlodych\\_Niemcow\\_przeszkadzal\\_przechodniom\\_Interweniowala\\_policja\\_wiadomosc.html](http://www.24opole.pl/12596,Spiew_mlodych_Niemcow_przeszkadzal_przechodniom_Interweniowala_policja_wiadomosc.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); K. Ogiolda, *Incydent w Krapkowicach. Mniejszość niemiecka: Idziemy do prokuratury*, „Nowa Trybuna Opolska”, 19 October 2015, [www.nto.pl/wiadomosci/opole/art/9010402,incydent-w-krapkowicach-mniejszosc-niemiecka-idziemy-do-prokuratury,id,t.html](http://www.nto.pl/wiadomosci/opole/art/9010402,incydent-w-krapkowicach-mniejszosc-niemiecka-idziemy-do-prokuratury,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>150</sup> Cf. *Śpiewali po niemiecku, nie spodobało się to kandydatowi na posła, bo „tu jest Polska”*, *tvn 24*, 19 October 2015, [www.tvn24.pl/opolszczyzna-kandydat-na-posla-zakazal-spiewania-po-niemiecku,587281,s.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/opolszczyzna-kandydat-na-posla-zakazal-spiewania-po-niemiecku,587281,s.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

Poland, and some communes are even officially bilingual in Polish and German<sup>151</sup>. The continuing fear of speaking German outside one's own family, instilled in Poland's Upper Silesia after 1945, prevents most of the very few remaining native speakers of the German language from using it in public (apart from church)<sup>152</sup>. Their reluctance to exercise the democratic right to speak in their native language was – in the native speakers' eyes – amply vindicated by the Polish nationalist skinheads' brutal foray into the Upper Silesian village of Dziewkowice in 1994<sup>153</sup>, the state-wide outcry at the attempted opening of the third-ever in Poland (partly) bilingual (Polish-German) minority elementary school in 2012<sup>154</sup>, or by the to this day unexplained murder or assassination of a highly popular German / Silesian local politician in 2014<sup>155</sup>. The Germanophone / ethnic German community overlaps, to a considerable degree, with the Silesian speech community, which brushes off the negative attitude toward German onto Silesian, as well. This semi-identification of Silesian with German is facilitated by the old prejudiced view, which persists among the Polish (Polish-speaking) majority, namely, that Silesian is 'Polish corrupted by German', or even a dialect of German.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Gminy w Polsce z językiem pomocniczym, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gminy\\_w\\_Polsce\\_z\\_językiem\\_pomocniczym](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gminy_w_Polsce_z_językiem_pomocniczym) (accessed: October 20, 2015); Urzędowy rejestr gmin, w których używany jest język pomocniczy, 2014, <http://mniejszości.narodowe.mac.gov.pl/download/86/15331/UrzedowyRejestrGmin-jezpom-17III14.pdf> (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>152</sup> T. Kamusella, *Opinion on the Sociological Inquiry into the State of the German Minority in Poland*, conducted by the House of Polish-German Cooperation ([www.haus.pl](http://www.haus.pl)), Opole, Poland in 2009 and 2010, *Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej*, University of St Andrews, Opole – St Andrews 2011.

<sup>153</sup> M. Kornak, *Brunatna Księga*, Stowarzyszenie „Nigdy Więcej”, Warszawa 2009, p. 23, [ksiega.nigdywiecej.org/brunatnaksiega.pdf](http://ksiega.nigdywiecej.org/brunatnaksiega.pdf) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>154</sup> T. Kamusella, *Prof. Tomasz Kamusella – Szkoła w Koźlu-Rogach a racja stanu, czyli nowy słoń a sprawa polska*, „Silesia” 2012, [www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=276:dr-hab-tomasz-kamusella-szkoa-w-kolu-rokach-a-racja-stanu-czyli-nowy-so-a-sprawa-polska](http://www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=276:dr-hab-tomasz-kamusella-szkoa-w-kolu-rokach-a-racja-stanu-czyli-nowy-so-a-sprawa-polska) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>155</sup> *Morderstwo Dietera Przewdzinga. Prokuratura milczy. W sobotę pogrzeb burmistrza Zdieszowic*, „Dziennik Zachodni”, 20 February 2014, [www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artukul/3339551,morderstwo-dietera-przewdzinga-prokuratura-milczy-w-sobote-pogrzeb-burmistrza-zdzieszowic,id,t.html](http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl/artukul/3339551,morderstwo-dietera-przewdzinga-prokuratura-milczy-w-sobote-pogrzeb-burmistrza-zdzieszowic,id,t.html) (accessed: October 20, 2015); R. Włodek, *Czy zabójstwo Przewdzinga bez motywów politycznych*, „Silesia” 2015, [http://www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=443%3Aczy-zabojstwo-przewdzinga-bez-motywow-politycznych-&catid=37%3AArtykul&Itemid=53](http://www.silesia-schlesien.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=443%3Aczy-zabojstwo-przewdzinga-bez-motywow-politycznych-&catid=37%3AArtykul&Itemid=53) (accessed: October 20, 2015).

The never-ending ethnolinguistic quest for the utopia of full 'national purity' (that is, homogeneity) is hard to marry with democratic pluralism and remains highly contradictory to the logic of globalization and of borderless travel in the European Union. Since 2004, over two million Polish citizens have availed themselves of the latter possibility, settling mainly in Britain and Ireland<sup>156</sup>. (Nowadays as many people speak Polish in Britain on an everyday basis, as Silesian in Poland, that is well over half a million<sup>157</sup>). Ethnically, linguistically and culturally nearby Slovakia or well-to-do Slovenia are much closer to Poland. But apart from economic considerations, what makes Britain and Ireland attractive to the aforementioned Polish migrants is established democracy and the considerably wider range of individual freedoms than what these migrants might enjoy back in Poland. Among others, without any intervention on part of the state administration or law, in Britain and Ireland one can employ whatever language or script happens to be of use for one's business, education or personal life. Should a person encounter linguistic problems when in hospital, court of law, or dealing with municipal, regional or state administration, required information in print or orally is made readily available in tens of languages, for instance, in 57 languages by the Dundee City Council. Among others, in Basque, Indonesian, Haitian Creole or Yiddish, as well as in Polish<sup>158</sup>. By contrast, the municipalities of towns and cities in Poland stick exclusively to the Polish language, though at times offer some general information in English, French or German, but exclusively

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<sup>156</sup> Cf T. McTague, *Eastern European Migrant Surge Sees Poles Become Britain's Second Biggest 'Ethnic Minority'*, „Daily Mail”, 2 July 2015, [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3147513/Eastern-European-migrant-surge-sees-Poles-Britain-s-second-biggest-ethnic-minority.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3147513/Eastern-European-migrant-surge-sees-Poles-Britain-s-second-biggest-ethnic-minority.html) (accessed: October 19, 2015).

<sup>157</sup> R. Booth, *Polish Becomes England's Second Language*, „The Guardian”, 30 January 2013, [www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jan/30/polish-becomes-englands-second-language](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jan/30/polish-becomes-englands-second-language) (accessed: October 19, 2015).

<sup>158</sup> Dundee City Council [see the rubric: 'Select Language'], 2015, [www.dundeeccity.gov.uk](http://www.dundeeccity.gov.uk) (accessed: October 6, 2015); Birmingham City Council: Languages, 2015, [www.birmingham.gov.uk/languages](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/languages) (accessed: October 7, 2015); Belfast City Council: Language Policy, 2015, [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/goodrelations/language.aspx](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/goodrelations/language.aspx) (accessed: October 7, 2015); Camden Council: Minority Communities, 2015, [www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living/your-local-community/minority-communities/minority-communities-a-m/](http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living/your-local-community/minority-communities/minority-communities-a-m/) (accessed: October 7, 2015).



for tourists, *not* for residents<sup>159</sup>. This attitude is eerily in step with the general Polish unwillingness to accept ethnically non-Polish immigrants and refugees, as evidenced by grassroots and some politicians' recent negative reactions to the need of shouldering part of the burden of the 2015 European refugee crisis<sup>160</sup>. It is proposed that such ethnically non-Polish newcomers would 'endanger' the grail of ethnolinguistic homogeneity<sup>161</sup>, while public figures calling for accepting refugees in the name of liberal values are threatened, even with death<sup>162</sup>.

The solution to the limitations that ethnolinguistic nationalism has imposed on Central Europe since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century lies 'in the wild and exuberant jostling of peoples and races that [...] became the new world we now take [in the United States or Britain] for granted'<sup>163</sup>.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Katowice dla odmiany, 2015, <https://www.katowice.eu/en> (accessed: October 7, 2015); Warsaw City Hall, 2015, <warsawtour.pl/en> (accessed; October 7, 2015).

<sup>160</sup> Cf. N. Maliszewski, Sondaż: Polacy nie chcą przyjmować uchodźców, *Onet*, 11 September 2015, <wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/sondaz-polacy-nie-chca-przyjmowac-uchodzcow/q8tht5> (accessed: October 19, 2015); Kaczyński o uchodźcach: cholera, dezynteria, pasożyty!, *SE.pl*, 14 October, [www.se.pl/wiadomosci/polityka/kaczynski-o-uchodzcach-cholera-dezynteria-pasozyty\\_703198.html](www.se.pl/wiadomosci/polityka/kaczynski-o-uchodzcach-cholera-dezynteria-pasozyty_703198.html) (accessed: October 19, 2015); Frasyniuk pyta Szydło: czy Jezus też byłby nosicielem zarazków?, *Parlamentarny.pl*, 15 October, <www.parlamentarny.pl/wydarzenia/frasyniuk-pyta-szydlo-czy-jezus-tez-bylby-nosicielem-zarazkow,1166.html> (accessed: October 19, 2015).

<sup>161</sup> Dlaczego wschód UE nie chce imigrantów? „NYT” wylicza: nacjonalizm, rasizm, ekonomia, *tvn24*, 13 September, <www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiatea,2/nyt-europa-wsch-nie-chce-uchodzcow-z-powodu-nacjonalizmu-i-rasizmu,576985.html> (accessed: October 19, 2015).

<sup>162</sup> Cf. D. Wodecka, Olga Tokarczuk, laureatka Nike 2015: Ludzie, nie bójcie się!, *Wyborcza*, 10 October 2015, <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,18999849,olga-tokarczuk-laureatka-nike-2015-ludzie-nie-bojcie-sie.html> (accessed: October 20, 2015); Groźby wobec Tokarczuk. Sprawą zajmuje się prokuratura, *Wyborcza*, 15 October 2015, <wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,19026706,kampania-nienawisci-wobec-tokarczuk-sprawa-zajmuje-sie-prokuratura.html> (accessed: October 20, 2015); *Blogerka tłumaczy, że nie hejtuje Tomasza Lisa*. „Ktoś włamał się na konto”, „Newsweek”, 18 October 2015, <polska.newsweek.pl/tomasz-lis-gazeta-wyborcza,artykuly,372466,1.html> (accessed: October 20, 2015); Fala hejtu po wywiadzie Tomasza Lisa dla „Gazety Wyborczej”. Jest reakcja, *Onet*, 19 October 2015, <wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/fala-hejtu-po-wywiadzie-tomasza-lisa-dla-gazety-wyborczej-jest-reakcja/4vqnfmm> (accessed: October 20, 2015).

<sup>163</sup> M. Ignatieff, *Raphael Lemkin and Genocide*, in: *The William Hazlitt Essay Prize Winners: 2013*, Notting Hill Editions, London 2013, p. 21.

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## Abstract

### **Silesian: From Subdialect to Language after 1989**

In the past, Silesian was treated as a subdialect of the Polish language (and sometimes of Czech). During the 1990s, following the fall of communism and the establishment of democracy in Poland, most Silesian-speakers decided to treat Silesian as a language in its own right. It became part and parcel of their effort to shed the status of second-class citizens that had been imposed on them in the interwar and communist Poland. Warsaw has not recognized this language yet, but, despite suffering this (quite humiliating) disadvantage, Silesian-speakers have produced a growing number of articles, books, websites, radio and television programmes in their language, winning a recognition for Silesian as a language abroad and among scholars. It appears that the Polish administration's rigid stance toward the Silesians and their language is dictated by the logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism, which equates the legitimacy and stability of the nation-state with the full ethnolinguistic homogeneity of its population. This article sketches the trajectory of the main events and probes into the state of the discourse on the issue of Silesian language and culture during the quarter of a century after the fall of communism in 1989.