

Summary of doctoral dissertation

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Dissertation topic: Agricultural production in the Kraków Voivodeship in the first years after the World War II (1945-1949)

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Subject of the doctoral dissertation are economic and socio-political changes in agricultural production in the Kraków Voivodeship in the years 1945-1949. In presentation of conditions in the countryside and in agriculture, were addressed the questions as to how did agricultural production develop and what difficulties it had to face in post-war reality. New reality after World War II have forced definition of new form and new tasks faced by the agricultural economy. In the face of many damages, and yet rapid changes in the national economic structure, normalization of economic relations took place, in particular transformation from war to peace economy.

The main aim of the dissertation is to illustrate agricultural situation in the Kraków Voivodeship in the first years after the end of World War II. Its implementation will allow to discuss the following issues: administrative and economic location of the Kraków Voivodeship; consequences of World War II with respect to agriculture; problems of agriculture that it encountered on its way to reconstruction; role and place of crediting the agriculture by the State Agricultural Bank and other agriculture crediting institutions; major objectives for agriculture financing; obstacles and difficulties in agriculture crediting.

This paper is assumed to be interdisciplinary, combining historical, economic, agricultural, sociological and legal knowledge. It requires analysis of archival source material. In the presented approach, the dissertation has historical and economic nature, as it takes into account the economic conditions of development of agriculture, as one of the branches of economy. And due to the examined period of time, and historical presentation of agricultural development in the economy of the People's Republic of Poland, it should be placed the field of economic history.

The Polish agriculture, as well as the whole Polish economy, suffered serious losses during the war and occupation. Many of the farms were burnt down, and the land was abandoned. There was a lack of livestock and (both living and mechanical) tractive force. Murdering by the occupation forces educated people and lack of education system deprived the country of professionals and lowered the productivity. Losses in animals have caused many years of soil exhaustion and crop yield reduction. The ten-year tree growth was also cut. Many agricultural machinery and tools, and industrial equipment were damaged. Taking into account the extent of damage and the complexity of political and economic situation, it must be admitted that agriculture had much more difficult challenges than in case of other sectors of the economy.

Kraków Voivodeship had to face the reconstruction of farms, both in the field of plant and animal production. The problem for local agriculture was the domination of dwarf farms and their dispersion, overpopulation, shortage of organic and mineral fertilizers, and the lack of feed and tractive force. In addition, farmers were burdened with land tax and compulsory material benefits, which they were often unable to meet. Also in the agricultural industry the following problems have emerged: lack of capital, raw materials, qualified staff, parts necessary to repair the damaged equipment, difficulties in the deliveries of coal.

The most important issue determining the fate of the nation was rapid increase of food production. The priority task of the Polish economy was to raise the standard of living of the population. It was important for the communist authorities that in the last year of the three-year Economic Recovery Plan the consumption of consumer goods exceeded the pre-war level.

An opportunity to increase agricultural production were investments. However, impoverished farmers did not have the financial means to finance them. Therefore, the demand for capital in agriculture was enormous and it often exceeded the capacity of credit institutions. In the first years after World War II crediting of agriculture was almost entirely controlled by the State Agricultural Bank, and its branches played a decisive role in the distribution of loans on the territory of its activity.

For performance of the aims assumed in this paper qualitative and quantitative research methods were intended. An attempt was also made to combine theoretical analysis with empirical studies. In the dissertation several research methods, with cause-effect and logical-deductive nature, were used. Agricultural economy of the Kraków Voivodeship was compared in a temporal and spatial arrangement, presenting selected issues against the background of the country. In addition to the main historical reasoning method, were also used comparative and statistical methods - statistical description and statistical inference (data are presented in the form of tables, some of which are own summary statistics, based on source and statistical material).

Situation of the agriculture in the period considered was extremely difficult. The unstable political situation did not facilitate the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and certainty, which was the foundation for the rebirth of economic life. On the other hand, economic imbalances disrupted the normal course of economic life and inhibited its rebirth after the war.

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