Lost heritage: Linen industry on Lower Silesia

Maciej Mądry
Foundation for the Protection of Silesian Industrial Heritage

Cities and Historic Textile Complexes / International Workshop April 24, 2020
Linenland

Flax growing and weaving centres in Lower Silesia in the pre-industrial era (1740)

- Bolesławiec
- Zgorzelec
- Lubań
- Lwówek Śl.
- Łęknica
- Legnica
- Jawor
- Kowary
- Kamienna Góra
- Wałbrzych
- Świdnica
- Ząbkowice Śl.
- Ziębice
- Kłodzko
- Nysa
- Otmuchów
- Prudnik
- Trzebnica
- Twardogóra
- Oleśnica
- Olawa
- Włocław
- Kłodzko
- Ząbkowice Śl.
- Ziębice
- Kłodzko
- Nysa
- Otmuchów
- Prudnik
- Trzebnica
- Twardogóra
- Oleśnica
- Olawa
- Włocław

- Cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants
- Cities with 3,000 to 10,000 inhabitants
- Cities and other settlements to 3,000 inhabitants
- Flax weaving centers
- Flax growing centers
- Concentration of rural flax weaving
Linenland

Rural weavers settlements on Sudetes foreland in the pre-industrial era (1740)
**Jelenia Góra district**  
Employment in rural weaving at the end of the pre-industrial era on Sudetes foreland (1740)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhabitants</th>
<th>Free tenants</th>
<th>1008</th>
<th>Veil weavers</th>
<th>1451</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cottars</td>
<td>10 109</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flax weavers</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11 117</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td>Settlements with weavers workshops</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15% of the population engaged in weaving  
70% of the settlements units had weavers workshops
The Twelve Apostles

Typical weaver settlement in pre-industrial era on Sudetes foreland

Chełmsko Śląskie (1707)
See-Handlungs-Gesellschaft

State enterprise established on the initiative of Frederick the Great 14th October 1772 with intention to increase the foreign trade of the Prussian state - including support for Sudetes foreland linen production

Flax weaving and spinning mills formed at the beginning of the industrialization era
Weavers Uprisings
A series of armed speeches against Prussian authorities in Lower Silesia, in the Sudetes region in the years 1785, 1786, 1793, 1798 and 1844

Käthe Kollwitz „Weberzug“ (1897)
Ermansdorfer Spinnerei und Weberie
in Ermannsdorf i. Reisengebrige

First industrial building on Lower Silesia with construction structure made by cast iron

Mysłakowice (1843)
Ermansdorfer Spinnerei und Weberei in Ermannsdorf i. Reisenengebrige

First industrial building on Lower Silesia with construction structure made by cast iron

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Mysłakowice (1843)

Drawing by Piotr Gerber
Państwowe Zakłady Przemysłu Lniarskiego „Orzeł” w Mysłakowicach

Nationalization 1945
### Spinning machines in polish linen industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>70,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>107,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Production volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>33 mln m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>130 mln m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>200 mln m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Silesian linen industry in numbers
Source: Jurowski Z., XXX lat przemysłu Iniarskiego PRL, Łódź 1974


- Soviet Union: 48%
- Rest of producers: 32%
- Poland: 9%
- India: 6%
- Czechoslovakia: 5%
Production volume of linen and hemp fabrics in Polish People's Republic (1974)

- 1960: 130,000,000
- 1971: 200,000,000
- 1946: 33,000,000

Source: Jurowski Z., XXX lat przemysłu lnierskiego PRL, Łódź 1974
Silesian linen industry in numbers
Source: Karst Z., Makroregion Południowo - Zachodni i jego gospodarka, Warszawa 1982

Sudetes foreland participation in production of linen and hemp fabrics in Polish People's Republic (1974)

Poland 73%  

Sudetes foreland 27%
Silesian linen industry - what left?
Państwowe Zakłady Lniarskie
Mysłakowice

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Thank you for your attention