



Przyjaciel Ludu Kaszubskiego

PRZĘJOCÉŁ LĚDU KASZĚBSCZÉGÒ

(FRIEND OF THE KASHUBIAN PEOPLE)

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Prussian Reforms and Their Influence upon the Socio-Economic Situation of the Kashubs from Chapter II, "*Kashubia and Pomerania in the 19th and 20th Centuries*" of *The Kashubs, Pomerania and Gdańsk*

by Józef Borzyszkowski and used with his permission, translated by Tomasz Wicherkiewicz

The 19th century history of the Kashubs and Pomerania, as well as entire Europe, encompassed a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism, from class society to civic society, from monarchies to democracies, even if—as precisely in the case of Prussia—a monarchy was preserved. It was a period of ethnic and national awakening of numerous societies in Central-Eastern Europe and activities aimed at regaining independence or creating their own state. The changes in peoples' culture and consciousness were conditioned by social and economic changes, participation of the theretofore "oppressed masses" in civilization progress, and making decisions when introducing representative institutions into self-government and entire states.

Formation of a modern society was determined mainly by changes occurring in the first half of the 19th century within the property relations in the countryside and methods of farming. The enfranchised peasants, similar to the noblemen-landowners, had become a part of the huge organism of the Prussian and later all-German state, where the development of free market required more and more education and very economical administration. Every landowner of a larger farm, like each craftsman, merchant, manufacturer, became an entrepreneur who managed the work of the people he employed, both family members and workers. Their prosperity to a large extent was dependent upon the development of the entire national economy, in which Pomerania, together with Great Poland (Wielkopolska) and Mecklenburg, provided a food base for Germany's growing industrial regions.

In the life and mentality of the Kashubs of that period, huge changes took place. From being inhabitants of their villages, parishes, neighborhoods, who still not so long before were tied to their land and dwelling place, they were becoming more and more often citizens of towns and countries, citizens of quite an alien state, sometimes almost citizens of the world, when wandering as free persons in search of work and livelihood, and of better futures, far away from their homeland. The starting point for those huge changes was the previously mentioned enfranchisement of peasants.

Only through enfranchisement, the Kashubian-Pomeranian peasant became a rightful owner of the land he farmed, and his properties were entered into real estate registers under his name.

continued on page 12

We received email with this sad news just as we were going to press:

Father Aloysius Rekowski, CSsR 22 October, 1921-17 June, 2006

Desmond Peplinski forwarded Sylvester's message, "I took the liberty of forwarding your message to many who would know or be interested in Father Al for his groundbreaking research over the past 65 years into our history and his authoritative book, *The Saga of the Kaszubs* which I believe is available through the Wilno Heritage Society."

Original message from Sylvester Peplinski (edited). "I just got a call from MaryAnn Ruske to advise us that her brother (and our first cousin) (*Ed: Father Al's mother was born Mary Peplinski*) passed away this morning, 17 June, 2006 in Toronto, while visiting with her and her husband, Deiter. Father Al had been failing fast in the few previous days. There will be a Memorial Mass after visitation on Tuesday, 20 June, in Toronto. Father Al's remains will then be taken to Barry's Bay, Ontario, where there will be a Funeral Mass on Friday, 23 June at Saint Hedwig's Church, celebrated by Rev. John Burchat, a cousin. He will be interred in the cemetery near the church next to Msgr. Piotr Biernacki, founder of the parish and also a cousin, both cousins are related, (*Ed: as are Desmond and Sylvester*) through the Peplinski family originally from Lipusz, Poland."

The English translation of *The Life and Adventures of Remus* by Aleksander Majkowski continues on page six!