

SILESIA IN POLAND HAVE NO RIGHT TO EXIST!

Silesia without Silesians

Ślōnzōki, Silesians who live in the Opole and Śląsk Voivodeships, demand the publication of the census results from April 1 to September 30, 2021, which took place in Poland. The census was accompanied by a broad alliance of Silesian people, including activists, associations, foundations, internet platforms, parties, and politicians, among them the Member of the European Parliament Łukasz Kohut and the former Member of the European Parliament Marek Plura (united under www.slonzoki.pl).



The difficulty with the online census was that the Ślōnzōki had to search for and then enter their nationality and language online under "Other." Neither was provided as a standard option. After 16 months, Warsaw has still not published the results of the census.

Looking back at the 2011 census, the Polish Central Statistical Office asked about national and ethnic affiliation. The answer was as surprising and perhaps shocking for the homogeneous unitary state as in 2002 (172,000), but this time in unusual height and clarity: 847,000 Polish citizens identified as the officially non-existent "Silesian nation." Of these, 376,000 said they were only Silesians, and 471,000 also identified as Polish. National Silesians do not see themselves as a subgroup of the Polish people, but as a separate people with their own language and culture - in other words, as a nation. They do not demand their own state but the right to live their own identity within the existing state. In this census, it was possible to indicate several (national) identities.

"Gödōmy po ślōnsku" - Let's speak Silesian!

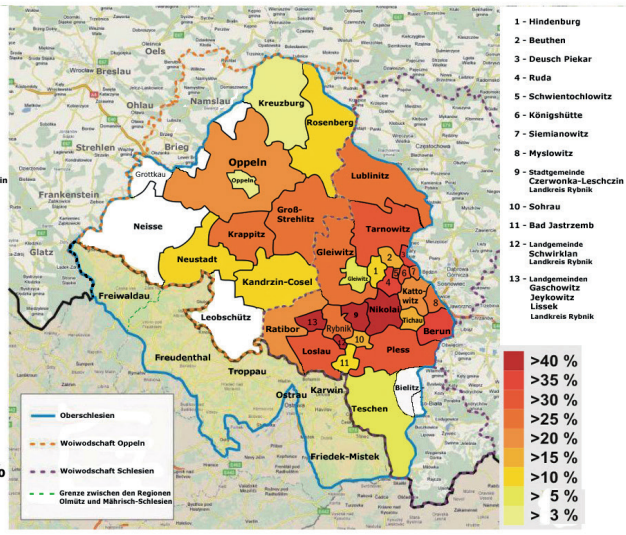
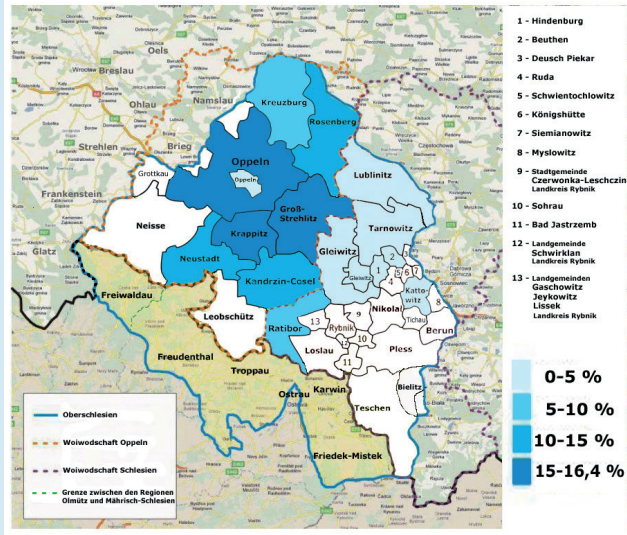
Warsaw ignores reality, although more than two percent of Poland's total population identified as "Silesians" (Ślōnzōki) in the 2011 census. 529,000 officially reported speaking the Silesian language (ślōnskō gödka). The Silesian language belongs to the West Slavic (Lechitic) language family. This language family also includes Sorbian (recognized in Germany) and Kashubian (recognized in Poland as a regional language since 2005). "Gödōmy po ślōnsku" (let's speak Silesian) became a popular saying and was distributed as a sticker in stores and among supporters of

the Silesian autonomy movement (Ruch Autonomii Śląska - RAŚ). The language is as young and dynamic as the autonomy movement itself, and it is very much alive through music groups and performers of all genres, radio and television programs, and cabaret and theater productions. The Silesia Progress publishing house did not wait for the endless debates among linguists about the Silesian ethnolect and its codification to end. In recent years, a whole series of books in Silesian have been published. Poets and translators are honored annually with the «Upper Silesian Tacitus Prize.» The website www.wachtyrz.eu was created to publish linguistic, cultural, and scientific publications in Silesian and to conduct research on Silesian topics. From analog to digital, Silesian is also used in computer programs and in some applications such as LibreOffice, Windows, or the Firefox browser. It is present in operating systems like Linux and Ubuntu.

The current census in the Czech Republic, published in January 2022, reveals that 31,300 Czech citizens identified as Silesian in terms of their nationality and language. The Silesians, as they are known in the Czech Republic, included 12,450 individuals who identified solely as Silesian nationals, and 18,850 who identified as having another nationality, similar to the results from the 2011 census. The partition of Upper Silesia occurred after the First Silesian War (1740-1742) when Frederick II waged war against the Habsburg monarchy. Silesia, a territory of the Bohemian Crown under Habsburg rule, became part of Prussia. The Duchy of Silesia remained under the rule of Maria Theresa.

Until 1945, the Prussian province of Silesia was home to a diversity of Silesian-German dialects. In Lower Silesia, there were East Lusatian, Dutch, herbal, Breslau, Glätzisch, and the mountain Silesian dialects, as well as the Brieg-Grottkauer dialect. These dialects disappeared almost entirely with the expulsion of Germans after World War II. Upper Silesia, on the other hand, retained its ethnically and linguistically mixed character. Since the end of the socialist People's Republic of Poland, a standard German (High German) has become established in the area, creating a "new" German minority. Unfortunately, the late director and politician Michał Smolorz summed it up per-

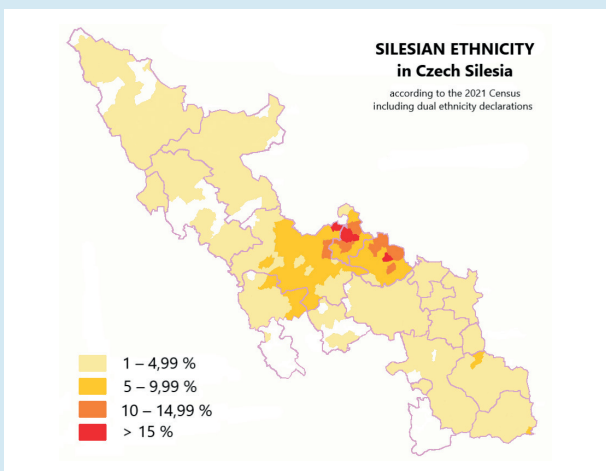




factly at a Silesian seminar: “The members of the recognized German minority in Upper Silesia (according to the 2011 census, 148,000 people) put on German clothes in 1989 to distinguish themselves from the Poles. They are Ślōnzōki, ethnic Silesians who speak “Schlesisch”. Derogatorily, this is also called Water-Polish.

Slavic culture “war” in the south of Poland
Due to the similarity of the Silesian language to Polish and the fact that the Polish post-war state regards Silesia as “reclaimed” territory (to this day) after over 600 years of separation, Silesia has been systematically culturally “polonized”. For example, everything German speaking was banned from the public sphere, including signs, tombstones, and so on. In contrast to other parts of the country, German was not allowed to be taught in schools in Upper Silesia. It is also a Slavic cultural struggle. Since de jure, there are no Upper Silesians, the non-existence of their language seems to be a very logical conclusion of political decision-makers. Silesian has, at best, archaic features of a Polish dialect, according to this view. In formal terms, there is no such thing as an Upper Silesian regional language. Jolanta Tambor is probably the most well-known Polish linguist. She earned her habilitation at the Katowice Faculty of her alma mater in 2006 with her dissertation “The Language of Upper Silesians and Their Linguistic and Ethnic Consciousness.” She refutes the Polish-national narrative.

parliament (Sejm). By 2016, five opinions had been received, with the only negative one coming from Rafał Bartek, the chairman of the German minority in the Opole Voivodeship. At that time, Bartek was co-chairman of the government commission for national and ethnic minorities. “The German minority is not afraid of the Silesians. Of course, we are not afraid, because then we would have to be afraid of ourselves,” he said in one of his statements. This logic is difficult to refute! The Upper Silesian Rafał Bartek appears to follow the well-known one-sidedness of the German or Polish government side: regarding nationality, there can only be Germans or Poles. Since May 2022, Bartek has also been the chairman of the Association of German Societies (VdG) in Poland.



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After 2011, another attempt was made in 2014 to “recognize Silesian as a regional language” - over 140,000 signatures and a court resolution were submitted to the Polish