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The Polish People's Republic State Apparatus and the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region

Introduction

With the installment of the communist regime after the Second World War, Poland experienced deep social and political changes. Having established its power, the new government introduced a law that imposed strict control over the entire population, including the remaining minorities. As in this reality, there was no place for camps and wanderers, the Roma people – or Gypsies (these names will be used interchangeably) – felt the new law especially strong as they quickly realized that they were unable to carry on their traditional way of life.

The aim of this article is thus to provide basic information on the situation of the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region in the Polish People's Republic. In the years 1945-1989, the Lubuskie Region, defined as the Zielona Góra Voivodship (1950-1975) and later as two separate voivodships, Zielona Góra and Gorzów, hosted a considerable number of that minority. It is thus unsurprising, that local authorities, as well as local militia, paid attention to this community. To describe and analyze the position of Gypsies in the Lubuskie Region, the article draws on primary documents found in various archives, including the National Archives in Gorzów Wielkopolski and Zielona Góra, as well as the Archives of the Institute of the National Remembrance (IPN). The complete list of the archives and the name of the documents is provided in footnotes. This paper covers the years 1945-1989. The period following the political and social changes, which began in Poland in 1989, will be covered in another paper.

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Characteristics of the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region

The Roma people had significantly marked their presence in the Lubuskie Region since 1945. The majority of them came from a group called the Polish Roma. It was that group that faced the greatest challenges following the forced settlement laws in the communist Poland. This political decision separated them from their centuries-long tradition of the wandering way of life. What made the Lubuskie Region so special in comparison to other regions in Poland was the fact that, starting from the 1950s, a numerous camp of Roma artists had settled down here. That camp comprised 130 people and had arrived in here from the Volhynia Region (present northern Ukraine). The majority of the camp's members settled down in Gorzów Wielkopolski. From this camp came Papusza, a famous Roma poetess.

It was also from that camp that Papusza's relative came from, Edward Dębicki, who formed the Gypsy Music Theater "Terno". It is worth mentioning that in Gorzów Wielkopolski there is a monument dedicated to Bronisława Wajs – Papusza. One of the streets bears her name as well. On the other hand, in 2007 Dębicki received the title of the Honorary Resident of Gorzów Wielkopolski and five years later the title of the Honorary Resident of the Lubuskie Voivodship. What is more, since 1989 there have been organized International Meetings of Gypsies "Romane Dyvesa". All these facts sustain the thesis that the local Roma people have made the Lubuskie Region their true home.

The Roma people in the Lubuskie Region in the first post-war years

In the first post-war years, the Polish state authorities did not pay much attention to the nomadic Roma people and they were allowed to live their traditional way untroubled. Such was the situation in the Lubuskie Region, where the first camps followed the incoming of the repatriates from the former Polish Eastern Frontier. It is true that on December 1, 1949, the minister of the public administration told local authorities to register the Roma people within their territory, but this order did not affect the ability to move. The process of registration took the form of writing down personal data of the Roma and including them in municipal registry books¹. Moreover, the process faced some serious problems in the Lubuskie Region as a consequence of the constant movement of the Roma camps. Following registration attempts that were undertaken in 1950

¹ Archiwum Państwowe w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim [National Archives in Gorzów Wielkopolski; later: AP Gorzów], Starostwo Powiatowe w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, sign. 902, "The Minister of Public Administration's letter to voievodas and presidents of Warszawa and Łódź, and other local authorities", October 18, 1949, p. 365.

and which also failed, however, these steps can be regarded as an announcement of the future forced settlement campaign in the Lubuskie Region².

In all communist-controlled European countries with a considerable number of Gypsies, authorities attempted to introduce forced settlement laws³. The abolition of the nomadic life of the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region was preceded by the resettlement and recruitment action aimed at the Roma people in the Kraków Voivodship. Its ultimate goal was to unload the largest groups of the Roma populations, inhabiting mainly the following counties: Nowotarski, Nowosądecki, and Żywiecki. After their resettlement into the Lubuskie Region, the Gypsies were to be employed at the State Agricultural Farms (PGR). It must be added that apart from the Lubuskie Region, transports with the Roma people also went to the West Pomerania Region⁴.

The institution responsible for the transports was the Kraków branch of the National Repatriation Office (PUR). In 1951, local authorities in Gorzów Wielkopolski informed the regional authorities in Zielona Góra that 27 Gypsies had been employed by a State Farm in Gralewo in the municipality of Santok⁵.

Gypsies working at the Pinów State Farm, in the municipality of Boczów (Ośno Lubuskie County) was dramatically different. The employed complained to local authorities about difficult working conditions and housing constraints, since there were incidents when up to ten people had to sleep in one room on two bunks covered with a blanket⁶.

The initiators of the resettlement action had not taken into account the lack of farming tradition among Gypsies. It is thus hardly surprising that Gypsies often gave up the work at State Farms and returned to their former places of residence. The reasons were manifold: being unaccustomed to hard physical work, feeling unwell at the new place of residence, poor health, missing relatives. Those that had returned often influenced others who refused to take up work at State Farms. Since the idea of employing Gypsies in

² See: P.J. Krzyżanowski, *Romowie na Ziemi Lubuskiej w polityce bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państwa w latach 1945-1989*, [in:] *Kwestia romska w kontekście bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego*, edit. E. and T. Szyszlak, Wrocław 2013, pp. 43-44.

³ See: D.M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, New York 1996; D. Crowe, J. Kolsti, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, London and New York 1991; O. Ulc, *Communist National Minority Policy. The Case of the Gypsies in Czechoslovakia*, "Soviet Studies" 1969, No. 20(4), pp. 421-443; D. Petrova, *The Roma. Between a Myth and the Future*, "Social Research" 2003, No. 70(1), pp. 111-161; D. Chirot, *Social Change in Communist Romania*, "Social Forces" 1978, No. 57(2), pp. 457-499.

⁴ See: P. J. Krzyżanowski, G. Pytlak, *Komunistyczny eksperyment z 1950 roku „resocjalizacji” Cyganów – akcja przesiedleńcza Bergitka Roma do Państwowych Gospodarstw Rolnych w województwie szczecińskim* [in:] *Cyganie/Romowie w Polsce. Dawne i współczesne konteksty 1964 roku*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2015, p. 113-128.

⁵ AP Gorzów, Starostwo Powiatowe w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, sign. 1509., "PPRN w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim do PWRN w Zielonej Górze w sprawie pomocy osiadłej ludności cygańskiej", February 13, 1951., p. 379-380.

⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Zielonej Górze [National Archives in Zielona Góra; later: AP Zielona Góra], PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7818, "Sprawozdanie Prezydium PRN w Ośnie Lubuskim w zakresie zagadnień ludności cygańskiej", second quarter of 1952.

the PGR system had failed, state authorities withdrew from it. It does not mean, however, the Gypsies from the Kraków Voivodship were left alone. According to the new decision, they were to be employed at the Nowa Huta construction site⁷.

State authorities maintained their decision to resettle the Roma people in Poland. On May 24, 1952, the Polish government adopted a resolution on the assistance for the Roma people in the process of adopting a sedentary lifestyle. According to the written justification of the resolution, the so-called “Gypsy” question was directly connected to the elimination of the nomadic life. The resolution, as well as the following instruction, obligated local authorities to undertake intensive actions in that matter. What the central government wanted to focus on, was the so-called “productivization of the Roma people”, that is their employment within the state-owned industry and their education. Moreover, all the local branches of the central government were told to provide Gypsies with all the necessary support in order to prevent their return to nomadic life again.

One of the main conditions for the implementation of the May 24, 1952 resolution was to determine the exact number of Gypsies in voivodships and their registration. In connection with this, the Commander-in-Chief of the Militia issued on September 2, 1952 order No. 71/52 regarding the registration and control of the movement of the Roma population⁸. The entire operation was coded as “C” (Cyganie – Gypsies). In the Zielona Góra Voivodship, as in other voivodships, the operation was preceded by the completion of census papers, registration cards, registration books, and fingerprinting materials. Special census and survey teams were formed, including representatives of national councils, militia officers, and a photographer. In a report from September 19, 1952, the Head of the Militia Voivodship Bureau for Population and Personal Identification in Zielona Góra informed the superiors in the Ministry of National Security about readiness to undertake evidential action⁹.

The report included information about the location of Gypsy camps in the Zielona Góra Voivodship: one camp was in Zielona Góra, two camps in Szprotawa, three in Głogów and two camps in Gorzów. Based on information from provincial militia headquarters, it was determined that all the camps comprised of 249 people. Moreover, the report also mentioned the number of Gypsies living a sedentary lifestyle. Their number was 273 and they lived in the following provinces: Zielona Góra, Żagań, Sulęcín, Koźuchów, Gorzów, Sulechów, and Głogów¹⁰. The “C” operation was carried out in the

⁷ See: P.J. Krzyżanowski, *Jak Cyganie w Nowej Hucie socjalizm budowali*, “Dialog-Pheniben. Kwartalnik Stowarzyszenia Romów w Polsce” 2011, No. 4, pp. 132-137.

⁸ Centralne Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji [Central Archive of the Ministry of Administration and Interior: later CAMSWiA], Prezydium Rządu, sign. 98/265, “Bill no 452/52 about the assistance for the Roma people with settling down”, May 24, 1952, p. 1-2.

⁹ CAMSWiA, Prezydium Rady Ministrów, Biuro Społeczno-Administracyjne, sign. 98/265. “Uzasadnienie do uchwały Prezydium Rządu nr 452/52”, May 24, 1952, p. 3.

¹⁰ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie [Institute for National Remembrance Archives: later: AIPN], sign. 1045/206, Komenda Główna MO, “Meldunek Kierownika Wojewódzkiego Biura Ewidencji Ludności i Dowodów Osobistych Komendy Wojewódzkiej MO w Zielonej Górze”, September 19, 1952, p. 121.

Table 1. "C" operation in the Zielona Góra Voivodship

Province	No. of settled Gypsies	No. of vagrants	No. of Gypsies included in the "C" operation	No. of issued documents
Głogów	18	–	18	–
Gorzów	113	70	183	134
Gubin	–	–	–	–
Kożuchów	57	–	57	–
Krosno	12	–	12	5
Międzyrzecz	–	50	50	30
Skwierzyna	–	–	–	–
Słubice	–	62	62	46
Strzelce Kraj.	–	–	–	–
Sulechów	14	29	43	35
Sulęcín	38	–	38	–
Świebodzin	–	–	–	–
Szprotawa	78	–	78	1
Wschowa	–	–	–	–
Zielona Góra	58	50	108	16
Żagań	128	43	171	67
Żary	53	–	53	2
Total:	569	304	873	336

Source: AIPN, , Komenda Główna Milicji Obywatelskiej, sign. 1045/206 "Zestawienie cyfrowe akcji C sporządzone przez Komendę Wojewódzką Milicji Obywatelskiej Województwa Zielonogórskiego", September 19, 1952, p. 120.

Zielona Góra Voivodship between September 22 and September 23, 1952. Its results were later included in the table provided by the Militia Voivodship Bureau for Population and Personal Identification in Zielona Góra:

After the completion of the "C" operation, the voivodship authorities proceeded to the implementation of the tasks specified in the May 24, 1952 resolution on the assistance of the Roma population in the process of moving to a sedentary lifestyle. As it turned out, it was not at all that simple. As the voivodship authorities informed the Ministry of the Interior in a report on the Gypsy population for the third quarter of 1952, the main obstacle was that Gypsies did not want to get rid of their wagons and horses¹¹.

In the same report, the voivodship authorities informed the Ministry of the Interior about problems related to the inclusion of Gypsy children into the institutionalized system of education. The chief obstacle was the reluctance of parents to educate their own children, as well as the lack of appropriate clothing and footwear for children. On the other hand, local education councils did not have the financial means to remedy this.

¹¹ CAMSWiA, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 98/286, "Sprawozdanie PWRN w Zielonej Górze dotyczące ludności cygańskiej", third quarter of 1952, p. 8.

Table 2. "C" operation in the Zielona Góra Voivodship

Province (county)	No. of registration cards	No. of surveys	No. of files	No. of photographs	No. of registration cards
Głogów	–	–	–	–	–
Gorzów	9	2	2	8	2
Gubin	–	–	–	–	–
Kożuchów	2	–	–	–	–
Krosno	–	–	8	–	–
Międzyrzecz	10	10	10	14	–
Skwierzyna	–	–	–	–	–
Słubice	2	10	10	11	1
Strzelce Kraj.	–	–	–	–	–
Sulechów	2	–	–	–	1
Sulęcín	17	28	28	28	–
Świebodzin	–	–	–	–	–
Szprotawa	4	2	2	9	–
Wschowa	–	–	–	–	–
Zielona Góra	23	3	3	–	1
Żagań	16	2	2	3	1
Żary	–	3	3	3	–
Total:	85	60	68	76	6

Source: AIPN BU 1045/206, Komenda Główna Milicji Obywatelskiej. Zestawienie cyfrowe akcji „C” sporządzone przez Komendę Wojewódzką Milicji Obywatelskiej Województwa Zielonogórskiego, 19 September 1952, p. 120.

Bad relations with Polish peers was another problem. For example in Wschowa Polish children threw snow at their Gypsy peers and insulted them on the streets¹². Drawing from the above, the local department of education instructed teachers to conduct talks during special lessons on inappropriate behavior towards Gypsy children. The unresolved issue of education of Gypsy children appeared in subsequent years in the reports of the voivodship authorities in Zielona Góra, which were then directed to the Ministry of the Interior¹³.

Similarly, in the following years, the issue of permanent employing of Gypsies in workplaces had not been resolved in the Lubuskie Region. Attempts to persuade Gypsies to take a permanent job had not brought satisfying results, and the City Council in Zielona Góra in a report of November 28, 1953 informed the voivodship authorities that the Gypsies did not want to take a permanent job because they were involved in

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ See: P.J. Krzyżanowski, *Edukacja Romów w okresie akcji osiedleńczej*, [in:] *Zatrzymane tabory. Wyzwania edukacyjne Europy*, edit. J. Horyń, Wrocław 2013, pp. 123-124.

copper smithing and that was how they earned a substantial income. In turn, women preferred to tell fortune rather than take a permanent job in a socialized workplace¹⁴.

The voivodship authorities decided to emphasize those forms of employment for the Gypsies, which caused the least problems and at the same time would bring quick results in the field of the so-called “productivization”. The establishment of Gypsy singing groups and financial support for their activities by the local authorities were considered the best solution as, according to the authorities, Gypsies loved music¹⁵. The most popular music band was the one established in 1955 by Dębicki, named “Terno” (originally called Kham) and founded in Gorzów. As Dębicki recalls, the main goal of the activity at that time was to “support amateur, gypsy artists by providing them with the opportunity to earn and work and improve their talents”¹⁶. In 1963, Dębicki and his band passed the exam for singers, musicians and dancers, taken before the State Verification Commission of the Ministry of Culture and Arts¹⁷. At that time, the band consisted of about thirty people, and the singer of the band was Bronisława Korsuń, performing under the artistic pseudonym “Randia”. It is worth mentioning that the band is still directed by Dębicki and performs under the name of the Gypsy Musical Theater “Terno”.

Forced settlements in the Lubuskie Region

In 1958, the Ministry of the Interior began working on a vagrancy bill. It was supposed to give local authorities and the militia legislative tools to hurry up the operation of settling Gypsies. It should be also remembered that the third version of the bill, introduced in 1958, provided for a one-year sentence for vagrancy¹⁸.

Local authorities in Zielona Góra had decided to wait for the central government to introduce the bill, doing little to work out the problem themselves. This is why a resolution adopted by the government on May 24, 1952 ceased to be followed in the voivodship. However, assisted by the militia, local authorities had collected information on the number of the Gypsies in the Lubuskie Region, as well as their financial situation and occupation¹⁹.

¹⁴ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, sign.7818, “Sprawozdanie Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Zielonej Górze dotyczące ludności cygańskiej zamieszkałej na terenie miasta Zielona Góra”, the third quarter of 1953, September 28, 1953, p. 12.

¹⁵ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze. Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7828, “Informacja o ludności cygańskiej zamieszkałej na terenie województwa zielonogórskiego”, January 29, 1959, p. 50.

¹⁶ E. Dębicki, *Wczorajszy ogień. Ptak umarłych II*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2012, p. 113.

¹⁷ P.J. Krzyżanowski, G. Pytlak, L. Bończuk, *Cyganie. Mity i fakty*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2002, p. 149-151.

¹⁸ AP Zielona Góra, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7828, “Pismo Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych PWRN w Zielonej Górze do Prezydiów Powiatowych Rad Narodowych i Miejskich w Zielonej Górze i Gorzowie w sprawie opracowania informacji dotyczącej ludności cygańskiej”, December 5, 1958, p. 56.

¹⁹ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7828, “Pismo Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych PWRN w Zielonej Górze do Prezydiów Powiatowych Rad Narodowych i Miejskich w Zielonej Górze i Gorzowie w sprawie opracowania informacji dotyczącej ludności cygańskiej”, December 5, 1958, pp. 56-57.

The information was to be used in the process of forced settlement of the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region after passing the vagrancy bill. Eventually, the government withdrew from passing the bill, claiming difficult financial situation and other problems as the reason for such an unexpected decision. There was lack of flats for those Gypsies who were to be resettled according to the bill. On the other hand, housing conditions of those who had already been resettled were similarly poor. Such was the situation in many cities, also in Zielona Góra whose authorities in 1962 informed about it the Ministry of the Interior²⁰.

During a meeting of the College of the Ministry of the Interior on February 5, 1964 it was decided to take measures to discourage the Roma people from vagrancy. These measures included, among others, rigorous punishment of nomadic Gypsies for breaking ordinance rules, e.g. destroying roads, felling trees or having camp fires. In the Lubuskie Region, as well as elsewhere in Poland, began the time of tracking down camps and combating them. Since not all Gypsies were covered during the “C” operation in 1952, the process of forced registration was undertaken once more on March 23, 1964. Details of the operation had been designed by local militia and voivodship authorities. As the result of the operation, 37 families were registered²¹.

In 1964, the voivodship authorities in Zielona Góra established the Coordinating Commission for Settlement and Productivization of the Roma People. Similar bodies were set up in provincial councils. The main task of the commission was to carry out work related to the forced settlement of Gypsies. During another meeting, on October 30, 1964, it was decided that in order to prevent Gypsies from vagrancy, their camps should be eliminated²². It was a preview of what awaited Gypsies in the Lubuskie Region. In January 1968, the voivodship authorities summarized the forced settlement operation. It was concluded that 166 Gypsy families, or 867 people in total, had been settled. Table 3, originally prepared by the authorities, includes detailed information.

In May 1969, the Department of Criminal Service of the Voivodship Headquarters of the Militia in Zielona Góra established the rules of cooperation with the local authorities concerning preventive actions aimed at the Roma people in the region. What is more, the Voivodship Headquarters of the Militia in Zielona Góra provided its subordinate units with guidelines, according to which they were to work with Gypsies²³.

²⁰ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7829, “Sprawozdanie PWRN w Zielonej Górze w sprawie aktualnej sytuacji ludności cygańskiej zamieszkałej na terenie województwa zielonogórskiego”, December 20, 1962, p. 33.

²¹ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, sign. 7831, “Sprawozdanie Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Sprawozdanie Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych w Zielonej Górze w sprawie dalszego ograniczania trybu życia Cyganów, ich osiedlenia i produktywizacji”, November 4, 1961, p. 160.

²² AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 783 “Sprawozdanie Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych w Zielonej Górze w sprawie dalszego ograniczania trybu życia Cyganów, ich osiedlenia i produktywizacji”, November 4, 1964.

²³ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7842, “Pismo zastępcy Komendanta Wojewódzkiego MO w Zielonej Górze do Komendantów Powiatowych MO i równorzędnych województwa zielonogórskiego”, May 25, 1969, p. 44.

Table 3. A register of Gypsies living in the Zielona Góra voivodship as for February 1, 1968.

City	No. of hours	Over 15 years old	Children up to 15 years old	No. of pensioners	People with permanent job	People with temporary job	Total no. of people with income	No. of identified people	From other regions
Głogów									
Gorzów									
Krosno Odrzańskie	6	14	15	-	3	3	6	2	-
Lubsko	11	28	31	3	5	3	11	5	5
Nowa Sól	30	79	83	5	13	11	29	8	5
Słubice	3	11	11	1	4	2	7	-	-
Strzelce Krajeńskie	7	15	17	2	3	3	8	1	1
Sulechów	8	20	23	-	11	2	13	18	16
Sulęcín	3	5	2	1	2	-	3	23	21
Świebodzin	3	9	10	-	2	-	2	22	16
Szprotawa	4	8	5	-	1	2	3	9	6
Zielona Góra	18	57	47	3	9	11	23	8	6
Żagań	3	10	5	-	2	3	5	3	3
Żary	7	18	21	1	15	-	16	10	6
Razem	166	436	431	19	114	49	182	124	90

Source: AP w Zielonej Górze, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7842, p. 2.

In various actions aimed at combating Gypsy camps took also part the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia (ZOMO)²⁴.

Another concern for the state authorities was the health care of the Gypsy population. For the first time, prophylactic examinations of the Roma people in the entire country was ordered by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in 1965. About half of the entire Gypsy population was surveyed. A report prepared in 1965 by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare contained information that the tests had run smoothly in most of the voivodships, whereas the best results had been achieved in the voivodships of Bydgoszcz, Łódź, Lublin, Białystok, Olsztyn, Rzeszów and Zielona Góra²⁵. Prophylactic examinations most often consisted of X-ray of the chest, the skin examination and the review of the condition of the teeth. The research had found a large number of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, rheumatic diseases, bronchial asthma, skin diseases (scabies) and others. Gypsies from the Zielona Góra Voivodship who had been diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis and required closed treatment were sent to sanatoriums and other institutions²⁶.

As a result of the examinations, in the Zielona Góra Voivodship protective vaccinations were carried out for school-age children. Moreover, Gypsy flats were examined by employees of sanitary and epidemiological stations, who provided disinfectants and instructions related to maintaining hygiene. Such examinations of Gypsies and their flats were repeated in the Lubuskie Region in subsequent years.

It should be added that the research revealed many cases of forced sterilization of the Roma people carried out by Nazis in the Dobiegniew hospital (until 1945, German Woldenberg) during the Second World War. In 1967, the investigation into this matter was initiated by the District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes in Zielona Góra. However, the local branch of militia office in Strzelce Krajeńskie failed in finding people who during the war had lived in Dobiegniew and could testify in the matter of mass sterilization of the Roma in the local hospital. Due to the inability to find perpetrators of the crime, the investigation into the criminal treatment of women and men of the Gypsy nationality at the Woldenberg Hospital (Dobiegniew) was discontinued by the prosecutor office on September 14, 1971²⁷.

²⁴ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze. Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7842, "Notatka służbowa dotycząca taboru cygańskiego", March 29, 1969, p. 85.

²⁵ AIPN Warszawa, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 1585/24509, "Informacja Ministerstwa Zdrowia i Opieki Społecznej, Polskiego Komitetu Pomocy Społecznej, Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża i Ligii Kobiet dotycząca zapewnienia opieki zdrowotnej i społecznej ludności cygańskiej w związku z osiedlaniem się i jej produktywizacją w roku 1965", p. 7.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ AIPN Poznań, sign. 835/45, "Akta prokuratora w sprawie zbrodniczych zabiegów sterylizacyjnych dokonywanych na kobietach i mężczyznach narodowości cygańskiej w Szpitalu Woldenberg (Dobiegniew) pow. Strzelce Krajeńskie. Postanowienie o umorzeniu śledztwa", September 14, 1971, p. 5.

Between Gierek's Decade and the Political Upheaval of 1989

According to the data provided by the Department of Internal Affairs, the Presidium of the Voivodship National Council in Zielona Góra 180 Gypsy families, including 430 adults, lived in the Zielona Góra Voivodship in 1971. Thus, the efforts of the local authorities were directed at preventing those families from returning to a sedentary lifestyle²⁸.

In 1971, a total number of 315 of Gypsies were identified as crossing the Zielona Góra Voivodship. Mostly they came from the regions of Poznań, Wrocław and Opole. They comprised groups of three to four people who moved in their own cars or rented taxis. They traded shirts and blouses made in Poland, claiming that they had been imported from abroad.

In 1971, the voivodship authorities did not register among Gypsies living in the region any attempts to travel. Only a few families owned horses that were used for farm work and other services. In summer 1971, two Gypsy camps were found in the voivodship that had come here from the Poznań Voivodship²⁹. They were quickly detained by the militia and returned to the place of their residence. In the same year, local authorities in Gorzów Wielkopolski had noticed "progressing" stabilization of life among the local Gypsy community, about which it informed its superiors in Zielona Góra in a special report on ethnic issues for 1971. The stabilization meant the deprivation of Gypsies from any chance of wandering³⁰. However, the problem for authorities in Gorzów remained how to persuade the Roma population to take permanent jobs, as among 58 adult people in the area (32 women, 26 men) none were permanently employed. Instead, men worked only on a casual basis, providing pots for state-owned enterprises.

The Gorzów authorities were unable to boast of any achievements in the field of education of the Gypsies. Not a single attempt had been made during that time, probably as a result of the belief that any activity would prove ineffective. However, the report informed that Gypsies presented no political threat to the state³¹.

Gierek's Decade (1970-1980) meant for the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region the need to adapt to a new situation. In the worst situation were those generations of Gypsies who had to abandon their traditional way of life even though they knew no alternative. Dębicki draws attention to the fact that many suicides were caused by bitterness³². The 1970s were also a period of Roma emigration. Usually, they left for Yugoslavia from where they later moved to the German Federal Republic or Austria. Another

²⁸ AP Zielona Góra, PWRN w Zielonej Górze, Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych, sign. 7844, "Informacja z zakresu zapobiegania przestępczości i ścigania przestępców narodowości cygańskiej na terenie województwa zielonogórskiego w 1971 r.", p. 46.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

³² M. Szemczyszyn, *Dom to klatka*, "Biuletyn IPN pamięć.pl" 2014, No. 3(24), p. 42.

popular direction was the Scandinavia. Those who could not get passports made illegal attempts to leave the country. Some of the members of the Gypsy band “Terno” also decided to emigrate: Korsuń, known as “Randia” moved to the United States, and Masio Sylwester Kwiek left for Sweden³³. Starting in 1975, the new voivodship authorities – separate in Zielona Góra and Gorzów Wielkopolski – did not pay any particular attention to the Roma people within their territory. In the 1980s, the only accepted form of Roma activity in the region was the presentation of their folklore, but even this to a limited extent. For example, in 1982, members of the “Terno” band took part in the Children’s Day celebrations organized by The Regional Museum in Gorzów Wielkopolski. Dębicki, who was the manager the band, could not receive permission for the organization of a separate Gypsy festival. Only in the new political reality, in August 1989, such a festival could be organized as the first International Meetings of the Gypsies “Romane Dyvesa’ took place.

Conclusions

The Roma people in the Lubuskie Region, as well as the rest of the country, remained under close investigation from both political and security authorities throughout the entire period of the Polish People’s Republic. Even though Gypsies were not perceived as a serious threat to the country’s political or social system, their independence, symbolized by their way of life, ran contrast to the expectations of the communist regime. Various operations that were undertaken, including forced settlement, were to unify this community with the rest of the population. Like other Polish citizens, also Gypsies were to be “productive”, that is to have a permanent job and live in flats. However, the lack of funds and the opposition from Gypsies made every such an attempt unsuccessful. As a result of it, the authorities decided that Gypsies would be employed as singers and performers as these occupations best suited their skills and character. Some of the music bands established in the 1970s and 1980s have managed to survive and exist today.

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³³ See: P.J. Krzyżanowski, *Cyganie w powojennej Polsce. Od wędrówki do emigracji*, [in:] *Wojna i emigracja. Studia i szkice, t. II, Emigracja i losy Polaków na obczyźnie*, edit. T. Sikorski, P. Słowiński, H. Walczak, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2013, pp. 48-50.

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Abstract: The article analyzes the situation of the Roma people in the Lubuskie Region in the years 1945-1989. Being part of the so-called “Western Territories”, the Lubuskie Region, first as the Zielona Góra Voivodship and later divided into Zielona Góra Voivodship and Gorzów Voivodship, attracted a number of ethnic minorities, including Gypsies. The article presents how local political and security authorities reacted to the presence of the Roma people, adapting central laws, most notably the 1964 forced settlement bill, to local situation. In their analysis, the authors use documents held in various local and central archives, including the Institute of National Remembrance archive and Ministry of the Interior archive.

Keywords: Gypsies, ethnic minorities, Roma people, Edward Dębicki, security policy, local policy

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