

The historical picture of Strzelce's district.

The history of state's adherence

The first mentions of Strzelce we can find in papers from the first half of the 13th century. The town's location based on Germany's law took place in 1920, when Bolesław I – the prince of Opolskie - rebuilt Strzelce's city, destroyed during the invasion of Bolesław Wstydlivy.

After Bolesław Opolski's death, in consequence of family divisions, came into existence the principality of Strzelce. Its creator and ruler – prince Wojciech (Albert), died without issue and the principality went to hands of the Niemodlińska's line of Piast. After its expiration in 1382 the principality was reigned by the Opolska's line of Piast – Bolko III and his son – Bernard. After childless death of Bernard in 1456 Strzelce with the surrounding areas became the ownership of Bolko V from Głogówek. In 1460 Strzelce's district was annexed to the Opolskie's principality and until 1532 had been reigned by princes of Opolskie Piasts. After death of the last of them – Jan II The Good, the whole principality got the king of Czech – Ferdynard Habsburg. He gave it in register to margrave Jerzy – from family Hohenzolern – Ansbach. From 1551 to 1554 Strzelce belonged to the queen of Hungary – Izabella Jagiellonka, later the Strzelce's goods got as a register the emperor's adviser – von Redern. In 1615 the Redern family became the owner of Strzelce.

During the 30 years war (1618-1648) Strzelce became again ruled by Habsburg family. In 1645 the emperor Ferdynand III received Strzelce, together with whole principality of Opolskie and Raciborskie in register to the king of Poland – Władysław IV. During the reign of Jan Kazimierz the renter administrator of Strzelce was Kasper Colona. In 1683 Strzelce was bought by Zygfryd Promnitz, in 1650 by count Colona. The line of Colona reigned the town until 1807.

In 1741 Fryderyk II subjugated Silesia and included it to the Prussian state. Beginning since this moment the range of administration's power of Colons became to make smaller constantly. The period of Prussian reign began since 1808, this mean from the date of introducing the act about cities, and last till 1945.

The population and colonization

The area of Strzelce's district was already populated in times of łużycka's culture (the years 1000-400 b.c.), what confirmed the excavations. People populated mainly fertile fields in the south part of Strzelce's area in that time. There was probably a flank trade border went through of it, connecting the Baltic's sea-short with Rome's emporium.

In historical papers from the 13th century we can find many places known till nowadays, like Leśnica, which got the legal right to trade in 1217, Ujazd – established in 1223 (the capital of the Wrocław's bishops goods) and of course Strzelce.

In the 13th century came also into being two places in the north part of Strzelce's district – Jemielnica in 1282 and Kielcza. From the fourteen's century acts we find out the next three places establishment in the valley of Mała Panew. Their names are Łaziska (1323), Żędowice and Wierchlesie (1328). In 1382 Leśnica was mentioned as a town.

In the middle age the Strzelce's land was very weakly populated. At the change of the centuries 14th and 15th in Strzelce's decanat the density of population was 14,4 people on 1 km². The amount of denizens of those-days towns was also not too big. Strzelce and Ujazd had the population of about 300 till 400 people. In 1534 in Strzelce lived 91 townsmen and 8 tenants. 21 families lived in suburb. At a rough guess the population was at about 600 people.

The result of the 30 years war and a long lasting plaque was a decrease of the population – in 1690 in Strzelce noticed 260 people and in Leśnica – only 132. In 1787 Strzelce's district had the population of 14 893 people, what gave it the last but one place of all 13 districts of Opolskie region.

The population of Strzelce's land hurt again because of the invasion of Husyts in the 15th century, religion's fights in 16th century, the 30 years war in the 17th century, the Sweden and Prussian wars, but also because of objective factors, like fire and flood. The district of Strzelce didn't avoid the epidemic ("black death" in 1656, cholera in 1866), locust in 1749, hurricane's wind, which in 1777 destroyed Kielcza, ironworks in Żędowice, a part of a castle in Strzelce and causes many damages in the other places. These and many other obstacles didn't stop coming into being new settlements and

the increase of already existed. At the change of the 18th and 19th century the valley of Mała Panew became very populated, as a result of rising there the factories of ironworks. Phillip Colonna and his successor Andrzej Renard established in the north part of Strzelce's district, along the Mała Panew's river bed, many new places. In 1770 came into being settlements: Harasowskie and Myślina, in 1776 - Spórok, in 1780 - Kolonowskie, In 1783 - Kowolowska near to Kolonowskie, in 1790 Filipolis (later known as quarter of Zawadzkie, lived by coalmen), in 1800 Fosowskie and Świerkle. From 1819 until 1821 between Kolonowskie and Fosowskie had been built Renard's ironwork. It was the cause of establishing the next settlements. The last one was Zawadzkie, established in 1838. It's the last link of a workers settlement's chain in the valley of Mała Panew. It's a time of thoroughly transformation of Mała Panew's valley and also of big demographical and economical modifications in district. Fast growing industry absorbed the local excess of population and admitted specialists from outside of district, a specially Germanys and Czechs. In the second half of the 19th century the scattered workers settlements began to complete into village's communes. A curiosity, showing the strength of industry is a fact, that from 1849 till 1855 the population of Żędowice exceeded the populations of the other places and villages of Strzelce's district and was almost the same as the population of the capital of district - Strzelce. In 1861 the population of Żędowice was at 3130 (in Strzelce - 3496), in year 1885 - 3468 (in Strzelce - 4252). In the next years we observe the decrease of Żędowice's population as a result of liquidation the local ironworks, inactivating the blast furnaces in Świerkle and becoming the competitive industry's center in Zawadzkie.

The 19th century and the first half of the 20th century was the time of quite fast increase of district's population. In 1939 there were 93621 people living in the district. In 1956 Strzelce's district lost a part of his land because of the new created Krapkowice's district.

The economical conditions of living

In the 13th and the 14th century the villages of Strzelce's land were surrounded by the dense forests, which were a source of timber and wood. Beside grubbing forests people were farming, fishing, picking up, beekeeping. The ground belonged mainly to knighthood and priesthood. Peasantry were charged with benevolences and serfdom to landowners. The last of Collons - Filip introduced into his granges potatoes, trefoil and consider as very important fertilization. Also in Strzelce's district the echo of French revolution was perceptible, the best proof of it was rising conducted by a smith - Marek from Jemielnica in 1794. The consequence of political changes (a lost war with Napoleon in 1806 - 1807) was an edict edited on the 9th October 1807, which abolished a personality serfdom beginning from the Saint Martin day in 1810. Peasantry's freedom opened a way to taking a job in new - risen ironworks in the north part of district. From 1845 began the years of scarceness, which resulted in the epidemic of putrid fever, which took about 16 thousand victims (from 80 thousand of sicken). The next mile stone in economical development of Silesia was edition on the 2nd march 1850 an affranchisementy resolution by ht Prussian government. Those changes didn't make the life of the village's population in the district radically better. Looking for better conditions for living and their chance of life, beginning from the years fifty of the 19th century, emigrants wave from Strzelce's district went to the United States of America. Mostly the emigrants came from Płużnica, Blotnica, Centawa, Kielcza. The townfolk of Strzelce's district form long time ago traded and handcrafted. A specially dynamical increase of handcraft appeared from the 16th century. A historical book (paper) from the 16th century mentions among villagers of Strzelce: 4 bakers, 16 shoemakers, 18 butchers and few potters. In the second half of 16th century Strzelce's handcraft was represented by guilds: potters, shoemakers, smiths, locksmiths, clothiers and butchers.

In the beginning of years 80's of the 18th century there worked 146 craftsmen in Strzelce. Clothes developed the most profitable. In 1733 15 tradesmen did it, in 1787 there were already 25 masters of clothes, 1 damask's weaver and 11 peons in 39 workshops. It made Strzelce the top center of clothes trade. The other trades were represented by: medicine-man, color-man, tanner, hatter, coppersmith, locksmith, rope-maker, chimney-sweep, carpenter, 2 coopers, 2 tanners, 2 glaziers, 2 gloves, 2 bakers, 2 bricklayers, 2 saddlers, 2 soap makers, 2 carpenters, 3 saddlers, 3 potters, 6 smiths, 12 butchers and 23 furriers. In this time Strzelce's tradesmen were organized in 8 guilds. Leśnica also was the important trade's center in 18th century. Among 562 people lived there in 1783, to the guild of shoemakers belonged 36 people and to the guild of weaver - 46 people.

Decay of the 18th century was a time of trade's volume by the mean of fairs, animal's fairs and weekly Saturday's fairs. Together with the development of trade and handcraft the conditions of living in town became better. The building developed, a specially outside town, came into being covering houses with tiles.

Napoleon's wars (in the beginning of the 19th century) had a bad influence on the economical life of towns and their citizens. Strzelce became charged for the war's costs in amount of 6213 thalers, which were payed completely in 1841.

In 1808 came into being an edict, which change the whole town's polity. Phillip Colonna had been stripped the right to nominate the provost of Strzelce and municipality, he also lost a control over their activity. He remained the police's references and jurisdiction in penitentiary cases, civil's jurisdiction came into the royalty's town courts.

The end of the 19th century is a period of again development of Strzelce's district. Further development of trade came together with increase of communication's net. Railway lines became. First of them - along the road through Opole - Ozimek - Zawadzkie - Tarnowskie Góry - were built in years 1856 - 1858. The next one was activated in years 1878 - 1880 line Opole - Strzelce - Pyskowice - Bytom. In 1869 had started a building of line Kędzierzyn - Strzelce - Fosowskie - Kluczbork, unfortunately it was finished very lately - in 1936. Strzelce's district got a connection with Upper Silesia Industrial District, what let the excess of workforce to immigrate from village to the industry at Bytom's and Gliwice's area.

The extension of communicational net was linked with industrialization of Strzelce's region. In 1859 many industrial factory have already existed, for example: 22 distilleries, 16 brickyards, 12 breweries, 2 sheet's rolling mills, 2 steel's factories, a wire's factory, 2 iron - ore mines, 13 ironworks and 2 tobacco's articles factories. Some time later in Strzelce and the nearest area were built: sawmill, water mill, brickyards, distillery and 3 breweries. In 1881 next to the railway station were built 2 lime-kilns signed by Rumford. In 1880 in Strzelce's area calcified in already 9 lime-kilns. Then came the next investments, such as: machine factory, roofing paper factory, cigar factory, stockings factory and a cement factory.

Despite of a dynamical growth of the economy, region wasn't able to employ the roughly increasing population. Only in Strzelce lived in 1855 2827 people, in 1885 - 4114 people, and in 1900 - already 5779. As we can see, during almost 50 years, the town's population increased over twice.

Similar tendencies came into being on the whole Strzelce's land. It happened more serious in the 20th century. Till 1933 Strzelce's population doubled again, to amount at about 11 000 people. Dynamical increase of residents caused that despite of further investments (beginning the exploitation of new created coke works and a synthetic fuel factory in Zdzeszowice, expansion lime industry) district stayed mainly a reservoir of workforce for Upper Silesia's district of metallurgic and mining.