

Аграрна історія в іменах

Agrarian history in names

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THE PEASANT ISSUE IN THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC IN THE CONCEPTION BY FRANCISZEK BUJAK

Abstract. *The purpose of the study is to fully reproduce F. Bujak's vision of the problems of the peasantry in the Polish state restored in 1918 on new foundations. At the same time, attention is drawn to the fact that F. Bujak was the founder of Polish historical and economic studies, and also had experience in political activity as the Minister of Agriculture.*

The scientific novelty is that for the first time the materials of the journal "Wieś i Państwo" are included in the scientific circulation, based on which F. Bujak's views on the relationship between the peasantry and the state in the interwar period are reconstructed.

Conclusions. *The view of the problem of the peasantry in interwar Poland by F. Bujak, a supporter of democracy and social equality, was distinguished by its integrity and depth of understanding. The researcher considered the peasantry not only the economic, but also the spiritual basis of the state. His attention was drawn to the issue of relations between the agrarian state, which was then the Second Polish Commonwealth, and its own most numerous social group - the peasants. F. Bujak presented quite balanced assessments of the real state of this problem, the solution of which he saw in the establishment of national solidarity between different social strata. For this, he considered the need for state regulation and the presence of socially significant laws to be justified. F. Bujak paid considerable attention to the problem of totalitarianism, in particular the possibilities and features of its introduction in the young Polish state. He also analyzed the threats that such an evolution of the political system could cause to the peasantry. F. Bujak considered the relations between the state and the peasants in historical retrospect as a confrontation between the peasants and the nobility. In this context, he considered overcoming mutual, historically determined prejudices to be one of the urgent tasks. And one of the main ways of this was supposed to be the effective participation of the state in raising the educational and cultural level of the peasantry.*

Keywords: *interwar twenty years, scientific press, Polish historiography, "Wieś i Państwo" journal.*

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СЕЛЯНСЬКЕ ПИТАННЯ В II РЕЧІ ПОСПОЛИТІЙ В ОСМИСЛЕННІ ФРАНЦІШКА БУЯКА

Анотація. *Мета дослідження полягає у цілісному відтворенні бачення Ф. Буяком проблем селянства у відновленій у 1918 р. на нових засадах польської державі. Звернено увагу на те, що Ф. Буяк був засновником польських історико-економічних студій, а також мав досвід політичної діяльності у статусі міністра сільського господарства.*

Наукова новизна полягає у тому, що вперше до наукового обігу залучено матеріали часопису «Wieś i Państwo», на підставі яких реконструйовано погляди Ф. Буяка на питання реляції селянства та держави у міжвоєнний період.

Висновки. *Погляд на проблему селянства у міжвоєнній Польщі Францішека Буяка, прихильника демократії й соціальної рівності, вирізнявся цілісністю та глибиною осягнення. Дослідник вважав селянську верству не лише економічною, а й духовною основою держави. Його увагу привертало питання взаємин аграрної держави, якою*

була тогочасна II Річ Посполита, з власною найбільш чисельною соціальною групою – селянами. Ф. Бюак подавав доволі виважені оцінки реально стану цієї проблеми, вирішення якої вбачав у встановленні національної солідарності між різними соціальними прошарками. Для цього він вважав обґрунтованими потреби державного регулювання та наявність соціально значущих законів. Значну увагу Ф. Бюак приділив проблемі тоталітаризму, зокрема можливостям та особливостям його запровадження у молодій польській державі. Також він аналізував загрози, які могла спричинити така еволюція політичного устрою селянській верстві. Взаємини держава і селяни Ф. Бюак розглядав в історичній ретроспективі як протистояння селян і шляхти. У цьому контексті одним із нагальних завдань він вважав подолання взаємних, історично зумовлених упереджень. Одним із основних шляхів цього мала бути дієва участь держави у підвищенні освітнього і культурного рівня селянської верстви.

Ключові слова: міжвоєнне двадцятиліття, наукова преса, польська історіографія, часопис «Wieś i Państwo».

Problem statement. Franciszek Bujak is a historian who was an active participant in the state-building processes of the restored Polish state. He is one of the key researchers of the past, a pioneer in the formation of the history of economic studies as a new discipline at the beginning of the 20th century. F. Bujak came from a peasant family, which, apparently, became one of the key factors of his constant interest in the issues of this social stratum. Under his watch and with his participation, the creation, formation and development of the Second Polish Republic took place – a European state with significant historical traditions and all the challenges inherent in a newly created organization: from the choice of a model of socio-economic development to the need to develop new mechanisms of social interaction.

Research analysis. The study of F. Bujak's scientific activity has its own tradition, which dates back to the 60s and 70s of the 20th century. The first attempts to evaluate F. Bujak's work were made by E. Topolski, V. Kula, A. Grabski, and H. Madurowicz-Urbanska¹. At the turn of the millennium, the figure of F. Bujak attracted the interest of American researchers², and the first biographical study dedicated to him also appeared then³.

The purpose of the study is to fully reproduce F. Bujak's vision of the issues of the peasantry in the Polish state restored in 1918 on new foundations. Attention is drawn to the fact that F. Bujak was the founder of Polish historical and economic studies, and also had experience in political activity in the status of Minister of Agriculture.

The statement of the basic material. F. Bujak turned to agrarian topics and issues of the

peasantry from the beginning of his scientific career, which, obviously, was most influenced by his own origin⁴. Before the beginning of the World War I, his social and political activities intensified. F. Bujak, being a supporter of democracy and social equality, saw his civic duty in social activities aimed at raising the level of education and justifying the need to change the existing economic system⁵. At one time, even before the World War I, he joined the national camp, but after the growth of nationalist sentiments there, he left its ranks. Immediately after the independence of Poland, F. Bujak became the Minister of Agriculture, trying to put his ideas about a successful and fair state into practice. However, his political career was not very successful and quickly ended. His scientific career developed much more successfully, connected in the interwar period with work in Lviv (at the university and the Polish Historical Society), where he created his own school of historical and economic studies. All this time, F. Bujak remained politically active and was a member of the Polish People's (Peasant) Party «Piast» («Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe «Piast»»), which in 1931 was transformed into the People's Party «Stronnictwo Ludowe»⁶.

In the 30s of the 20th century F. Bujak established the journal «Wieś i Państwo» («The Countryside and the State»), which became a kind of tribune, an expression of the position of the editor-in-chief and his like-minded people regarding the relations of the «agrarian state with its own most numerous social group – the peasants»⁷. In a number of essays published on the pages of this periodical F. Bujak's give a description of the young Polish state in the inter-

1 Topolski J. Badania historyczno-gospodarcze w Polsce. *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*. 1963. N. 25, s. 56–76; Kula W. Problemy i metody historii gospodarczej. Warszawa, 1963. 786 s.; Madurowicz-Urbanska H. Franciszek Bujak – o nowy kształt historii. *Bujak F. Wybór pism*. Warszawa, 1976. T. 1. S. 37–170.

2 Shelton A.K. The democratic idea in Polish history and historiography: Franciszek Bujak (1875–1953). Colorado, 1989. 315 s.

3 Szafranec B. Franciszek Bujak (1875–1953). *Życie, działalność naukowo-dydaktyczna i społeczna*. Toruń, 2009. 305 s.

4 Kowalczyk E. Agraryzm i jego wyraz w myśli społeczno-ekonomicznej F. Bujaka, W. Stysia i W. Grabskiego. *Przegląd Prawa i Administracji*. 2016. N. 105. S. 85–98.

5 Bujak F. O naprawie ustroju rolnego w Polsce. Warszawa, 1918. 160 s.

6 Budzyński Z. Franciszek Bujak (1875–1953). *Złota księga historiografii lwowskiej XIX i XX wieku*. Rzeszów, 2007. S. 429.

7 Baran Z., Sypko B. Ahrarna polityka polskoho uriadu v otsintsii F. Buiaka. *Kwartalnik Kolegium Ekonomiczno-Społecznego. Studia i Prace*. 2019. N. 3. S. 91.

war period and reflect on its gains, losses, and prospects for its development.

The first issue of this journal opened with a kind of programmatic article by F. Bujak, which was called, like the magazine itself, «The Countryside and the State»⁸. In four points, the author outlined the importance of the countryside in the formation and development of the Polish state. Drawing attention to the «new times of totalitarianism» that engulfed Poland after the May coup of 1926 and the introduction of the Sanation policy, he noted that this was not the first and, obviously, not the last wave of confrontation between the state and the individual. In the matter of relations between the state and citizens, the state and the individual were, in his opinion, «doomed to coexistence, mutually supporting each other and mutually dependent on each other»⁹. The most difficult and, therefore, dramatic part of this process has always been the search for balance, the fair determination of the limits of interdependence, and the difficulty of respecting them.

The author presented his vision of the formation of the state from the earliest times with a special emphasis on the issue of the state's attitude to the countryside. Trying to emphasize the significance of the peasant estate for the Polish state, F. Bujak noted that its representatives were actively involved in its defence even in the Middle Ages. Later, they formed the basis of the common noble militia, which included village elders, and in modern times, infantry from the peasants of royal villages were added to the mercenary army. In addition, at all times, the army was supported by taxes paid by the common people. The last attempt to involve these «silent witnesses» of the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the state affairs, as noted by F. Bujak, was the participation of peasants (cosigners) in the uprising of T. Kościuszko. Characterizing the situation of the 19th century, the researcher wrote: «It is a shame to remember what importance for the case of restoration the independence of Poland had the passivity of the peasants, the reason for which was the reluctance of the nobility to get rid of their privileges and recognize the peasants as the owners of their land»¹⁰.

F. Bujak paid special attention to the importance of preserving Polish national culture in times of statelessness. In his opinion, the peasants were actually the element that preserved the language and religion (preventing the «erosion» of ethnicity in this way) and folklore – the basis of national culture. Characterizing his current moment, he claimed that «the condition for the preservation of the Polish state is the elevation of the culture of the masses in order to reduce the gap between ordinary people and the educated class, between the ideals of the people and the ideals of the intelligentsia, because the latter were based on the historical noble tradition»¹¹.

The greatest internal threat to interwar Poland, in his opinion, was the lack of national solidarity between different social strata. F. Bujak interpreted solidarism as the best model of social organization. He declared the solidarity of society members to be the primary and determining factor of social life. He considered raising the education of the people masses to be the shortest way to achieve social solidarity, which could increase the defence capability of the state and the functionality of its apparatus.

According to the ideology of solidarism, F. Bujak considered the need for state regulation, the presence of socially significant laws, various voluntary associations, etc. to be justified. In this context, he considered changing the attitude of the peasant masses to the state and the state to the peasants to achieve solidarity as one of the urgent tasks. In this sense, his statement is indicative: «Poles without peasants cannot be considered a nation»¹². After all, even from an economic point of view, the main breadwinner of the population of interwar Poland were peasants – small landowners, who made up 75% of the country's inhabitants. However, the governments that kaleidoscopically changed during the 20-30s of the 20th century, managed to implement agrarian reform (after an unsuccessful one in 1920) until 1925, but its main provisions were very controversial¹³.

The question of implementing solidarism through the involvement of peasants in joint work for the benefit of the state became particularly acute in the 1930s of the 20th century – before the threat of war and the possible repeated loss of Poland's independence. In this regard,

8 Bujak F. *Wies i Państwo. Wies i Państwo*. 1938. N1. S. 5–12.

9 *Ibid.* S.5.

10 *Ibid.* S.7.

11 *Ibid.* S.10–11.

12 *Ibid.* S.11.

13 Baran Z., Sypko B. *Ahrarna polityka polskoho uriadu v otsintsi F. Buiaka. Kwartalnik Kolegium Ekonomiczno-Spolecznego. Studia i Prace*. 2019. N. 3. S. 89–102.

F. Bujak wrote: «If the nobility could not maintain independence in the past, then even more so now there can be no question of maintaining independence by the state, which pushes away the majority of the population, which performs the most basic role in its organization»¹⁴.

Another issue of the prospects for the development of the Polish state, which attracted the attention of F. Bujak, was the evolution of the political system towards totalitarianism. In the article «Countryside and Totalitarianism», F. Bujak expressed his vision of this, in his opinion, the most urgent challenge at that time¹⁵. The importance of this issue also grew due to the fact that Poland in the 30s of the 20th century was still faced with the issue of choosing the political path to follow. Therefore, the researcher focused on the issues of the sources of totalitarian ideas, the ways of their implementation in his contemporary world, and the prospects of their introduction in Poland.

In Poland, R. Dmowski and V. Vitos first began to defend a strong government, and later in May 1926, Yu. Pilsudski decided on a coup d'état. As a result, the semblance of a democratic state system was preserved, but until the end of his life Yu. Pilsudski remained a dictator, subordinating the army and foreign policy to himself and influencing the decision of all issues of the country's internal life through his proteges¹⁶. An interesting description of these processes as «inevitable» for Poland can be found in N. Davies: «A society where two-thirds of the population lived from subsistence agriculture, and one-third consisted of national minorities, could hardly afford the liberal atmosphere of gradual changes characteristic of wealthy and stable Western countries»¹⁷. It did not seem that F. Bujak was particularly upset by this «Polish» (which, apparently, he considered not quite real), different from the Italian and German, totalitarian path. It is also interesting that the researcher believed that the ground was not very favourable for totalitarianism of the «Marxist» type in Poland. However, the circumstances that developed after the World War II «ploughe» the soil of many Eastern European countries.

Outlining the prospects of «real» totalitarianism in Poland, F. Bujak sincerely believed

that this type of state power has no chance here. The main reason for this, in his opinion, was the peculiarities of Polish society. He wrote: «Society is difficult to discipline, although by nature it is passive and inclined to obey. Among the intelligentsia, there are many who are uncritical and who are easily bribed with beautiful words, many weak-willed, poor, who are ready to remain silent... however, they are all too different»¹⁸.

Reflecting on the question of totalitarianism in the projection of the Polish countryside, he noted: «As for the countryside, it never created totalitarianism, it is a form of state organization that was only imposed on the countryside... The peasant instinctively feels that the totalitarianism brings an increase in duties for the benefit of the state, economic and political control due to the increase in bureaucracy»¹⁹. All this could be observed on the example of the Soviet Union in the early 30s of the 20th century. However, in Poland, as evidenced by the data, the official introduction of «their» totalitarianism (rather authoritarianism – author), at least in the beginning, did not lead to a worsening of the situation. However, F. Bujak believed that the countryside should resist totalitarianism, because it had what to lose: «At first, the militarization of the economy leads to its growth, but temporarily. It threatens to limit civil and political rights and entails further deterioration of economic, cultural and political life... For example, if journals for peasants are banned now, then in the future only the government press is possible. If even now the elections are quite conditional, in the future they will be nominal»²⁰.

It is interesting that for F. Bujak, totalitarianism – like everything human – was «better» and «worse». He preferred to hope that Polish totalitarianism, which left freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of individual organizations, speech and press, was better. However, he was also aware that from his vantage point (both geographically and temporally) the value/cost of totalitarianism remained unknown. On this occasion, F. Bujak wrote: «It [totalitarianism] is still at the testing stage. Some attempts have already ended in disaster, and the most daring Russian attempt is terrifying to all humanity and, despite

14 Bujak F. *Wieś i Państwo*. *Wieś i Państwo*. 1938. N.1.S. 11.

15 Bujak F. *Wieś a Totalizm*. *Wieś i Państwo*. 1938. N.2.S. 88.

16 Pobóg-Malinowski W. *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski 1864–1945*. T.2. Cz.1. Londyn, 1956. 665 s.; *Wielka historia Polski: 1918–1939*. T. 9. Kraków, 2000. 272 s.

17 Deivis N. *Боже ігрище: історія Польщі*. К. 2008. S. 752.

18 *Ibid.* S. 93.

19 *Ibid.* S. 94.

20 *Ibid.* S. 95.

its short duration, threatens with disaster. A great war is coming, which will undoubtedly help clarify the situation. Only the results of the war will show whether the constitutional-democratic system or totalitarianism better ensures the existence and future of the state and the nation»²¹.

F. Bujak's vision of the transformations to which all social strata were subjected in the new conditions of that time cannot be ignored. In the essay «The Nobility» F. Bujak paid attention to the position of representatives of this estate in restored Poland, in particular in the context of the opposition «nobility – peasantry»²². The most characteristic feature of the nobility was the traditional social superiority of its representatives. The feeling of superiority over the peasant and the right to rule over him was justified by the theory of the multi-tribal or even racial origin of the nobility and peasants. «Peasants», wrote F. Bujak, «are considered a lower class, incapable of spiritual development, forced to work and listen. This vision is similar and derives from the same source as in the vision of slaves and barbarians in the classical antiquity and in the Western European perception of «coloured» people in our time»²³. In a broader sense, according to F. Bujak, the concept of «nobility» included a negative vision of the rural population – underestimation of its importance, removal from influence on public affairs – i.e., everything that contained harmful manifestations for the countryside, the state and its authorities.

F. Bujak spoke about these negative features, warning against the elitism of his contemporary era, which, like totalitarianism, harmed the development of the young Polish state. F. Bujak saw the greatest harm from the nobility in its «one-partyism», behind which stood the slogan «the state is us». He wrote: «By not allowing other estates to rule the state, the magnatery actually reduced the dark and economically dependent small nobility to the role of a tool in its hands. This perfectly resonates with the modern idea of elitism and with today's totalitarian tendencies»²⁴. The researcher interpreted his contemporary elite as a sociological (rather than heraldic, ancestral) continuation of the former nobility, which has similar defining features. He saw this as a serious threat to the democratic development of the state. However, in response,

the representatives of the elites accused the supporters of democracy that the lower classes showed the same political defects as the nobility once did, so they should be deprived of political rights in order to protect the state from the anarchy and decay that the «seimocracy» brought them.

Subsequently, F. Bujak, developing this «noble-peasant» theme, turned to the issues of comparative evaluation of the spiritual traits of representatives of these estates²⁵. He was talking about refuting the objections of individual politicians that the involvement of wider social strata in the state-building processes of the beginning of the 20s of the 20th century brought an element of anarchy no less harmful than chaotic features in the activities of the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

As F. Bujak believed, cultural figures, like politicians, also saw in the representatives of the people elements different from those of the nobility, in particular – the inability to accept and create culture in the same direction as the upper class did. Such views were the result of the historical cultural distance between the nobility and the people and ancient mutual prejudices, the researcher noted. Trying to figure this out, F. Bujak immersed himself in history, turning to the topic of Jan Długosz's portrayal of the nobility and peasants, who in the first book of his «History of Poland» included a section entitled «On the Nature and Customs of the Poles». «The analysis of Długosz's views shows», wrote F. Bujak, «that in the eyes of the greatest connoisseur of Poland at that time, the Polish nation at the turn of the Middle Ages was homogeneous, and the differences between nobility and the peasants were determined only by the degree of wealth and culture»²⁶. The nobility in the modernized society left the historical arena and the peasant, according to F. Bujak, had to become «the expression of Poland». Without taking on prophecies, F. Bujak, however, predicted the beginning of a new period in the development of the Polish nation and culture – a period of predominance of the peasant element, which he preferred to consider the «peasant spring»²⁷.

F. Bujak, however, did not consider this confrontation insurmountable and optimistically noted that «the two main layers of the Polish na-

21 Ibid.

22 Bujak F. Szlachetczyzna. *Wiś i Państwo*. 1938. N3. S. 161–168.

23 Ibid. S. 164.

24 Ibid. S. 166.

25 Bujak F. Z jednej gliny jesteśmy. *Wiś i Państwo*. 1938. N4. S. 258–269.

26 Ibid. S. 259.

27 Bujak F. Chłop wyrazicielem duha Polski. *Wiś i Państwo*. 1938. N8. S. 488.

tion had an essential common feature that can be considered an advantage or a disadvantage depending on the point of view - unwillingness to tolerate rape and coercion, which was based on deep feelings of one's own rights and internal dignity. 150 years have passed since the first partition and 200 years since the first Russian intervention (the «Silent» Sejm of 1717), and the nobility-nation did not stop striving for independence until it finally achieved independence²⁸.

Conclusions. The view of the issue of the peasantry in interwar Poland by Franciszek Bujak, a supporter of democracy and social equality, was distinguished by its integrity and depth of understanding. The researcher considered the peasantry not only the economic, but also the spiritual basis of the state. His attention was drawn to the issue of relations between the agrarian state, which was then the Second Polish Republic, and its own most numerous social group – the peasants. F. Bujak presented quite balanced assessments of the real state of this is-

sue, the solution of which he saw in the establishment of national solidarity between different social strata. For this, he considered the need for state regulation and the presence of socially significant laws to be justified. F. Bujak paid considerable attention to the issue of totalitarianism, in particular the possibilities and features of its introduction in the young Polish state. He also analysed the threats that such an evolution of the political system could cause to the peasantry. F. Bujak considered the relations between the state and the peasants in historical retrospect as a confrontation between the peasants and the nobility. In this context, he considered overcoming mutual, historically determined prejudices to be one of the urgent tasks. One of the main ways of this was to be the effective participation of the state in raising the educational and cultural level of the peasantry.

28 Bujak F. Z jednej gliny jesteśmy. *Wieś i Państwo*. 1938. N4. S. 268–269.

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