

A fascist sympathiser appointed head of the Wrocław branch of the Institute of National Remembrance

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THERE IS NO FREEDOM WITHOUT SOLIDARITY

Tomasz Greniuch, a former member of the far-right National Radical Camp known for his fascist sympathies, has been appointed as the new head of the Institute of National Remembrance in Wrocław- our sources tell us.

Two independent sources at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) have confirmed that the historian, Tomasz Greniuch, will preside over one of the Institute's regional branches starting early February. –There's no doubt about it. Starting next week, Mr. Greniuch will be the new head of the Institute's branch in Wrocław – one of our sources tells us.

To confirm the information, on Monday morning, we've reached out to Mr. Greniuch himself. We haven't received an answer yet.

At the moment, Tomasz Greniuch is still the head of the delegation of IPN in Opole. When he assumed the position in November 2019, the Institute's employees and local journalists didn't hide their astonishment. The historian's strong ideological leanings were a deciding factor.

Although Mr. Greniuch is a history graduate of the University of Opole holding a PhD from the Catholic University of Lublin (his dissertation was about the controversial "doomed soldiers", the NSZ "Bartek" unit, more specifically), he is also a former member and long-time activist of the far-right National Radical Camp (ONR).

A radical firebrand and would-be arsonist

In the early 2000s, Mr. Greniuch was the leader and spokesman of ONR's local chapter in Opole. Initially, he worked under the pseudonym "Tomasz Piasecki" – adopting the surname of Bolesław Piasecki, leader of the pre-war fascist organization ONR-Falanga. He co-organized nationalistic demonstrations and was supposed to be one of the initiators of the Independence March in Warsaw.

In 2012, he organized a nationalist march in Opole, whose members picketed the local office of the Democratic Left Alliance party, and holding a banner which said "you don't talk with communists, you shoot at them", demanded that the party be abolished. On his Facebook page, Mr. Greniuch wrote that he will gladly join the march and bring a canister of gasoline and some matches himself. He also asked whether someone would bring the party's flag so that they could burn it. - "Alternatively, one of their party members would do just as well " - he added.

Local media reported that the "March on Myślenice" was also his idea. It was ONR's way of commemorating Adam Doboszyński, whose militia took control of Myślenice in 1936 and terrorized Jewish merchants out of the local market.

As the ONR's spokesman, on his blog, Mr. Greniuch referred to Adam Doboszyński as "a forgotten hero". The page can still be found online (although deleted, it has been archived and can be accessed through webarchive.com). On his website, he shared photos from the 2007 "March on Myślenice" showing several far-right nationalists gathered in the town square, some of them raising their hands in a Nazi salute.

"ONR's slogans are criticized because of >>political correctness<<. This is what >>liberal democratic standards<< dictate to do. ONR's slogans go beyond these narrow standards, expressing the will of many Poles who are afraid to voice their opinions out loud" - "Piasecki" or Greniuch, wrote in one of his blog entries citing excerpts from ONR's Training Manual.

In the same entry, he also defended some of the nationalist slogans, including "all Poland should be white".

- "The color white is a universal symbol of counter-revolution (...) But the slogan also has a different, much more common and simple meaning. It means the ethnic supremacy of white people in Poland, which is obvious given the fact that Poles belong to the Indo-European family, which is white" - Mr. Greniuch wrote.

The Roman salute

His nationalist activism didn't go unnoticed by the anti-racist „Never Again” association. In its "Brown Book", a registry of neo-fascist and far-right incidents, the organization noted, for instance, that in 2006 Mr. Greniuch posted pictures showing ONR members with their hands stretched out in a Nazi salute. The photos were taken during one of the organization's meetings at the Opole University Academic Club. Local media reported on the incident, students who participated in it were threatened with expulsion, and the police launched an investigation.

- It was just a regular Christmas-time meeting, and I was the only person in the club who made the gesture," Mr. Greniuch said. – The salute is used by nationalists all over the world. Why should I be responsible for the fact that Hitler appropriated it? Already the ancient Romans used it.

The former ONR spokesman also downplayed the fact that his colleagues used the Nazi salute during a ceremony on St. Anne Mountain. In a local newspaper, he admitted that the gesture "was a mistake," but he again defended the gesture, saying that in the nationalist circles "it is still considered to be a Roman salute that has purely national roots." He added that after World War II most people associated the salute with Nazism. - That's why we no longer perform the gesture in public. And if we ever return to St. Anne's Mountain, it will only be with a bouquet" - Mr. Greniuch said.

In his book "The Way of the Nationalist" published in 2013, he used similar rhetoric to defend the so-called "Roman salute". There, he also wrote that "nationalism is the guardian of Christian tradition and the sole defender of God's natural law". He quoted figures such as Adam Doboszyński or Leon Degrelle, an SS officer of Belgian origin. The book has been reviewed by Przemysław Witkowski, a writer and scholar interested in political extremism.

President Duda awarded him with a medal

The 38-year-old Tomasz Greniuch has never made a secret of his views or passion for history. In January 2018, President Andrzej Duda awarded him with the Bronze Cross of Merit.

When he took the position as head of IPN in Opole less than a year later, in an official statement, the Institute emphasized that Tomasz Greniuch became "known as a popularizer of history of the underground independence movement after 1944. His research interests focus on the National Armed Forces fighting under the command of Captain Henryk Flame <>, a large part of whom were murdered near Stary Grodków in September of 1946."

Later, the Institute also told the TVN news portal that while considering the candidates it was primarily concerned with qualifications and professional experience, and that "discrimination based on political views would have been a violation of the Labour Law".

Tomasz Greniuch himself told TVN that someone had clearly appreciated his work - he is the author of many books and has given many lectures on history. After receiving the nomination for his post in Opole, he assured a journalist from Onet.pl that "his views and his scientific work are two different things".

<https://wyborcza.pl/7,173236,26761304,a-fascist-sympathiser-appointed-head-of-the-wroclaw-branch-of.html>