

Elżbieta Słabińska (*Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Kielce*)

ORCID: 0000-0003-0854-6756
elzbieta.slabinska@ujk.edu.pl

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES BY LABOR OFFICES UNDER THE "AZ" PROGRAM IN YEARS 1947-1950

Abstract: The paper deals with mechanisms used for reducing unemployment among women in Poland after the World War II, the so-called "women productivisation." I discussed women's attitude to employment and the state's standpoint as far as the problem of women's unemployment is concerned, and analyzed women's unemployment figures in the introductory part. Employment policy in the early days of the Polish People's Republic was a combination of many factors, among which the most important were ideology, pre-war tradition, and war-related experiences. Women found employment in the industry since the beginning of industrialization of the Polish lands in 19th century. In the interwar period and the early days of the Polish People's Republic, employment increased mainly out of economic reasons (necessity to support family and oneself). It was in keeping with the Marxist ideology in place after the World War II. The "new woman" was to be free from capitalist exploitation and on par with a man in terms of professional career. The role model of the woman was in particular a female-worker employed in industry. After the war, in 1940s, the number of women registered at labor offices was rising. According to labor offices' figures, the number of job offers for women was insufficient or these were unattractive. Hence, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej) conceived the idea of developing short-term training for women and employing them in the cottage industry - action "AZ". It lasted from 1947 to 1950; it was evolved due to changing regulations. Undoubtedly, the action "AZ" contributed to the development of "female" cooperatives, but with time it was considered as ineffective and its scope was limited. My fundamental goal was to discuss the 'AZ' program, including its course, scope, and scale, as well as its evaluation. The subject matter in question has not been discussed in detail to date but only briefly addressed in the literature listed below.

Keywords: unemployment, labour offices, professional activation of women

doi: 10.2478/sho-2020-0009

INTRODUCTION

As claimed by Małgorzata Fidelis, "(...) after 1945, (...) the state's policy in the areas of employment and gender parity constantly fluctuated" [Fidelis M. 2010: 18]. It was a combination of many factors, among which the most important were ideology, pre-war tradition, and war-related experiences. It was also influenced by the trend observed in economically developed countries [Kurzynowski A. 1979: 8].

The idea of parity in the professional area originates from concepts by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. According to their beliefs, the "new woman" was to be "free from capitalist exploitation, and find fulfillment and self-actualization in socialist society and professional career" [Fidelis M 2010: 40]. They shared the idea of gender parity, but the role model of a woman was in particular a female-worker employed in industry. In Poland, the concepts had taken shape in socialist and communist parties' programmes as early as before the World War II [Fidelis M. 2010: 40]. Since 1919, when the women policy division was established in the socialist party, its members supported women employment, even though perceived women as predisposed to take care of family and bring up children. They also demanded that employed women protection was legally sanctioned. The programme assumptions were still valid after the war. In contrast to the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), being a "relatively new party", had to establish their women policy division from scratch and define the gender-related approach. In fact, the divisions, formally established in both the parties in 1946, were undoubtedly very active in the area of women's employment support in the political and professional spheres [Fidelis M. 2010: 58-9, 61].

Gender parity in the professional area was a kind of dilemma for the postwar government. They did not have a clear vision of how to make gender parity happen in communism. They also did not want to adopt the entire Soviet model but make use of the Polish socialist tradition from the interwar period. The tradition, as mentioned above, highlighted the necessity for women employment based on gender parity, taking also family responsibilities into account [Fidelis M. 2010: 24-5]. As claimed by Małgorzata Fidelis, the so-called women's employment support (or women productivisation) was "an attempt to combine the prewar tradition which highlighted the role of a woman at home with the postwar, revolutionary promise of equality" [Fidelis M. 2010: 38]. Women were not

passive 'objects' of state and party policies. Engagement in political life opened up the possibility to influence it.

It is worth to list women's motives of going to work in the postwar Poland; these originate from the past. Women were being employed in industry since the beginning of industrialization of the Polish lands in 19th century. It was incompatible with the traditional family model promoted by the Catholic Church. A woman was responsible for bringing up children in the spirit of patriotism and the Catholic faith, while a man for supporting family. However, by that time, the Church had already accepted the fact that women often had to work to support family [Żarnowska A. 1992: 161; Żarnowska A 2000: 42-4]. Censuses from 1921 and 1931 show a significant increase (in absolute figures) in women employment in non-agricultural branches of economy. The biggest one was observed in industry, double one in commerce and public service, and half one in domestic service [Żarnowski J. 2000: 122]. In the war and occupation period, women took on many new roles previously performed by men. They not only supported families on their own due to absence of male breadwinners, but also participated and died in military operations. Even when husbands and fathers returned from war, an economic situation forced both men and women to work in many cases. Finding a source of income was a necessity for widows and orphans, as well as women waiting for husband's, father's, or sons' return (when they came back from front lines, forced labor, extermination camps) [Fidelis M. 2010: 39, 42, 51-2, 55; Jarska N. 2015: 29-30, 38]. Dariusz Jarosz's claim that "increased pressure of women on the job market was largely the result of demographic aftermaths of the war" is absolutely correct [Jarosz D. 2000a: 219; 2000b: 120]. As Barbara Klich-Kluczevska writes, losing the loved ones and war separations resulted in "a forced, learned self-reliance" [Klich-Kluczevska B. 2011: 96]. After the war, the Church efforts were channeled into finding their own place in a new, postwar configuration of powers. Even though the Catholic press still promoted the traditional roles of women, the Church did not take a clear stance on women employment or gender parity in the mid-1940s [Fidelis M. 2010: 47-8]. In case of young women, especially those of traditional rural origin, professional activity involved 'finding a space of autonomy' in private and public spheres [Fidelis M. 2010: 20].

At the beginning of the Polish People's Republic the problem was high unemployment. There were a few legal instruments regulating this domain. Without getting into too much detail, I will focus on the two most

important ones [Słabińska E. 2019: 100-2; Grata P. 2018: 214]. According to the Ordinance dated 24th of September 1945 [Dz.U. 1945 nr 41 poz. 231], the unemployed who looked for a job were required to register at a labor office. The Decree on Registration and Obligation to Work dated 8th of January 1946 [Dz.U. 1946 nr 3 poz. 24] explicitly cleared the way for forced employment, and introduced the obligation to register for Polish citizens and people residing in Poland without citizenship of a different country in the following groups: men aged 18 to 55 and women aged 18 to 45. The decree granted labor offices the right to call the citizens who were registered for less than 2 years to work in all sectors and types of work. From the legal perspective, employment relationship based on a call is less profitable than an ordinary employment contract. This is because a call is an unilateral declaration of a calling body (a labor office in this case) which takes the action instead of an employing entity (an employer represented by a site manager). A called person is a passive participant of the process [*Czym jest powołanie...*].

Labour offices were formed with the Decree dated 2nd of August 1945 [Dz.U. 1945 nr 30 poz. 182]. The Ordinance dated 29th of April 1946 [Dz.U. 1946 nr 22 poz. 144] established the entire network of labor bodies which included labor offices, their branches, and substitute bodies. There were 14 labor offices located in the capitals of the Polish provinces (excluding the Kielce Province where the labor office was located in Radom). There were 48 branches with jurisdiction extending over towns, or towns with adjacent districts, and counties. The substitute bodies were located in 300 places far from the locations of the offices and the branches [Taleyko W. 1946: 27]. Ordinances from 1946, 1948, and 1949 introduced changes to the territorial alignment of the labor offices. Later on those were repealed with the Ordinance dated 22nd of November 1949 [Dz.U. 1946 nr 22 poz. 144]. The labor offices and their branches were replaced with province and county labor offices. There were 14 province labor offices which were located in all the capitals of the Polish provinces. Their jurisdiction extended over a given province (excluding the labor offices in Katowice and Cracow). There were 69 county labor offices which were under the province labor offices' authority. Their jurisdiction extended over a given county (which was not the case for county labor offices in Warsaw). The labor offices had the exclusive right to offer: job agency, job-market clearing. They also dealt with: career counseling, issuing certificates for employed and job-seeking citizens to enable them apply for concessions and use legally available rights [Romański S. 1948: 22].

Table 1. Labour offices' activity in 1946

Profession	Unemployed persons registered with labor offices		Vacancies reported by employers to labor offices		Unemployed persons employed through labor offices	
	men	women	men	women	men	women
skilled workers	249 225	52 943	219 294	47 413	179 114	42 898
unskilled workers	204 675	166 402	228 489	101 041	178 191	94 642
white-collar workers	54 646	46 091	41 296	34 656	36 437	5 062
youth	45 585	27 888	30 114	11 462	28 205	11 561
all together	554 331	314 323	515 288	216 292	399 858	161 306
	868 654		732 580		567 164	
demobilized war invalids	3 769				2 365	
	25 472				19 831	

Source: AAN, MPiOS [576: 16].

The first complete unemployment figures for the Polish People's Republic are available for year 1946. That year about 868,600 people registered in labor offices. Women constituted 36.2% of the total. They were a numerous group among unskilled workers, i.e. 44.8% (see Table 1). The percentage can be even greater if the group of unskilled juvenile women is taken into account.

Figures concerning people registered at labor offices do not reflect the level of unemployment. As noted by Natalia Jarska, "lack of trust in labor offices and effectiveness of their job agency discouraged people from registering" [Jarska N. 2015: 35]. Women complained about bureaucracy, crowded rooms, inadequate service, scarcity of job offers designed for women, patronage and bribery in the course of assigning job positions [AAN, KC PZPR, 237/XV-31: 66-7, 70-1; Zaremba M. 2012: 242].

Difficulties in finding a job were not experienced everywhere in the country. In 1945, the most difficult situation was in the central, northeastern, and southern Poland; on the other hand, the Upper and Lower Silesia, and Pomerania regions were lacking manpower [Zaremba M. 2012: 243]. At the same time, men who reported to labor offices were offered positions undoubtedly more often. There were more offers for them than women.

Table 2. Women employment through labor offices from 1946 to 1948 (in thousands)

Unemployed women	1946*	1947	1948
registered	314.3	365.7	535.3
vacancies were reported	223.3	279.7	399.2
accepted for work	187.4	236.9	335.8
the percentage of employment in relation to the registered ones	59.6	64.8	62.7
there are vacancies	35.9	42.8	63.4

*Statistical data for year 1946 in Tables 1 and 2 are inconsistent, even though they originate from the same single source.

Source: AAN, MPiOS [576: 12].

Also employers submitting job offers often specified candidate's gender [Jarska N. 2015: 36].

The number of registered women rose from 314,300 to 535,300 in years 1946-1948. Less than 36% of them found a job through labor offices (see Table 2). According to Natalia Jarska, "postwar unemployment in Poland was 'gender-specific' because women not only constituted the majority of the unemployed, but also were stereotypically perceived as worse and unqualified workers" [Jarska N. 2015: 39]. Lack of qualifications was commonly considered the cause of high unemployment among women. As late as in 1948, the press informed that 95% of women who reported to labor offices did not have any professional qualifications [*Szkolenie kobiet* 1948: 3]. The above opinion is not to be regarded as completely true. Many men were also unqualified, yet it did not negatively impact their employability. To make the matters worse, qualified women had problems with finding employment, too [AAN, KC PZPR, 237/XV-31: 136; Zaremba M. 2012: 241]. Another cause of high unemployment among women was their lack of mobility. Women agreed to be hired in nearby plants [APK, PWRNK, 17: 32].

GOALS AND SCHEDULE OF THE "AZ" PROGRAM

Employment among women was a serious problem which needed solving with the use of appropriate social policy tools. The program of eliminating unemployment among women came to life in 1947. On 22nd of February, at the convention of the women policy division of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party (KC PPR), a lecture on women

'productivisation' was held. It outlined women's situation on the labor market and ways of combating unemployment. The project discussed in the lecture aimed to train and employ women in a planned fashion [AAN, KC PPR, 295/XVI-2: 37-9, 41-3].

The so-called program of making unemployed women become economically independent, 'AZ' in short, was conducted from 1947 to 1950. It was aimed at women who registered at labor offices but the offices did not have any job offers available for them. The program involved vocational training for women and establishing producers' and services' cooperatives in locations with high concentration of unemployed women [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 2]. The ministry entrusted the program with the Center for Manufacturing Cooperative (Centrala Gospodarczej Spółdzielni Pracy Wytwórczej) at the beginning, and the Center for People's and Art Industries (Centrala Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego) and the Cooperatives' Association (Związek Spółdzielni Pracy) later on. The provisions regarding cooperation were defined in contracts between the ministry and the above mentioned organizations.

Cooperation between the ministry and the Center for Manufacturing Cooperative was based on the contract dated 3rd of September 1947 [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 9], which was later amended with the contract dated 1st of October 1949 [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 14-6]. The center was entrusted with "establishing workers' cooperatives and developing the existing cooperatives for the productivisation of the unemployed, and especially job-seeking women" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 14] with the use of funds provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 15-6].

The development of cooperatives' network for unemployed women was to be carried out in a planned fashion. The center prepared a detailed ministry-approved annual plan with data on locations of new plants, stock base, employment volume, costs, etc. on the basis of applications submitted by branches of the Women's League (Liga Kobiet) and labor offices. Labor offices, local branches of the Women's League, and the Trade Unions' Board (Rada Związków Zawodowych) selected women for cooperatives. Next the women were trained in a given profession or a given theoretical field by the Women's League [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 2-3].

The courses' duration and quality, as well as recruitment rules were diversified. There were both elementary courses focusing on housekeeping and ones offering training on professions which were considered 'masculine' in the Second Polish Republic. Below there are examples of courses organized by the Warsaw branch of the Women's League in 1948

in the training center located at 30-32 Lubelska Street. On 1st of October, a housekeeping course for women began. Trainees were divided into 3 groups. The first one learned about keeping a household tidy, the second about preparing menus for larger groups of guests, and the third one about being in charge of a household [*Kursy dla...* 1948: 9]. The same day a weaving course started, too. The curriculum covered classes on weaving materials for clothes, kilims, bedspreads, etc. [*Kursy dla...* 1948: 9]. On 20th of September, a course on typing and stenography began [*Kursy dla...* 1948: 9]. Other courses from the same year were devoted to straw work, wickerwork, watchmaking, toy making, and tailoring [*Szkolenie kobiet* 1948: 3]. It was a large-scale initiative by the Women's League. The data are incomplete but, for example, in the first half of 1948, there were 144 courses and 272 learning groups which were completed by more than 5,000 women [*Szkolenie kobiet* 1948: 3]. The students were incentivized to participate through meals and remuneration [*Kursy dla...* 1948: 9]. Trained women were helped in setting up their own workshop or, which produced better results, in organizing themselves into cooperatives.

At the end of 1949, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy withdrew from courses organized by the Women's League and stopped the cooperation with the Center for Manufacturing Cooperative. Low effectiveness was the reason: the courses did not prepare women for practical professional activity. The number of garment-producing cooperatives increased rapidly, whereas growth in other industries was inadequate. The ministry also modified financing rules of the "AZ" program. On 3rd of November 1949, the contract for operating the program was concluded with the Center for People's and Art Industries. The cooperation ceased in 1950 due to divergent views. The center was interested in promoting outwork in the rural areas, which was incompatible with the "AZ" program goals.

Cooperation between the ministry and the Cooperatives' Association, based on the contract dated 14th of July 1950, produced better results [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 18-21]. The contract imposed the obligation on the association "to train job-seeking women and next employ them at new or existing cooperatives" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 18] according to a plan submitted by the ministry. The plan involved training 7,360 women in specific country regions as well as branches of production and services, and next providing them with employment in cooperatives. Training recruitment was carried out by the Employment Divisions (Oddziały Zatrudnienia) attached to the Labor and Social Welfare Departments (Wydziały Pracy i Pomocy Społecznej) at the Presidiums of Province National Councils

(Prezydium Wojewódzkich Rad Narodowych). The training took the shape of workshops and lasted for 2-3 months. The Cooperatives' Association was responsible for the organization of cooperatives and their development, which was archived through the agency of industry associations. The program was financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 17]. The statistical data below are the proof of the large-scale nature of the "AZ" program.

Table 3. The listing of the cooperatives' industries available to "AZ" program participants in years 1947-1950

No	Industry	Number of cooperatives 'AZ'	Employment under contract	Actual employment
1	confectionery industry	127	17 447	18 732
2	art industry	2	115	221
3	service industry	3	208	233
4	textile industry	10	1 073	942
5	knitting industry	6	543	754
6	carpentry industry	3	182	260
7	catering industry	3	180	in liquidation
8	herbal industry	2	345	176
9	wood industry	2	910	273
10	wicker industry	2	230	295
11	chemical industry	2	34	34
12	Christmas decorations industry	5	415	405
13	bookbinding industry	1	23	23
14	hardware trade	5	198	218
15	hat making	2	202	204
16	brush industry	4	271	220
17	making slippers	1	100	93
18	industry leather	23	2 170	1 718
19	industry paper	1	30	41
20	production of quilts	1	100	127
21	entertainment industry	1	70	in liquidation
all together		206	24 846	24 969

Source: AAN, MPiOS [561: 76].

From 1947 to 1950, 206 cooperatives covering 21 industries were established; these employed 24,969 women. The greatest number of them, 127, were related to the garment industry (61.6% of the total), the leather industry (11.2%), and the textile industry (4.8%). Only isolated cooperatives were related to other industries. The garment-manufacturing cooperatives were being established in years 1947-1949, and there are a few factors explaining their great number. They did not require huge non-cash and cash outlays; the manufacturing processes made use of textile industry waste, and machines were inexpensive. Additionally, women could be rapidly trained [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 4].

The leading industry branch employed 3/4 women participating in the 'AZ' program, and if we take the two other industries mentioned above, it totaled 85.7%. It is worth to note that cooperatives employed much more women than planned and next stated in contracts between the ministry and cooperatives' centers. On average, there were 147.5 female employees per each garment-producing cooperative (Table 3). In 1950, no more garment-producing cooperatives were created due to their excessive number in the 'AZ' program. The Cooperatives' Association took care of establishing services' cooperatives and cooperatives in scarce industries [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 4].

Because local areas with high unemployment rate among women had been eliminated, at the end of 1949, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy limited the "AZ" program to places where it was impossible to provide employment in industry. By means of the Order dated 28th of February 1950 on admission of women to the "AZ" - based cooperatives, the Employment Divisions attached to the Labor and Social Welfare Departments at the Presidiums of Province National Councils were ordered to admit women who met one of the following requirements: were more than 35 years old, could not work in industry due to poor health, could not be employed as there was no local industry, could not relocate due to difficult family situation, were widows of war-killed soldiers. As a result, the ministry approved cooperatives' organization plan for the 3rd quarter of 1950 only; it involved employing 3,986 women instead of initially planned 12,000 ones by the Cooperatives' Association [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 4].

Decision to terminate the 'AZ' program was taking shape in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. the National Committee for Economic Planning (Państwowa Komisja Planowania Gospodarczego) approved of the plan at the conference on 19th of September 1950; they justified it on the grounds that "this year local areas with high unemployment rate

Table 4. Quantitative listing of cooperatives and budgets according to the provinces in years 1947-1950

No	Provinces	Number of cooperatives	Employment		Credits	
			under contract	actual	returnable	non-returnable
1	Białystok	7	606	616	25 984 739	1 718 000
2	Bydgoszcz	7	1 054	1 173	40 740 802	3 107 425
3	Gdańsk	14	1 338	1 683	54 340 646	5 489 640
4	Katowice	30	3 747	4 504	162 088 612	14 376 606
5	Kielce	9	1 148	1 107	50 735 903	6 254 000
6	Kraków	16	2 186	1 400	74 198 296	5 483 640
7	Lublin	6	770	847	26 140 074	1 630 000
8	Łódź	18	2 134	2 336	71 782 464	5 462 840
9	Olsztyn	4	520	587	1 849 838	1 445 000
10	Poznań	21	2 169	2 388	77 937 528	7 081 740
11	Rzeszów	4	470	552	17 749 680	2 049 200
12	Szczecin	10	1 060	1 078	40 535 599	5 663 848
13	Warszawa	37	5 088	3 706	195 043 761	20 147 743
14	Wrocław	23	2 556	2 987	87 073 906	7 853 133
all together		206	24 846	24 969	942 843 847	87 662 815
					1 030 506 662	

Source: AAN, MPiOS [561: 77].

among women have been eliminated and there is a steadily increasing demand for female workforce" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 5].

On the 13th of November 1950, the ministry organized a conference which hosted representatives of the ministry, the Ministry of Finance, the National Committee for Economic Planning, Bank Rzemiosła i Handlu (the Bank of Craft and Commerce), the Cooperatives' Association, and the Board of the Women's League; during the conference, the ministry put forward a motion to terminate the "AZ" program [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 63]. According to ministry's explanations, the program was continued in years 1947-1949 due to high unemployment rate among women. In 1950, its continuation became not only unreasonable, but also detrimental. There was an excess of the "AZ"-based cooperatives. Initially "(...) AZ cooperatives were established to offer employment to job-seeking women, and

now they reach out to the ministry to provide them with workforce to complete a production plan" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 58-9]. "At the moment, the state is capable of offering employment to all the job-seeking women. Additionally, for a couple of months, the employment service have been intensively recruiting women to reveal and implement female workforce in the area of manufacturing" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 59].

The ministry's motion was accepted. The "A" program was to terminate on 1st of January 1951 [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 60]. The control over all the cooperatives was to be handed over to the Board of the Cooperatives' Association who were obliged to account for all the state's lines of credit which had been allotted for the program. The money was to be transferred into the Bank of Craft and Commerce [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 59].

As of 25th of October 1950, the ministry ended training women in the 'AZ' program, suggesting that the Employment Divisions attached to the Labor and Social Welfare Departments at the Presidiums of Province National Councils refer to-be-trained women to local factories [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 4]. They were to substitute for men in the positions which do not require physical strength. Industry-employed women often received a short vocational training [APK, PWRNK, 38: 323].

FINANCING

According to the Resolution dated 10th of October 1947 [AAN, MPiOS, 560: 3] by the Komitet Ekonomiczny Rady Ministrów (the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers), the "program of productivization of the unemployed, especially women, through establishing cooperatives and labor teams" was financed from contributions collected on the basis of the Act on Protection against Unemployment dated 10th of July 1924 and contributions for protecting white-collar workers against unemployment which were collected based on the Ordinance on White-Collar Workers' Protection dated 24th of November 1927. The money were being kept in the Labor Fund (Fundusz Pracy) bank account. The Minister of Labor and Social Policy managed the money, allocating it according to financial plans submitted to the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers [AAN, MPiOS, 560: 3]. The allocation was carried out via a chosen bank.

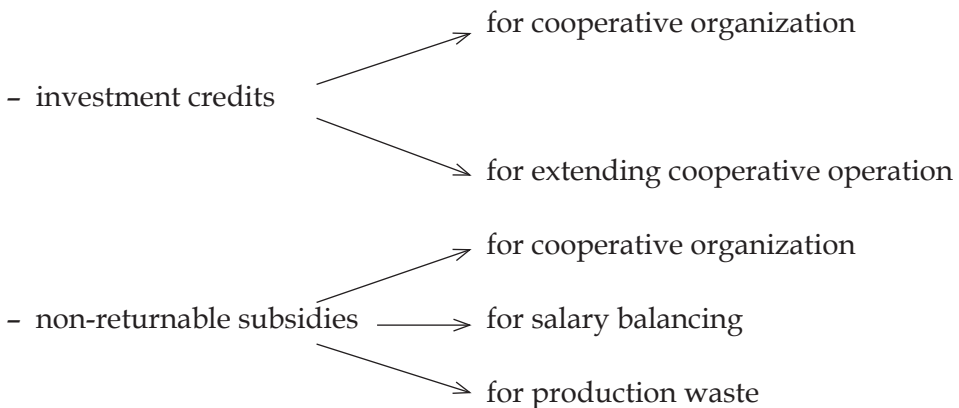
The Center for Manufacturing Cooperative received the funds (based on the contract dated 1st of October 1949) which it next allocated to in-

dividual cooperatives as subventions and interest-free credits for administrative organization-related expenses, developing or transforming cooperatives, current funding, costs of searching for and adapting rooms/buildings, buying appropriate number of machines, tools, and raw materials, and labor costs. Money which the center did not spend were later transferred into the Labor Fund account [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 14-6].

For example, based on the contract between the ministry and the Cooperatives' Association dated 14th of July 1950, 21,500 zlotys was allocated per person in a two-month training and 32,000 zlotys in case of a three-month one. The money went to the following expenses:

- a scholarship for a trained woman (15,000 zlotys/quarter) and insurance fees at 6% of the scholarship,
- remuneration for training-delivering personnel,
- study aids,
- raw material wasted during training.

The Cooperatives' Association was responsible for the organization of cooperatives and their development, which was achieved through the agency of industry associations. The association received money for the "AZ" program from the ministry via the Bank of Craft and Commerce. There were different forms of cooperative financing sources:



The investment credits for cooperative organization covered expenses for technical equipment at workshops, warehouses, offices, and personnel facilities. The credits were accounted for on the basis of the true number of employed women; a cooperative received about 60,000 zlotys for each employed person. Each credit was interest-free and returnable within 5 years' term. Rules of granting and repaying the investment credits for extend-

ing cooperative operation were defined in plans approved by the ministry [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 42-5].

The subsidies for cooperative organization corresponded to the expenses incurred within 3 months from establishing a cooperative. The subsidies were accounted for on the basis of the true number of employed women; a cooperative received about 7,000 zlotys for each employed person. The subsidies for salary balancing were designed for these cooperatives whose female workers did not earn a minimum wage, i.e. 8,500 zlotys a month. They served the purpose of supplementing a salary for the duration of 3 months from establishing a cooperative. The subsidies for production waste covered waste in new cooperatives in the period of 3 months from their establishment, i.e. resulting from damaging raw materials by yet low qualified workers. They amounted to 1,000 zlotys a person.

The association allocated money to industry associations and cooperatives. They were also responsible for targeted and purpose-specific consumption of the credits and subsidies. The association returned unconsumed credits and subsidies to the Labor Fund account [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 18-21].

Table 5. Money allocated to the "AZ" program in years 1947-1950

Year	To Centrala Gospodarcza Spółdzielni Pracy Wytwórczej	To Bank of Craft and Commerce
1947	69 000 679	
1948	366 074 545	
1949	635 711 587	
1950	50 000 000	332 767 110
all together	1 120 786 811	332 767 110
	1 453 553 921	

Source: AAN, MPiOS [561: 78].

In years 1947-1950, 1,453,553,921 zlotys was donated for the purposes of women's employment support. As much as 77.1% of the amount was allocated to the Center for Manufacturing Cooperative because it was responsible for the "AZ" program for a long time. The financing level rose for the first three years with over fivefold increase in 1948 compared to the previous year. In 1950, a significant decrease of funds available to the cent-

er was observed due to handing the program over to the Cooperatives' Association and later on ending it (see Table 5).

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy committed to finance material expenses related to establishing new and developing existing cooperatives as planned for year 1950 through the Bank of Craft and Commerce by 1st of December 1950. As of 31st of December 1950, all the payments for the "AZ" program ceased. Any debts were to be settled by the Cooperatives' Association [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 5].

CONCLUSIONS

Despite many institutions' engagement and allocating a lot of money, the 'AZ' program turned out fruitless. Low quality of courses and difficulties in providing all the participants with employment were the biggest problems. Establishing manufacturing cooperatives in different industries, no one took market demand into account. Newly established cooperatives faced facilities-related problems, there were shortages of raw materials and difficulties in selling manufactured goods. The manufacturing activity was unprofitable due to low work output [Jarska N. 2015: 42-3].

The 'AZ' program was a form of social assistance for unemployed women who were registered at labor offices. At a special conference in 1950, the program was summarized in the following way: "The program which was initiated out of social and political, and not economic reasons had to make a loss" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 62]. The program was aborted on the grounds of starting "an intensive recruitment to (...) implement female workforce in the area of manufacturing" [AAN, MPiOS, 561: 59].

The program was of short-term, temporary nature, and aimed to quickly train and employ women in outwork. Its scope was not broad, since only nearly 25,000 women took part in it. It did not positively impact their qualifications nor promotion. As a result, the government promise to ensure gender parity was not fulfilled.

REFERENCES

Archive materials

- AAN, KC PPR, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/XVI-2.
- AAN, KC PZPR, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 237/XV-31.
- AAN, MPiOS, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w latach 1945-1960 [1961-1966], sygn. 560, 561, 576.
- APK, PWRNK, Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach, Prezydium Wojewódzkiej Rady Narodowej w Kielcach w latach [1934] 1950-1973, sygn. 17, 38.

Legal acts

- Dz.U. 1945 nr 30 poz. 182, Dekret z 2 sierpnia 1945 r. o urzędach zatrudnienia.
- Dz.U. 1945 nr 41 poz. 231, Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Opieki Społecznej z 24 września 1945 r. o pośrednictwie pracy i pośrednictwie przy zawieraniu umów o naukę zawodu.
- Dz.U. 1946 nr 22 poz. 144, Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Opieki Społecznej z 29 kwietnia 1946 r. o organizacji urzędów zatrudnienia.
- Dz.U. 1946 nr 3 poz. 24, Dekret z 8 stycznia 1946 r. o rejestracji i o obowiązku pracy.
- Dz.U. 1949 nr 60 poz. 471, Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Opieki Społecznej z 22 listopada 1949 r. w sprawie organizacji urzędów zatrudnienia.

Literature

- Czym jest powołanie?*, <https://www.infor.pl/prawo/praca/umowa-o-prace/286246,Czym-jest-powolanie.html>, accessed 30.09.2020.
- Fidelis M. (2010), *Kobiety, komunizm i industrializacja w powojennej Polsce*, Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal, Warszawa.
- Grata P. (2018), *Czas przełomu. Polska polityka społeczna w latach 1944-1950*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów.
- Jarosz D. (2000a), *Kobiety a praca zawodowa w Polsce w latach 1944-1956 (główne problemy w świetle nowych badań źródłowych)*, [in:] Żarnowska A., Szwarz A. (eds.), *Kobieta i praca. Wiek XIX i XX, Zbiór studiów*, Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa, 217-241.
- Jarosz D. (2000b), *Polacy a stalinizm 1948-1956*, IH PAN, Warszawa.
- Kursy dla bezrobotnych kobiet*, (1948), Repatriant. Ilustrowany Tygodnik Informacyjny, 4(38), 9.
- Jarska N. (2015), *Kobiety z marmuru. Robotnice w Polsce w latach 1945-1960*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej - Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Warszawa.
- Klich-Kluczevska B. (2011), *Kobiety w powojennej Polsce. Paradoksy komunistycznej rzeczywistości*, [in:] Czocher A. (ed.), *Wojna to męska rzecz? Losy kobiet w okupowanym Krakowie w dwunastu ośłonach*, Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, Kraków.
- Kurzynowski A. (1979), *Aktywizacja zawodowa kobiet zamężnych w Polsce Ludowej*, Książka iWiedza, Warszawa.
- Romański S. (1948), *Pośrednictwo pracy w Polsce*, Praca i Opieka Społeczna, 20(1), 18-22.
- Ślabińska E. (2019), *Ewolucja działań publicznych służb zatrudnienia w latach 1918-1939 i 1944-1949. Zarys problematyki*, Optimum Economic Studies, 2(96), 95-109.
- Szkolenie kobiet*, (1948), Repatriant. Ilustrowany Tygodnik Informacyjny, 4(33), 3.
- Taleyko W. (1946), *Urzędy zatrudnienia i ich działalność*, Praca i Opieka Społeczna, 20(1), 27-28.

- Zaremba M. (2012), *Wielka trwoga polska 1944-1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*, Wydawnictwo Znak: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Kraków.
- Żarnowska A. (1992), *Kierunki aktywności zawodowej kobiet w Polsce XX wieku (do 1939 r.)*, [in:] Żarnowska A., Szwarc A. (eds.), *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w. Zbiór studiów*, II(2), Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa, 161-175.
- Żarnowska A. (2000), *Praca zarobkowa kobiet i ich aspiracje zawodowe w środowisku robotniczym i inteligentnym na przestrzeni XIX i XX wieku*, [in:] Żarnowska A., Szwarc A. (eds.), *Kobieta i praca. Wiek XIX i XX, Zbiór studiów*, Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa, 29-52.
- Żarnowski J. (2000), *Praca zawodowa kobiet w Polsce międzywojennej*, [in:] Żarnowska A., Szwarc A. (eds.), *Kobieta i praca. Wiek XIX i XX, Zbiór studiów*, Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa, 119-140.

Elżbieta Słabińska, Professor of Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. Employee of Department the 20th century History at the Institute of History. Scientific interests: social and economic history of Second Polish Republic and Polish People's Republic, industry, labor market.