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The promotion of a political, social and professional model of a woman in Poland by the Polish Workers' Party/Polish United Workers' Party in years 1945 – 1956 based on the example of Lubelskie Voidoveship

Summary

The purpose of this doctoral dissertation has been to analyze the project of away-from-home activation practices aimed at female inhabitants of Lubelszczyzna (the historical region of Lublin) through attempts to change their mentality and the social role they served. The project, realized by national authorities, strived for creating the so-called 'progressive woman' according to the communist model who would be involved in social and political affairs and stay professionally active. The timeframe for this phenomenon falls within the period from the end of World War II until 1956 when the implementation of the concept was terminated due to ongoing de-Stalinization.

After the armed conflict within 1939 – 1945, attempts were made to significantly modify the social structure system in Poland. The existing differences and discrepancies between women and men which would establish the social standard and determine their limitations as to professional career and public activity were to be transformed. Through a political system, communists tried to equalize the genders. At the end of the 1940s, intensive efforts were made to implement the project, resulting in the amplified number of women who entered those areas of professional and social life which used to be reserved for men.

The dissertation has discussed the attempts aimed at creating the new model of a woman and influence of the initiated policy on the life of female inhabitants living in the area between the Vistula and the Bug. The performed analysis covered the diverse approach of women towards the promoted changes, the level of success of such changes and the social and cultural outcomes of the implemented concepts.

After the war, female Polish citizens were encouraged go beyond the well-established areas of functioning in a society attributed to women. The purpose was, on one hand, to accelerate the process of building the so-called socialist social relations and, on the other hand, to provide support in solving the existing economic problems. Women would be

motivated to take part in undertakings in favor of the local community, to participate in political matters and to work in professions that had been reserved only for men.

The propaganda would nurture the widely understood women's emancipation. New roles did not exempt female Poles from performing their duties such as caring for children and the household. The ruling communists expected that women would be able to find balance between all those roles and harmoniously fulfil them, which was an impossible task. The communist project propagated by the central authorities of the Polish Workers' Party/Polish United Workers' Party was in conflict with the model of women well-established in Poland by the Catholic church. It was of particular importance among female inhabitants of rural areas that dominated in the country and in Lubelskie Voivodeship. Moreover, among the masculinized local ruling elites responsible for the implementation of the project of a new woman, one would notice clear aversion towards its successful realization. The revolutionary professional and social change of the role of women was not approved by male members of political parties. As a result, the women living in the analyzed region would massively reject the new functions and duties proposed by the government.

Since 1955, the central communist authorities started to withdraw from the concept of a 'new woman'. They slowly returned to the so-called natural order of things, rejecting the concept of equality. People would remind others on the different aspects of both genders and the natural features of women and men which, to some extent, determined activity in certain areas of everyday life. Women of Lubelszczyzna did not experience any significant and durable changes until the introduction of urbanization processes.