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THE RESEARCH OVER THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GROUP OF TEACHERS IN GDYNIA'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE YEARS 1945–1956¹

INTRODUCTION

After the end of World War II, the Polish administration faced many challenges, the only one of which was to rebuild the school system, with the teaching staff as an indispensable element thereof. However, after 1945, schools started to operate in completely different political and social conditions, which significantly influenced their functioning and the formation of a professional group of teachers. The ideological and socio-economic assumptions of the governing parties after 1945 implied directly and indirectly on the teaching system, as well as on the work of teachers. The way to change the educational reality was also a properly conducted educational policy, the main goal of which to be pursued by educational institutions in the post-war reality of Polish People's Republic was to build a socialist society – the Polish version of *homo sovieticus*.

The detailed principles of the functioning of education in the Polish People's Republic were to be worked out by the Ministry of Education of PKWN, established on July 27th, 1944, and headed by Stanisław Skrzeszewski². On August 1st, 1944, he issued *Wezwanie do nauczycielstwa polskiego (a Call to Polish Teachers)*. It did not specify the principles of functioning of the educational

¹ This article is based on materials from the Master Thesis prepared under supervision of dr hab. Arnold Kłoncewicz, prof. UG.

² The composition of the Management of the PKWN Educational Department was as follows: the manager – Stanisław Skrzeszewski, the deputy manager – Bronisław Biedowicz, the head of the general department – Eustachy Kuruczko, the head of the school reform department – Żanna Kormanowa. The group of the PKWN Ministry of Education during World War II worked in Polish education in the USSR; see: Mauersberg, Walczak, 2005, p. 23.

system in any way, but encouraged teachers to start work as soon as possible and act independently to rebuild their schools (Dz. Urz. Resortu Oświaty 1944, no 1–4). Avoiding formulations concerning the shape of the educational reform was in a way a deliberate action of the Ministry, which wanted to involve the widest possible group of teachers in work to rebuild schools. Thus, the first schools were established *spontaneously*, thanks to the effort and commitment of teachers who undertook to work in very difficult conditions.

The activity of the educational system in the first post-war years was based on the still valid *Jędrzejewicz Act*, which was modified by the new authorities by means of appropriate guidelines, circulars and decrees, which were to give it a character in line with the policy adopted by the Communist authorities.

From the very beginning, the new authorities were striving to *educate young people* in the right direction, in accordance with the communist ideology. However, convincing young people and teachers to the new system was not an easy task. Therefore, organisations associating the school youth and teachers were subjected to full control. One such organization was *Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego* (Polish Scouting Association), which after the war started functioning under the control of the authorities (Dz. Urz. Resortu Oświaty 1944, no. 1–4, items 13–14). There were also other youth organisations in a similar situation, i.e. *Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego*, which was controlled by the authorities after the war (Dz. Urz. of the Ministry of Education 1944, no. 1–4, item 13–14); *Organizacja Młodzieży Towarzystwa Uniwersytetu Robotniczego*, *Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej RP Wici*, *Związek Walki Młodych czy Związek Młodzieży Demokratycznej*. In 1948, the above-mentioned organisations were incorporated into a newly established, centrally controlled and fully subordinated organisation – *Związek Młodzieży Polskiej* (Association of Polish Youth, ZMP) (Mauersberg, Walczak, 2005, p. 117–120).

On January 19th, 1947, the first parliamentary elections after the war took place. As a result of blatant forgery, the election was won by the so-called *Democratic Block*, i.e. the PPR and the parties subordinated to it. The fiction of a government of national unity with the participation of the legal opposition (PSL) ceased to exist³. At that time, persecution of activists of political groups not connected with *the Democratic Bloc* began. For example, teachers associated with *Tajna*

³ Formally multiparty elections were attended by the electoral list of the so-called *Democratic Block*, created by *Polska Partia Robotnicza* (Polish Workers' Party, PPR) and other licensed or satellite parties – *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (Polish Socialist Party, PPS), *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Democratic Alliance, SD) and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Polish People's Party, PSL). *Stronnictwo Pracy* (Labor Party) and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe Nowe Wyzwolenie* (Polish Peasant Party *Nowe Wyzwolenie*, meaning: New Liberation) which started separately, were also subordinated to the PPR. The opposition to the PPR and dependent groups was PSL – the only opposition platform of society tolerated to a limited extent by the communist authorities. As a result of blatant forgery, the election was won by the so-called Democratic Bloc, which allegedly won 80.1% of the votes and thus, 327 seats in the Sejm. Then the persecution of the opposition activists began. The newly elected Sejm appointed Bolesław Bierut as President, while Józef Cyrankiewicz became Prime Minister; see: Friszke, 2003, p. 127–129, 152–161.

Organizacja Nauczycielska (Secret Teaching Organization) were removed from schools (Szuba, 2002, p. 127–129).

At the beginning of 1948, the Central Committee of the PPR started to develop a new education reform. Its main author was Władysław Bieńkowski. Unlike in 1945, the draft of this reform was developed at the initiative of the party rather than the ministerial authorities, who opted for maintaining the postulates of the Łódź Assembly (Jakubowski, 1975, p. 250). The new reform was to change the structure of education by introducing an 11-year period of teaching in general education schools. Teaching at the first level was to last seven years, while at secondary school – four years. The reform also contributed to renaming *the common school* as *the primary school*. A new type of school was also introduced – a uniform general school of primary and secondary education (classes 1–11) (Dz. Urz. MO 1948, no. 5, item 86). This structure survived until 1961, when it was replaced with a new reform.

In December 1948, PPR and PPS were united into *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (the Polish United Workers' Party – PZPR). With the establishment of the system, the politicization, secularization and *sovietization* of schools began (Krynska, Mauersberg, 2003, p. 68–75). The aim of education was to activate young builders of socialism, as Bolesław Bierut announced during his speech at the United Congress of PPR and PPS: *The period of wandering astray of rotten ideological liberalism in the field of pedagogy is coming to an end. Since then, the only philosophical and methodological basis of the new education is Marxism-Leninism* (Szuba, 2002, p. 164).

In the years 1950–1955, schools faced a new task – the implementation of a 6-year plan, which assumed increasing the number of graduates from 7-year primary schools to three hundred and fifty thousand (i.e. by 61%) and transforming incomplete primary schools into full schools, where 87% of pupils were to study until 1955 (Dz. U. 1950 no. 37, item 344). The new, educated generation was to take an active part in building socialism.

The hope of improving the situation in education came in October 1956. In December 1956, the new Minister of Education, Władysław Bieńkowski⁴, issued an ordinance which made it possible to study religion in secondary and primary schools (Dz. U. MO 1956 no. 16, item 156). However, this did not mean a complete abandonment of secularisation of teaching⁵. The 1956 thaw contributed to some positive changes in education, e.g. the removal of the most blatant

⁴ Władysław Bieńkowski was Minister of Education from November 1956 to October 1959, see: Dąbek, 2020.

⁵ Religion was taught for students whose parents gave their written consent, and already on December 11th, 1956, a circular was published, which allowed schools to be run without religious education if the majority of parents did not wish their children to receive religious education in school. On the other hand, children wishing to attend religion lessons were then to be transferred to another nearby school; see: Dz. U. MO 1956 no. 16, item 157; despite this, during the term of office of Minister Bieńkowski (1956–1959) religion lessons were conducted in schools on a fairly large scale, but already in 1961 they were withdrawn again; see: Dz. U. 1961 no. 32, item 160.

propaganda content from curricula or the weakening of Soviet influence, which in turn made it possible to develop the Polish pedagogical thought (although still limited).

The changes introduced in the school system and the degree of indoctrination of young people and teachers took different forms and were of varying intensity. In the years 1944–1956, there were three sub-periods with different characteristics:

– 1944–1947 – this was a period of building the socialist state and the foundations of the new school system. It was then that the tasks and goals of educational policy were shaped. Indoctrination was not yet extensive. The new authorities tried to preserve the appearances of the democratic system, e.g. by appointing Czesław Wycech, a member of the PSL, as Minister of Education.

– 1947–1948 – the period in which the system *stabilised* (the opposition was crushed, parliamentary elections were held in 1947). It was then that the *ideological offensive* and personal repressions against teachers began.

– 1949–1956 – the period of the apogee of the indoctrination of education (after the establishment of PZPR through the saturation with political content of curricula, textbooks, school readings and the activity of politically oriented youth organisations, i.e. ZMP or ZHP).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GDYNIA'S TEACHERS GROUP OF PRIMARY (GENERAL) SCHOOLS IN THE YEARS 1945-1956

The time of war and occupation had a significant impact on inhibiting the dynamic demographic development of Gdynia from the pre-war period, mainly related to the influx of people taking up employment in the port and developing related industries (Adrianowska, 1990, p. 72–73). As a result of warfare, the occupier's extermination policy and forced displacement, which were carried out on a massive scale in Gdynia, many of its inhabitants did not return home after the war. There was also a small group of teachers remaining in the city. Some of them left Pomerania after the outbreak of the war, seeking refuge in other regions of the country or abroad. Still others – on military service, left their native areas with the moving army or died in battle.

After the end of the war, large-scale migratory movements began. People from different parts of Poland started to come to Gdynia, as well as its pre-war inhabitants returned. Among the group of migrants there were also teachers. Among the teachers working in Gdynia after the war there are three main groups:

– teachers who came from the former Eastern Borderlands (repatriates), mostly born in the big cities of Vilnius or Lviv. They were well educated people with pedagogical background. Among them was the Ładoński couple, Piotr and Maria, who came to Gdynia from Nowogródek (now Belarus) in June 1945. The Ładońskis took up a job at the primary school No. 12 in Witomino district. As Maria Ładońska recalls, *the headmaster of that school was a man without any pedagogical qualifications, he was a tax clerk by profession, so after a few days my husband Piotr*

Ladoński, a long-time pedagogue and knowing his managerial duties as he was in Nowogródek, took up the position of headmaster of school no. 12 (Archiwum Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego Oddziału w Gdyni (ZNPoG), Oryginały i pierwodruki wspomnień nauczycieli, sygn. 1/27a). Among the repatriates from the former Eastern Borderlands was also Jadwiga Linkiel, a graduate of the Queen Hedwig Teachers' Seminar in Vilnius, who started working as a teacher in 1928. After the war she came to Gdynia, where she took up a job in the primary school no. 5 and no. 14 (Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku Oddział w Gdyni (APGoG), Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1330),

– teachers who came to Gdynia from smaller towns in the Gdańsk Province and some neighbouring provinces. These were mostly people from the regions of Kashubia and Kociewie,

– teachers who came from central Poland (e.g. Warsaw Province) and south-eastern Poland (e.g. Rzeszów or Kraków Province),

The professional group of Gdynia's teachers also included people coming from abroad. Among them was Ludwik Szura who came to Gdynia from Chicago, Illinois, USA. In addition, there were six people born in Germany and one born in the coastal city in Russia. These people belong to the group of re-emigrants.

A very small group among teachers in Gdynia included, understandably, people from the so-called Regained Territories. These were people born mainly in the area of today's Lower Silesia Province. Most of them, however, were people who had left the area before World War II. They included Alfons Flis, born in 1907 in Przemków, who took up a job at a school in Gdynia in 1928 and resumed it in 1947 after the war (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1299). Maria Beynowa, the first post-war headmistress of the school no. 1, born in Osy near Wrocław, also came from the Western Lands region. Before arriving in Gdynia, she had worked in the Poznań area and taught secretly in Tomaszów Mazowiecki (ZNPoG, Oryginały i pierwodruki wspomnień nauczycieli, sygn. 1/27a).

Most of the teachers working in Gdynia in the discussed period came to the city after 1945 with the wave of post-war migration. However, the available sources do not allow for a clear exclusion that some of the teachers came to Gdynia even before the end of the warfare or even before 1939. However, this uncertainty concerns only a small group of teachers whose life stories are not fully known.

The resumption of the activity of common schools in Gdynia after the end of warfare would not be possible without the participation of people coming to the city from other regions of the country. Among the teachers employed in common schools there were also native inhabitants of Gdynia, but their percentage share was small (in the discussed period it did not exceed 10%). These were relatively young people, because they were born in the early 1930's, probably children of people who emigrated to Gdynia in the previous decade in search of employment in a young developing city.

Table 1.
Birthplace of teachers employed in primary schools in Gdynia in the years 1945–1956

Place of birth of teachers employed in Gdynia's primary schools in the years 1945–1956	The number of teachers
Wrocław Voivodeship	7
Pomeranian Voivodeship	9
Poznań Voivodeship	5
Łódź Voivodeship	9
Kraków Voivodeship	16
Warszawa and Kielce Voivodeship	14
Rzeszów Voivodeship	13
Białystok Voivodeship	5
Gdańsk Voivodeship	43
Silesian and Opole voivodeships	2
Kielce Voivodeship	3
Olsztyn Voivodeship	5
Poznań Voivodeship	6
Eastern Borderlands	25
Germany	6
Russia	1
USA	1

Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archival materials of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745), Educational Department of the Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22) and materials from Pedagogiczna Biblioteka Wojewódzka in Gdańsk (Eng. the Pedagogical Provincial Library in Gdańsk), Lista nauczycieli szkół gdyńskich 1945, sygn. R541/1.

The settlement of teachers from different regions of Poland in Gdynia was a multi-faceted phenomenon. Some of them came to the city of their own choice. Such a decision was often motivated by the prospect of better housing conditions, faster career advancement, as well as a social or wider access to education for teachers themselves and their children. An additional advantage of living in Gdynia was probably its attractive location at the Baltic sea. Some of the teachers, however, found themselves in a seaside town for reasons beyond their control, such as repatriation from the East or transfer of their spouse⁶. It is likely that some of the people who came to Gdynia decided to leave their home town for political

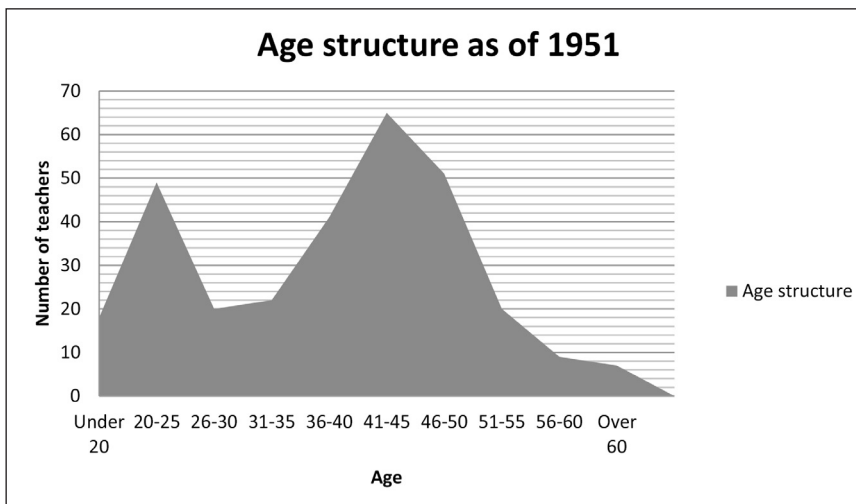
⁶ An example of a family that came to Gdynia after the war as part of a business transfer was the Beyns. In 1945, Artur Beyna – an educator with many years of experience – was ordered to go to Pomerania in order to rebuild the school network in the area. Then, after arriving at the Education Office in Gdańsk, he was delegated to the position of School Inspector in Gdynia, where he started working alone. Artur Beyna was followed by his wife, Maria Beynowa, and her two children. Maria Beynowa, who was also an experienced teacher, took up a job as the headmistress of the primary school no. 1; on the basis of an interview with Jerzy Beyn (son) conducted on 16.07.2019.

reasons. The persecution by the communist authorities of people connected with the London government or the Home Army forced many of them to hide their wartime activities, which seemed to be easier in the new environment.

World War II also influenced the changes in the population structure in terms of age. The graph on the age of teachers in general schools in Gdynia depicts a significant decrease in the number of teachers between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age. The low percentage of people of that age is to a large extent a consequence, not only of World War II but also of World War I. The least numerous age group consisted of teachers born during the demographic decline caused by the war of 1914-1918. In 1939, these people entered adulthood and a significant proportion of them were involved in warfare, and thus, at risk of losing their lives and health, as well as being deprived of a chance to complete their education or take their first job in the profession.

Chart 1.

Age structure of teachers employed in Gdynia's primary schools in 1945–1956, as of 1951



Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745) and Educational Department of the Presidium of the City National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22).

The percentage of young teachers between twenty and twenty-five years of age was different. These were people born in the 1920's, i.e. in the period of the post-war baby boomers, who in the 1940's and early 1950's reached adult age and started their professional career.

The most numerous group among teachers in Gdynia were people born between 1905 and 1910. These were people who were born during the period of the *demographic explosion* caused by an increase in the number of births with

a simultaneous decrease in mortality, which caused an increase in the population on the then Polish territory from 1815 to 1914 by 21 million (Eberhardt, 2014, p. 139). These teachers were mostly graduates of pre-war teacher seminars.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the teaching profession was almost exclusively pursued by men. It was only the advancing industrialisation, which created many attractive jobs for men outside education that contributed to the abandonment of the teaching profession by men who started to take up better paid jobs and were offered promotion opportunities. The multiplication of the number of women employed in education also contributed to the spread of education, which has led to an increase in the number of children attending school and a demand for more posts.

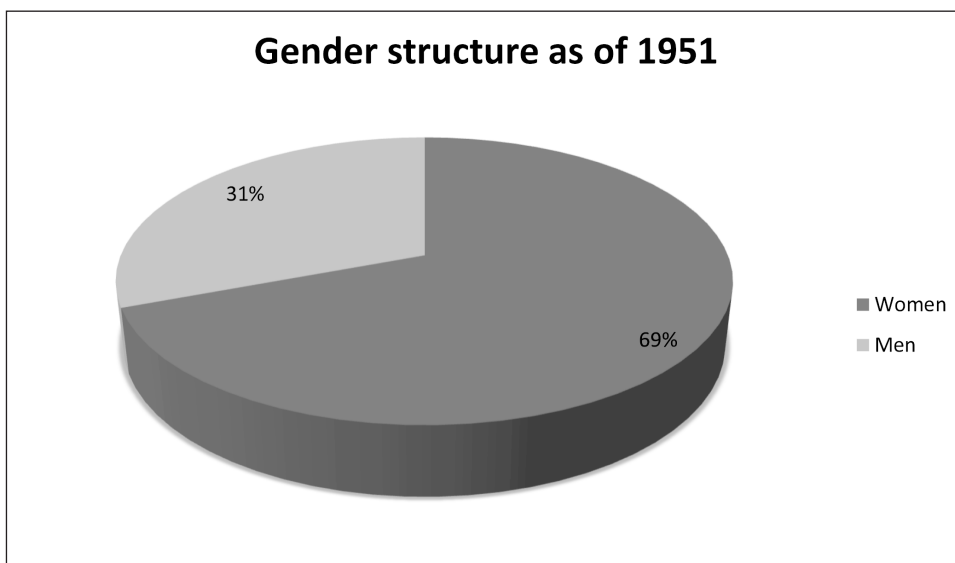
After the end of World War II, Poland also underwent rapid and deep social changes. This was particularly evident in the first decade of the Polish People's Republic, when the effects of the just ended war and the influence of the new authorities on society were felt most strongly. One of the visible changes was the widespread employment of women, especially in industry and services. This was due to the need to make up for the shortage of personnel caused by the death or disability of men fighting during the war. In 1950, there were one hundred and eighteen women per hundred men in cities (Jarosz, 2000, p. 120–121). Without enriching their staff with women, many institutions and plants could not begin to function, hence the *working woman* became one of the heroines of the communist propaganda.

In the post-war period, the professional work of married women and mothers began to spread. Before the war, only three out of one hundred married women worked (Żarnowska, Szwarc, 2000, p. 190), while at the beginning of the 1950's the percentage of married women working was already 18% (Duchen, 1994, p. 154). This process was only halted after 1968, when the right to unpaid child care leave was introduced (Żarnowska, Szwarc, 2000, p. 196).

In the post-war period, there was still, although a less clear division into *male* and *female* professions. It is therefore worth considering the causes of this state of affairs and their social consequences in a historical context. The definitely feminized professions included a teaching job. The statistical dominance of women in the teaching profession, after World War II, increased in relation to the number before 1939, which amounted to 55.7% (Smołalski, 1994, p. 52) nationwide and 47% in Gdynia (Mielczarska, 2013, p. 101). The above thesis is confirmed by the percentage of women employed in Gdynia's primary schools between 1945 and 1956, which amounted to 69.24% (see Figure 1). However, it was relatively low in comparison to Poland. For example, in 1945, 75% of women were employed in the district of Stalowa Wola, while in the cities of the Olsztyn district as many as 92% of teachers worked (Radziszewska, 2011, p. 83), while two years later in Włocławek 71% of the teaching staff were women (Moraczewska, 2010, p. 280).

However, there is no statistical data on the gender structure of the teaching profession in the period 1945–1956 from all over Poland. The available data comes

Figure 2.
A gender structure of teachers in primary schools in Gdynia employed in 1945–1956. As of 1951



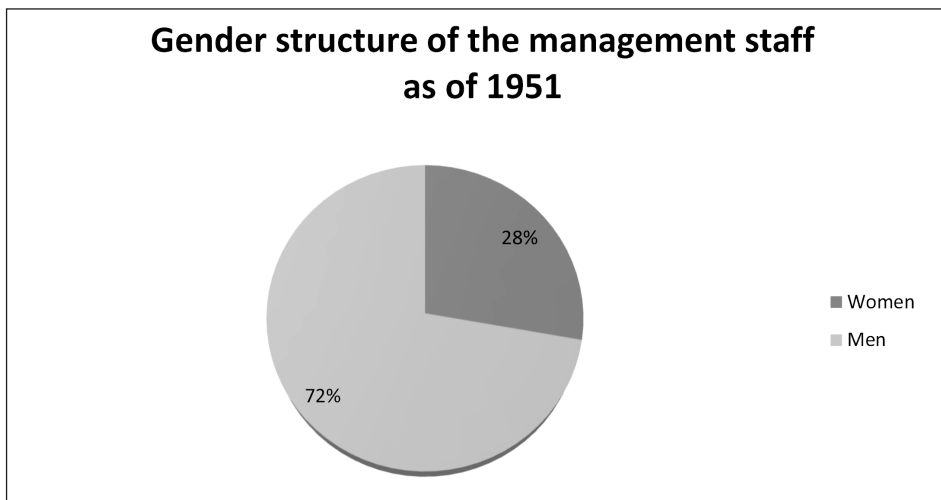
Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745) and the Education Department of the Presidium of the City National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22).

only from 1970, when, according to the report on the state of education, 80% of women were employed in schools (*Raport...*, 1973, p. 132). It should be stressed that primary schools were characterised by the highest degree of feminisation of the teaching staff. Only in the period just after the end of World War II the number of women and men working in common schools was comparable. At the beginning of August 1945, 53.2% of men were employed in Gdańsk Voivodship, while in Gdynia – 47.73% (Tomkiel, 2013, p. 161).

The percentage distribution of the management staff of Gdynia's general schools by gender was completely different, 72.23% of which were men (see Figure 3). This was to some extent due to the fact that many women combined their official duties with household duties and raising children, which meant that they could devote less time to matters related to the workplace, as well as the higher social position of men at that time. As one of the teachers working in the Gdańsk region in the 1950's mentioned: *If there was a man in the teaching staff, he was immediately entrusted with a managerial position, even if he had no predisposition to do so* (Kubaś, 1997, p. 201).

The main task faced by the educational authorities in the first period of the school's operation after the end of World War II was to recruit a sufficient number of teaching staff, without whom it was impossible to open schools. Due to the

Figure 3.
A gender structure of the management staff employed in primary schools in Gdynia in 1945–1956, as of 1951



Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745) and the Education Department of the Presidium of the City National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22).

shortage of staff it was decided to employ people without pedagogical qualifications⁷ in schools as well. These were often teachers who had completed only a few weeks' course to prepare them for working at school⁸ (Jarowiecki et al., 1983, p. 54–56).

⁷ In the period after the end of World War II, the Ordinance of the President of the Republic of Poland of March 6th, 1928, on professional qualifications of teachers in common schools was still in force, according to which a person holding a diploma of the state institution for the education of teachers in common schools or an equivalent examination passed on the basis of the regulations specified by the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in the Ordinance of March 6th, 1928, was qualified to perform the teaching profession.

⁸ On November 27th, 1944, the Minister of Education recommended organizing 3-month preliminary pedagogical courses for graduates of 8-grade gymnasiums, general secondary schools or equivalent vocational schools under 30 years of age. A few months later, on May 22nd, 1945, the Ministry of Education ordered the launch of 6-week preliminary pedagogical courses for graduates of general secondary schools or equivalent vocational schools aged between 18 and 30 years. At the same time, the Minister of Education allowed for the organisation of 3-months introductory courses for graduates of general and vocational secondary schools or students who had certificates of completion of the 6th grade of the former gymnasium. The instruction on the organisation of the school year 1945/1946 provided for the organisation of annual state teaching courses for secondary school graduates in addition to permanent forms of education. In 1951, special pedagogical courses started to be organised in the 11th class of general secondary schools the so called pedagogical classes. Such courses were introduced from the half-year of the eleventh class, and their graduates received a general secondary school certificate of maturity and full qualifications to teach in primary schools. Soon the organization of pedagogical courses for students of the tenth class began. Upon completion of the pedagogical course and the tenth class, students were referred to primary schools as non-qualified teachers, see: Jarowiecki, Nowecki, Ruta, 1983, p. 54–56.

The professional qualifications of the teachers employed in Gdynia's general schools in the years 1945–1956 were high against the national background. The percentage of people without pedagogical qualifications was only 10.12% (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745; APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22)⁹. While in the whole Gdańsk Province there were 28.2% of unqualified teachers (Tomkiel, 2013, p. 164). Moreover, it should be mentioned that in the first post-war school year, only teachers with pedagogical qualifications (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, Sprawozdania statystyczne 1947–1952, sygn. 22) started working in educational institutions in Gdynia. These were mainly graduates of pre-war teacher seminars (PBW, Lista nauczycieli szkół gdyńskich 1945, sygn. R541/1). According to the sources, it was not until the end of the 1940's that non-qualified teachers started to be employed in Gdynia's schools.

This was partly due to the growing number of pupils and school establishments. The following schools were established during this period: no. 5, no.

Chart 4.

Professional qualifications of teachers in general schools in Gdynia employed in the years 1945–1956



Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745) and Educational Department of the Presidium of the City National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22).

⁹ Own calculations based on the data contained in archival materials.

14 and no. 26 (Sokołowska, 2006, p. 793–801)¹⁰. The second reason why schools in Gdynia started to employ people without pedagogical qualifications was the outflow of teachers to other better paid professions. It should also be noted that after 1947, the authorities began to select teachers based on ideological criteria, and not on the level of education. This caused teachers (often with many years of professional experience) who did not meet the requirements set by the party authorities to be replaced by people *loyal to the party*, although often not prepared for the teaching profession. An example of this is teacher Helena Gustowska, a member of the Polish United Workers' Party, employed in the primary school no. 27 (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1342).

The group of teachers with professional qualifications included people with very diverse education. The highest percentage were graduates of teacher seminars – 39.79%. The second largest group in terms of numbers included teachers with secondary pedagogical education – 13.5%.

Teachers' work was not only limited to providing lessons. In the period under discussion, an important element of this work was their activity in social and educational organisations operating at schools, which were to shape the

Photo 1.

The class of the PCK school circle operating in the primary school no. 10, 1956



Source: Chronicle of the Primary School No. 10 in Gdynia p. 1 (Kronika Szkoły Podstawowej nr 10 w Gdyni, cz. 1).

¹⁰ The Primary School No. 5 was established in 1948 and its building was located at 1 Gospodarska Street in Gdynia. The Primary School No. 14 started its activity in 1947, and its building was located at Władysław IV Street. The Primary School No. 26 was established in 1949 and was located at Daszyńskiego Street.

attitudes and views of young people. As early as in 1944, new educational authorities indicated which organizations should be established in schools. The circular of December 1944 listed ZHP, PCK or LOPP (Dz. U. Resortu Oświaty PKWN 1944 no. 1–4 item 40). The activity of these circles was particularly desired by the authorities, especially in the first post-war months due to their practical character. For example, the PCK school circles, carrying out charitable activities, distributed fish oil, vitamins or necessary hygienic measures among children (Gorloff, 2015, p. 569). In addition, as part of their extracurricular activities, teachers also organised sports, artistic and subject-related interest groups.

The youth organisations run by teachers from Gdynia's primary schools included: *Liga Morska* (League of the Sea), *Polski Czerwony Krzyż* (Polish Red Cross – PCK), *Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko Radzieckiej* (Polish-Soviet Friendship Society – TPPR), *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Żołnierza* (Society of Soldier Friends – TPŻ), *Liga Kobiet* (Women's League), student cooperatives, school self-government or schools of the Warsaw Reconstruction Club. The activities of the above organizations were of various character, e.g. the youth from the school no. 16 associated in the PCK circle under the care of teacher Ludwika Bandych took care of the cleanliness of classrooms, helped in the action of nutrition and organized sanitary courses (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1359).

TPPR played a leading role in the process of indoctrination of school children and teachers. The Polish-Soviet friendship circles did not enter schools until after 1948, when the Second Congress of the Society formulated its ideological programme. The aim of TPPR was to promote knowledge about the USSR (Gorloff, 2015, p. 575–576). The popularisation of TPPR activities in the late 1940's was therefore part of the process of ideologization of education. In 1953, the Society was active in all the primary schools in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1409). The most intense period of TPPR's activity was the *month of deepening the Polish-Soviet friendship*, lasting from October 8th to November 7th. During this period, academies, lectures, actions to clean the graves of Soviet soldiers and talks for students were organized. For example, their subject matter in the school year 1952/1953 was as follows: Stalin – a teacher and an educator of children and young people, the Soviet Army and its role in the world, The Life of Soviet Pioneers (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1409)¹¹. After the CIS, TPPR was the second organisation in terms of¹² the number of members to which Gdynia's teachers belonged.

¹¹ The topics of talks held in Gdynia's common schools during the month of Polish-Soviet friendship in the school year 1952/1953.

¹² Own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia.

As mentioned above, the main organization in which Gdynia's teachers were involved was *Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego* (Polish Teachers' Association – ZNP), which after 1945 became the only trade union of educational workers. After the German army left the city, the first meeting was organized in order to rebuild the pre-war structures of the Association. Eugeniusz Brach, headmaster of the Primary School No. 10 in Gdynia was elected as the chairman of the Gdynia branch of ZNP and held this position until 1947. For the next three years, the Union was headed by Józef Bodziński, who was replaced by Helena Bojarska in 1950. For the next two terms of office, which fell between 1952 and 1955, ZNP was headed by teachers from primary schools: Stanisław Streer (1952–1953) and Alfons Kosik (1953–1955). The activity of trade unionists over the years 1945–1956 took various forms, from striving to satisfy the basic needs of teachers (assistance in obtaining housing or material support for the poorest) to artistic activity (e.g. choir) (Wojno, 2013, p. 13–26; Wiśniewska, Biernacka, 2018, p. 9–13).

Moreover, teachers of primary schools in Gdynia were the guardians of numerous circles of interest. In addition to classical subject circles, schools also organized artistic groups – choirs, theatres. These groups under the care of teachers usually prepared performances during school celebrations marking national holidays (e.g. the First of May) and anniversaries of various events, i.e. the October Revolution. Although the performances of school art groups had propaganda overtones, they allowed students to develop their artistic passions. In some schools there were also other, unusual circles of interest, such as the gardener's circle established in the primary school No. 6. During the meetings, students under the care of teacher Lidia Ksinto arranged the school garden (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1303). However, under the guise of developing students' interests and carrying out various activities, the activities of all youth organisations focused on preparing young people for the role of socialist builders in Poland – such a role was entrusted to teachers in the Polish People's Republic.

In addition, an extremely important task assigned to teachers in the first post-war years included feeding school children. Almost in each of Gdynia's common schools one person or several others designated carried out nutrition actions. These were teachers, often simultaneously leading the Polish Red Cross school circles or members of parental groups. Meals for young people were prepared and distributed in school canteens, which were often built with the work of the teaching staff and parents. Such a situation took place e.g. in the primary school no. 3 on Witomin. In the report published in 1945 in *Dziennik Bałtycki* it was written: *We leave the main school building and move on to the provisionally vaulted barrack, where the kitchen and canteen are located. The headmaster of the school introduces us to Józefowiczowa, who, on behalf of the Parents' Circle, deals with the action of feeding children. [...] This whole barrack was built with the joint effort of the teachers and parents. The headmaster of the*

school brought the boards and the material needed to build it himself (Dziennik Bałtycki, 1945, no. 189, p. 4).

However, a lack of food, mainly meat, was more of a problem than the difficult situation of the premises. Schools were given little variety and modest food rations: mainly bread, flour, sugar, sometimes a small amount of vegetables or meat. Various types of charitable organizations provided invaluable assistance in supplying food to schools (and not only). These included UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). In addition, the Swedish government provided enormous support to the war-ravaged Poland by donating necessary medical equipment, medicines and food. The activity of Swedish charities in Gdynia focused mainly on support for school children, young people and the city hospital (Kłonczyński, 2017, p. 39–42).

The working conditions of teachers, especially just after the war, were very difficult. Some of them did not receive any financial remuneration at all during the first months of work. The teachers of the primary school No. 8 in Orłowo until June 1945 received half a loaf of bread for each member of the family, as well as sugar and some fat, and clothes donated by UNRRA for their work. By virtue of the ordinance of the Council of Ministers of May 1945, new rules of classifying teachers into particular groups of emoluments were introduced. Pedagogues with the longest seniority, amounting to at least twenty-seven years of work in the profession were assigned to group No. 6, while teachers were assigned to group No. 10 just after being appointed (Dz.U. 1945 no. 21 item 126). During this period, teachers were granted a special service allowance of PLN 300 per month, as well as a war allowance of varying value (from PLN 325 to 490) (Radziszewska, 2011, p. 193). However, this did not significantly improve the material situation of teachers. The memoirs of the headmaster of the Primary School No. 8 (a teacher with 16 years of experience) show that in the middle of 1945 he received a salary of PLN 800, which was an equivalent of a pair of shoes and trousers (PBW, Szkoła podstawowa nr 8 w Gdyni Orłowie w latach 1945–1948, sygn. R 447).

In the school year 1946/1947 teachers were granted increases, at which the teachers' salaries ranged from PLN 830 to 1470, depending on their seniority. Despite the nominal increase in salaries, the material situation of teachers did not improve significantly, as the granted increase was rather an attempt to adjust teachers' salaries to the then prices (Radziszewska, 2011, p. 200).

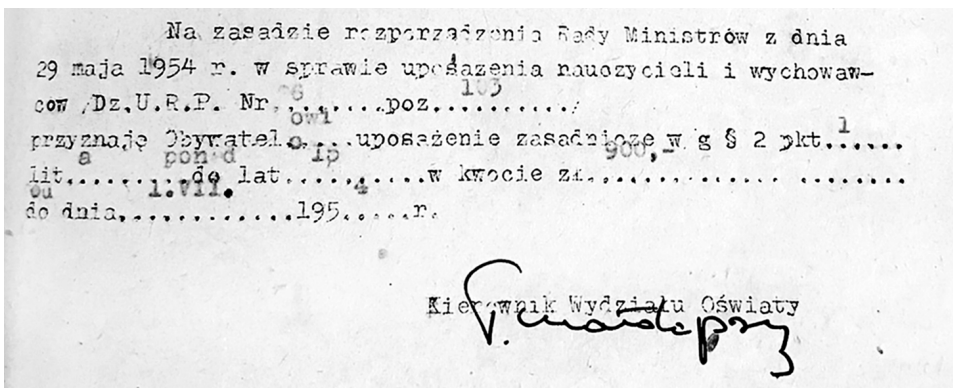
Further changes in the amount of teachers' salaries were made in 1948. At that time, a new division into salary groups was introduced, from 1 to 7. Pedagogues qualified for the first group received a basic salary of 11,000, while those from the seventh group received 6,000. Moreover, teachers were exempt from state tax on salaries and social security charges. However, the teachers' allowance was abolished (Dz. U. 1948 no. 44 item 313). A significant increase in the basic salary of teachers in comparison to previous years led to some improvement in the living conditions of teachers. Unfortunately, the change

in currency and the increase in the prices of food products at the beginning of the 1950's had a negative impact on the wealth of teachers (Szulc, Mruk, 1984, p. 39–58). The average teacher's salary in 1953 was PLN 838 (Smołalski, 2006, p. 11).

Subsequent changes in teachers' emoluments were made in 1954 by virtue of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers on the emoluments of teachers and tutors. A novelty introduced in the above act was the dependence of the amount of earnings not only on the length of service, but also on qualifications possessed by teachers (Dz. U. 1954 no. 26 item 103). The last regulations concerning teachers' salaries in the discussed period were introduced in the middle of 1956. At that time, both the basic salary and function allowances were increased (Dz.U. 1956 no. 37 item 168). It is worth mentioning, however, that the low remuneration of teachers was a weakness of this profession almost throughout the entire history of education and has remained so to this day. While analysing the teachers' lounge throughout history, Antoni Smołalski (2006, p. 12) indicated only two short periods in history in which the material position of teachers was relatively good: the years of activity of the National Education Commission (1773–1794) and the years 1933–1939. The wealth of teachers in Gdynia did not differ from the national average, however, due to the fact that they lived in a city with a quite specific social composition, where a significant percentage of the population were employees of better paid occupations, i.e. seafarers or ship-builders, their material status was quite low. The commitment and dedication of teachers to their profession should therefore be appreciated.

Photo 2.

The letter from the Department of Education of the Presidium of the Gdynia City National Council to Edward Nowacki, head of the school No. 3, with information about the salary granted, 1954



Source: The archive of Gdynia City Hall, Personal files of Edward Nowacki sign. 2/112, (Archiwum Urzędu Miasta Gdynia, Akta osobowe Edward Nowacki, sygn. 2/112).

In addition, the difficult living conditions during the war caused many people – including teachers – to face numerous health problems. In the first post-war weeks, however, they could not count on medical care. Despite this, even sick teachers did not give up their work. For example, Sabina Łoposzko, a Russian language teacher suffering from bone tuberculosis, taught lessons (PBW, Szkoła podstawowa nr 8 w Gdyni Orłowie w latach 1945–1948, sygn. R 447).

The accommodation of teachers was also a serious problem. Schools did not have a sufficient number of suitable premises or did not have them at all. This problem was noticed in the July issue of *the Baltic Journal*, where it was written: *a huge percentage of teachers do not have adequate housing conditions. Such a response to the needs of today's undoubtedly valuable people is a grave mistake for the future. After all, a teacher is also a man and he will one day wave his hand at school and his mission and find a place in some other more fattening ministry* (Dziennik Bałtycki, 1945, no. 54, p. 3). In some cases this was the case, the outflow of teachers to other professions made it difficult for many schools to fill their posts. In 1950, there were five vacancies in the primary school no. 13, which meant that teachers working in the school had to teach more hours. It should be emphasized that first of all, flats were allocated to employees of more prominent occupations. The flats for teachers from the school no. 13 in Mały Kack were not obtained until after they were left by workers who had moved into the newly built housing estate (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1325).

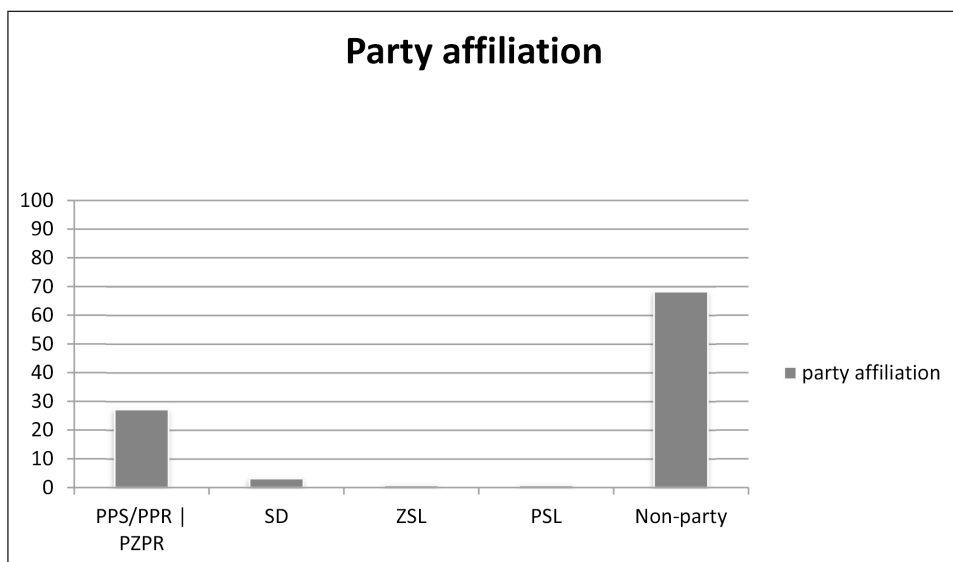
During World War II many teachers were involved in the activities of the Polish Underground State. Some of them fought for independence by joining the ranks of the Home Army or conducting secret teaching. In the period after the end of the war many teachers were distrustful of the new power. However, due to the terror and repression introduced by the security apparatus, few decided to put up an open resistance. In the initial period after the end of the war, most teachers adopted rather politically neutral attitudes. In 1945, only one of Gdynia's primary school teachers belonged to PPR. However, from the whole Gdańsk Province, only five teachers joined the ranks of the workers' party. Also other parties did not enjoy a significant interest among teachers. An increase in the number of teachers involved in political activity took place in 1947, and after the establishment of the PZPR it intensified even more. The then Minister of Education, Stanisław Skrzeszewski, announced in his article of 1947: *The period when the teacher was afraid to join progressive political parties must end, and was afraid to become a pepper. We must make it clear that we will clearly support stubborn elements* (Skrzeszewski, 1947/1948, p. 6).

Thus, the teachers' entry into the party was motivated by the fear of losing their job and top-down pressure exerted by the authorities rather than by an actual interest in a political activity. However, despite the party's personnel policy and indoctrination in schools, a vast number of Gdynia's teachers did not join any political party. For example, in the school year 1950/1951, only two out

of sixteen teachers of the primary school no. 8 belonged to the PZPR (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1311). However, this did not mean that a completely ideologically neutral attitude was maintained. For example, none of the teachers employed in the primary school No. 4 in Oksywie belonged to the PZPR or the party of the so-called democratic bloc, and despite this, during an inspection carried out by the members of the Department of Education of the Presidium of the Gdynia City National Council, it was noted that: *Judging by the external appearance of the school /a large number of slogans, newspapers, ideological pictures/ and attempts to implement socialist teaching and education, it must be stated that the teaching staff makes a lot of effort to keep up with the contemporary reality* (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22/1363).

The level of stubbornness of people employed in common schools in Gdynia, as compared to other cities in the Gdańsk Province, was quite high, as it amounted to over 20% (see graph). The lowest percentage of teachers – the members of the PZPR was in Gdańsk and Sopot, as it did not exceed 10%.

Figure 5.
Party membership of teachers employed in Gdynia's primary schools in the years 1945–1956



Source: own calculations based on the data contained in the archives of the school inspectorate in Gdynia (APGoG, Inspektorat szkolny w Gdyni, sygn. 745) and Educational Department of the Presidium of the City National Council in Gdynia (APGoG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdyni, sygn. 22).

CONCLUSION

The environment of Gdynia's primary school teachers was shaped almost anew in the first post-war years. A significant part of teachers working in the city before 1939, during the war left, was displaced or did not return to Gdynia for other reasons. Some of them managed to arrange their lives in the place of resettlement, some of them had nothing to come back to, because their flats had been destroyed or assigned to other – usually new residents of the city, and still others, for political reasons, could not return to the city, of fear of e.g. being arrested.

Therefore, the group of teachers from Gdynia was mostly made up of people coming to the city after the end of the warfare, mainly from the former Eastern Borderlands, provinces of central Poland and smaller towns in the Gdańsk Province. Gdynia was an attractive destination – often chosen by post-war migrants due to its large employment opportunities and quite good housing conditions according to the then standards. As a result, there was no large-scale problem of shortage of educational staff in the city, which was visible in most other regions of Poland, especially the less affluent ones e.g. Warmia and Mazury.

The research undertaken has also shown some regularities concerning the age of teachers employed in Gdynia's primary schools in the years 1945–1956. The age structure of teachers clearly shows the demographic changes taking place in Poland over the years – especially the population growth taking place at the beginning of the 20th century (up to 1914), as well as the demographic decline caused by the outbreak of World War I and the increase in the number of births after its completion. The most numerous group among teachers in Gdynia comprised people between forty and fifty years old.

In the post-war period, the process of feminisation of the teaching profession, which deepened in comparison to the period before 1939, was also apparent in Gdynia's public schools. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the teaching staff of Gdynia's primary schools in the years 1945–1956 were women. This phenomenon was mainly related to the increase in women's professional activity after World War II. Moreover, men were rather reluctant to take up work in schools due to its low profitability and social conditions – recognition of caring and educational duties as a female domain.

A characteristic phenomenon for the post-war period was the employment in schools of non-qualified teachers who did not have any pedagogical education, but completed only several weeks' courses preparing for teaching at school. This situation was caused by significant staff shortages. However, as the research carried out in this work shows, Gdynia was a city where the level of teachers' qualifications was high, as in the years 1945–1956 only one in ten teachers employed in a common school had no professional qualifications, while in some regions of the country almost half of the teaching staff working in schools did not have adequate pedagogical education. On the other hand, in the first post-war school year, all teachers working in Gdynia's schools had pedagogical qualifications,

which was a rare phenomenon in Poland. A specific phenomenon in Gdynia was also the employment of teachers who were not qualified usually for ideological reasons, and not because of staff shortages, as they were usually young, subject to party ideology.

After 1945, an important element of teachers' work became an activity in social and educational organisations operating at schools. Most of the students of Gdynia's schools belonged to ZHP, PCK, TPPR or LOPP. This was not a phenomenon deviating from national trends. Although various forms of extracurricular activities conducted in schools in the years 1945–1956 (especially after 1948) contained ideological content, they were an integrating element of the environment, and most of them allowed for the development of students' passions and interests.

The working conditions, and the social and living conditions were an important element influencing the development of Gdynia's teacher community in the post-war period. The main problems faced by teachers in the period in question were a lack of didactic aids and appropriate equipment in the classrooms, as well as a poor housing situation and low salaries, often inadequate to the hardship they put into work. However, it should be noted that the social and living conditions of teachers working in Gdynia were good in comparison with the realities in other parts of the country and did not differ from the living standards of the other inhabitants of the city.

Throughout the whole discussed period, the party authorities were striving to recruit teachers into their ranks, these activities intensified especially after 1948, when large-scale activities aimed at indoctrinating society were undertaken. Teachers were to become their direct executors for children and the youth. In the first post-war years, the teachers employed in Gdynia's common schools approached the new authorities with a certain suspicion and distance, and it was only after 1947 that the number of teachers joining the party ranks increased, which was mostly due to social and political pressure rather than actual ideological beliefs. The level of the party's dependency of teachers in general schools in Gdynia, as compared to other larger cities in the Gdańsk Province, was quite high, as it amounted to almost 20%.

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The research over the development of the group of teachers in Gdynia's primary schools in the years 1945–1956

Summary

Aim: The purpose of this article is to characterize the group of Gdynia's teachers in the first post-war decade).

Methods: The following research methods have been used in this article: induction, deduction, statistical and comparative methods (with reference to the whole Poland, as well as the Gdansk Province). The geographical method was also used to a small extent.

Results: The main result of the research is to show the characteristics of the group of teachers from Gdynia's primary schools employed in the years 1945–1956, with particular emphasis on the differences in the work of teachers in Gdynia compared to the nationwide reality).

Conclusions: One of the challenges that the Polish administration had to face after the end of World War II was the reconstruction of education, especially

general education. A significant role in this process was played by teachers, who after 1945 were entrusted with the task of educating young people as *socialist builders*. The social and political changes taking place in Poland after 1945 had a significant impact on the group of Gdynia's primary school teachers.

Keywords: the education system, Education, primary school, Gdynia city.