

**Report on Young Women Workers in Poland, 1952**  
**Translated by Malgorzata Fidelis**

Report to the Head of the Labor Unions Regarding the Situation in the Home of the Young Woman Worker in Nowa Sol, the province of Zielona Gora

Source: document from the Archive of the Historical Documentation of Polish People's Republic, Warsaw, Poland. (Fundacja Archiwum Dokumentacji Historycznej PRL).  
Translated by Gosia Fidelis.

1. The flax industry factory has three Young Workers' Homes;<sup>1</sup> [of these] the women's home is located in Kozuchowo, 14 kilometers [8.75 miles] from Nowa Sol. The nearest railroad station is 4 km [2.5 miles] away from the Home. The girls have to walk this distance twice every day in order to get to and from work.
2. The entire organization of the Home fulfills requirements, with the exception of the floors. In the rooms, the floors are made of concrete, which contributes to lower temperatures and creates a health risk of rheumatic illness.
3. The Home is inhabited at the moment by 60 girls. It is run solely by a woman-manager. There is neither preceptor nor educational-cultural instructor.

The Home is deprived of organized, steady, and systematic work in the sphere of cultural education and political consciousness. Because of its location, the involvement of the factory management, the Factory Council, the Factory Party Committee, and the Association of Polish Youth is accidental and sporadic. This, in sum, allowed the enemy to develop activities in the Home and to bring about the total moral decay of those girls.

- a) three among these 16-17-year old girls became alcoholics, that is: Sek, Gil, and Szprygier; drinking destroyed their bodies and they faint, have attacks, etc. There are cases, when after they receive their pay, they throw parties in their rooms, boozing with wine and alcohol. A case exists of one of the girls having wasted 200 zloty<sup>2</sup> on this.
- b) In the same town, there is an army unit. In the summer, the nearby forest and fields are sites of indecent scenes. There has been confirmation of a series of incidents in which the soldiers spent entire nights in the girls' rooms. I myself witnessed the case of an air force officer being in one bed with [Miss] Bednarczyk; she explained that this was her brother, who came on a visit. The officer was supposedly there for two days and one night, playing a social game called 'flirt', which consequently resulted in all the girls in that room being tardy for the factory's afternoon shift. I established a second case of a male presence in

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<sup>1</sup> The Homes of Young Workers are hostels in which women (16 - 20 years old) and men (17 - 19 years old) lived while completing a required two-year training period after graduating from a vocational school.

<sup>2</sup> Polish currency. 200 zloty equaled approximately the girls' monthly wage.

a locked room. After the door was opened, there were three girls and a man with a kerchief on his head pretending to be a woman. When I asked him why he was dressed up this way and what he was doing in this room, he said that he was a brother of one of the girls paying a visit from Radom; my firm intervention, however, revealed that he was not a brother, but a worker from Nowa Sol and came to Kozuchowo for a dance party. In both cases, the manager of the Home was not informed about the visits of those “brothers,” although this is required by the regulations.

- c) I intervened twice with the commander of the army unit and asked him to influence, through discipline, this state of depravation and dishonor to the uniform of a Polish Soldier; the commander took an anti-social and even hostile stand: in one case, he explained: “I am not able to do anything, because those people already have one foot in civilian life and it is difficult to influence their behavior.” In the second case, he summoned the head of the local chapter of the National Council and said: “Do something about those girls, because they overtire my soldiers and the next day the soldiers are not capable of attending classes and exercises.”

4. In the middle of the workweek, during the night of Wednesday-Thursday, there was a dance party in the male Home of a Young Worker, to which the girls were invited. As a result of this dance party, from which the girls were coming back at 2 and 4 in the morning, the next day only 8 out of 60 showed up to work. The rest slept comfortably until noon. When I asked them why they did not go to work, they said that they were not feeling well, that they did not have shoes, and that they overslept because the clock was broken – the same clock that is often deliberately stopped or moved backward; in this case the battery connector was broken.

During my conversations with the girls, I established that in many cases they had hickeys on their necks. I established this in the case of the leader of the Association of Polish Youth here in the Home; we summoned her for a conversation with the factory manager regarding this matter.

While conducting conversations, I was treated with contempt. I found the doors locked, despite the fact that the girls were in their rooms. One of the girls, Brzechowska, when told by the manager to clean up her room because the representatives were coming to see their living quarters, responded: “why are there so many of them? Wouldn’t it be enough if just one came to see me?”

5. Vulgar and disgusting expressions are the phenomenon one encounters here all the time. If one comments on [the girls’] behavior, one encounters laughter and contemptuous shrugs of shoulders. ...

6. The highest number of unexcused absence at work is 8-15 days per month. Criminal matters are directed to the court. I passed those matters to the representatives of the Province Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party in Zielona Gora; this caused them to delegate a team to Kozuchowo. Nevertheless, this decay accomplished by the

enemy requires intervention from the central organs of the Party and the labor unions. ...  
The present condition is catastrophic and should be looked at beyond the district level.

I can supply orally any further information to illustrate the situation fully.

Senior Instructor  
M. Szymczyk

Warsaw, March 3, 1952.

Contact the translator, Małgorzata Fidelis, for questions regarding this document:  
[gosia@stanford.edu](mailto:gosia@stanford.edu)