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Unemployed people in Małopolska voivodeship - past and present of the social problem in light of personal and official documents

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UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE IN MAŁOPOLSKA VOIVODESHIP – PAST AND PRESENT OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM IN LIGHT OF PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Presently, Małopolska voivodeship is the core of the south-eastern region of the country. Małopolska during the last two centuries experienced numerous political and administrative changes, including the period after the Second World War. In the times of the partitions, Małopolska was overcrowded, poor and economically backward region. During the interwar period the situation improved but the economic crisis of the 30's led to mass unemployment and to significant deterioration in the living conditions of families, what is reflected in the memoirs written by the inhabitants of the province of Krakow. They were published in the classic work, „Memoirs of the Unemployed” edited by Ludwik Krzywicki. The experience of unemployment during the years of the Great Depression was confronted with descriptions of inactivity in the first decade of the system transition. The subjective world of the unemployed was supplemented with quantitative data showing changes in the labour market in the voivodeship. The comparison of contemporary diaries and those written before 80 years have revealed differences in the institutional support of the health care and social assistance and the similarities in the experience of unemployment.

Key words: social problems, social change, unemployment, personal documents, labour market

1. INTRODUCTION¹

The overall characteristics of the social problem contain human experience, a subjective perception of events and data showing objective and external descriptions of the situation. In the first part of this paper I would like to refer to the unemployment diaries from the 30's and 90's of the Twentieth century and the beginning of a new decade. This paper will use research conducted before 1989 among the unemployed during the Great Depression. In the second part of the paper, according to the practice of research combining objectivist and subjectivist perspective, used in my earlier works (Miś 2007; Miś, Nóżka and Smagacz-Poziemska 2011). I will try to explain the extent and depth of the unemployment in Małopolska voivodeship at the end of 2011. In other words, the goal of this paper is to compare the unemployment experienced by the Małopolska inhabitants documented in the memoirs produced in the 30's of the 20th century and at the turn of the 20th and 21th centuries.

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In this place I would like to focus on the changes that have taken place over the last 80 years in the relation to the area which is nowadays known as Małopolska voivodeship. It is much smaller than Małopolska as the historical ethno-geographical region, because in the past it covered parts of Lviv, Ternopil and Stanislawow voivodeships (so called the Eastern Małopolska) and the areas of contemporary Podkarpackie, Kielce, Lublin and, to some extent, the other voivodeships. For over one hundred and thirty years Małopolska had not existed and was replaced by the formation known as the Western Galicia. Norman Davies (2010: 419) states: „Western Galicia coincided largely with the historical Małopolska, the land whose roots can be found in the eleventh century, it occupied a large tract of land between the upper basin of the Vistula and the back of the Carpathians”. Eastern Galicia laid behind the San river and covered areas of the former Russian voivodeship. According to Norman Davies (2010: 407) Galicia was „the kingdom of naked and starving ones”. Nineteenth-century scholars have described the rapid increase in population, the failure of agriculture and the negative consequences of overpopulation (Davies 2010). The history of Małopolska, Galicia, Subcarpathian or Podbeskidzie is a good example of the social construction of homelands, both the larger and smaller ones.

The further political and administrative changes have resulted in changes in social consciousness, because at the moment the Małopolska is often reduced to Małopolska voivodeship and Podkarpackie has gained the status of the separate ethno-geographic region, what is – for example – reflected in the scientific works (see Długosz and Niezgodą 2010). Presently, Małopolska is the most adequate to the area of the Krakow voivodeship from the period between 1918–1939. When the competition for the first memoirs of the unemployed was announced, the Krakow voivodeship included Żywiec, Jasło, Ropczyce and Mielec counties, which presently do not belong to the voivodeship. Some other counties (e.g. Miechów and Olkusz) which now are included in Małopolska Voivodeship were not its part in 1932 (they belonged to Kielce voivodeship). Based on the memoirs of past and present people we can definitely say that the authors have identified with the territory and the local community. Due to the limitation of the amount of text, this objective analysis will be focused on the characteristics of the unemployed in the last decade.

2. THE ANALYSIS IN THE SUBJECTIVE CATEGORIES

2.1. THE MEMOIRS OF THE UNEMPLOYED DURING THE SECOND REPUBLIC

In „The Memoirs of the Unemployed” edited by Ludwik Krzywicki were included three memoirs written by people living in Krakow voivodeship (3 of 57 published). To the contest were sent 96 diaries from the twenty counties of Krakow voivodeship, to the total number of 774 diaries sent from all over the country. At the end of 1931 in Krakow voivodeship were registered in the State Employment Service Offices were registered 13 630 unemployed, in all Poland the number of the unemployed was 312,487 thousand (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych...* 1933). In fact, the unemployment was much higher, historians estimated its number as more than a million: „total unemployment between 1929–1933 has increased ten times,

(...) during the times of the trough of the industrial crisis almost every third worker was unemployed” (Landau and Tomaszewski 1982: 123).

The unemployed in Krakow during the times of the Great Depression came from large families. They received a psychosocial support but not money. Sibling families usually lived in poverty and did not support financially their not working sisters and brothers. Despite their young age, the unemployed were orphans because their parents died early. One of the authors expressed her faith in Marshal Pilsudski as a providential man who knows how to find a way out of the economic crisis. They All expressed hope for some form of help from the organizers of the memoir competition. The unemployed were in the case of the Krakow diarists combined with the temporary homelessness and economic migrations of the other family members to the other destinations in Poland. The unemployed found some material help, because the municipal authorities (Krakow, Bochnia) granted them a limited amount of food (potatoes, bread) and coal. They also mentioned one-time money benefits (15 zloty) and about the activities of the Municipal Committee of Unemployment. However, municipal officials showed indifference, what was described by the author of Diary No. 49 „I’m going to one of Krakow’s Municipal Councillor, and then to the other one, I ask them: give the work to the orphan, give a hand, because I’m dying, (...) and they say we do not have the time, don’t bother us, go away” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. I 1967: 495).

The other forms of assistance were gained from the private or philanthropic nature of the church. Nuns and charity missions operating in public places (such as train stations) also helped them. Memoirists described the experience of support from their colleagues, friends, and even strangers. The important role for the memoirist No. 48 had her faith in God, prayer and request for help addressed to the saints. „We entered St Mary’s Church, and there, before the miraculous image of Our Lady we begged for mercy, for help” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. I, 1967: 448).

To sum up, the unemployed from the 30’s of the 20th century suffered from a lack of basic goods such as food, clothing and shelter. One resident of Bochnia said: „We didn’t go to the church, because how would you go there if you have nothing to wear” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. I 1967: 502). They failed to get a more stable job, although sometimes they had temporary jobs or hope to get it. The unemployed bona-teacher described it in this way: „I travelled to different cities, I took representatives of Polish books and hygienic corsets, trusses, different tools for massages, nobody buys it. I walked the streets of the city, entered the various factories, larger stores, institutions, warehouses, I presented the certificates, references” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. I 1967: 495). Pre-war memoirists received support enabling them to survive biologically, but the aid was temporary and mainly material one. They benefited from a psychosocial support of numerous members of the closest family (or hope of contact with relatives who had their jobs in the distant cities). „We live together in harmony, setting up a kind of a small family” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. I 1967: 490).

The story of two unemployed people from Malopolska after twenty years, are presented in Volume II of *Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, titled *Pamiętniki bezrobotnych. Pamiętnikarze po latach. Pamiętniki w świetle prasy*, published in 1967. The author of „The Memoir No. 48” („Student”) used the training in accounting, which she had done when she was unemployed, because – after a period of short-term work as a bailiff and a buffet attendant – she had a stable

job in the Central Heating Plant from 1933 to 1945 and then in the printing house. After the war she became involved in the social activities of the work council, trade union, and in a court (as a juror). The second memoirist received for his diary 25 Zloty, „what helped me survive for two months” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. II 1967: 218). Until the outbreak of war, he worked casually at the building sites of the private owners. „Still, there were days and weeks, I had nothing to put to my pot (...) it was always something missing in my house. To make things worse, the tax office, when I did not pay tax, could make requisition everything I had in the house. Sometimes in the house was left only one bed, where we slept the whole family” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. II 1967: 219). Just before the outbreak of the war, the author started a regular job by giving bribe the priest, who “found” him the employment in the railways. After the war he experienced a three-year period of financial prosperity, when he set up his own business (workshop and tinsmith shop). During the forced nationalization of small crafts, the diarist reduced his working activity, and after 1956 went on a disability pension and managed his workshop seasonally. It is worthy to quote the reflection of the author of the Diary No. 50 „The old age have gained me a confidence in the fact that I can easily live till the end of my days, not worried about a roof over my head and some food. When I go out on the street it is nice there are no crowds of scruffs looking for work. For me, during my entire life a work was the most important issue, I have learned to appreciate it properly when I could not work nowhere” (*Pamiętniki bezrobotnych*, vol. II 1967: 222).

2.2. THE MEMOIRS OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Seventy years after the first research, the Institute of Social Household organized a competition for the memoirs of the unemployed. There were posted 1700 works (1635 of them were qualified for the competition), including 111 from Małopolska voivodeship. They were over-represented, were situated on the fifth place in terms of the total number of works, although the unemployment rate for Małopolska was 13,9% and 8,7% for Krakow, and these rates among the lowest ones in the country (Budzyński 2003). By 2008, the eight volumes have been issued, including the five diaries of unemployed living in Małopolska voivodeship. Memoirs were written by women: two aged 25 and 28 years, one 38 years old, and two aged 50. We can find there the descriptions of the living conditions, which they had to deal with. First of all, everything was about food. „The main meal was a bread baked in the house, milk, potatoes, soup. (...) There was nothing to heat the oven. On the windows was a 5-centimeter frost. I was collecting old rags, shoes from the dustbins and in this way we warmed our house” (Budzyński 2005a: 149). The memoirist from Nowy Targ: „Going shopping, it’s just well enough for breakfast and a modest dinner. A dinner for so many people? Four mouths to feed it is not a trifle. Bread is so expensive” (Budzyński 2005b: 157). The unemployed person from Poronin: „Without a job I could not time provide some basic needs to my son. Well, maybe except for a plate of noodles and soup for lunch. (...) After the loss of a permanent source of income in our house literally started to live with us a threat of poverty” (Budzyński 2006: 68). Two older (over 50 years) authors had large families, husbands received health pension which were one of the most important sources of income. Unemployed women had a support sourced in their faith, and stated that without religious solace their life would

be very difficult. „I take very often a Holy Communion, this is a strength. It's like charging” (Budzyński 2005b: 162).

The differences between the fate of the memoirists from the time of the Great Crisis and the memoirist from the period of the political transformation (1990–2000) relate mainly to the issue of the medical and social assistance. The authors have benefited for many years from the social benefits, health pensions (their own, their husbands and children) and medical care. Teresa Krok said: „I have got a treatment in a psychiatric clinic already for 6 years. Including the four years I lived on a pension” (Budzyński 2005a: 149). Elansabag for many years was appealing from the decisions of the Department of Social Security in order to receive disability benefits. She was treated in many specialist hospitals and clinics in Zakopane and Krakow. Barbara Bigos received assistance from the hospital, but „I did not admitted that I had no insurance, but I could not count for the further medical care and sickness benefit” (Budzyński 2006: 72). Because she had not earlier registered at the employment office as unemployed during the time of a serious illness her son was treated with a home methods and antibiotics acquired by her friends.

The three diaries were written by women with a higher education. Two of them made some effort to start a job, and one of them had experience of almost 15 years of work at the school. All of them were actively seeking for work, including the intensive writing of resumes and cover letters. They also tried to get an unregistered („black”) job and sometimes they were successful. Based on the authors' of memoirs personal confessions, the reader can notice the hidden features of institutional procedures of the job seeking. These features fill up their unemployed time, allow to and send resumes and applications, making phone calls and direct interviews for a job. The unemployed does not work but it is still active and still has got a hope of employment. However, the unemployed frequently did not receive any responses to their applications and documents posted to the companies. Only one of the memoirists from Malopolska voivodeship defined her own financial situation as a good one. But she wanted to undertake professional work despite of her care on the young daughters and her husband's good earnings. „Now the financial situation is better and we have got a much better life – house, car, children (...)” (Budzyński 2008: 431).

The other diarist was touched by the lack of money so badly that she took money compensation in exchange for giving up her return to work at the school: „At the same time I needed money in a hurry – after all, you had to pay for the flat, pay off debts taken to buy drugs and shoes, and simply have got some money for living” (Budzyński 2006: 69) The memoirists undertook the activities in the private enterprise (food kiosk, internet cafe, work as a „freelancer” in journalism). The contact with the state offices was for them very traumatic. Registration, „it was the most humiliating experience of my life” (Budzyński 2008: 428). „Registration at the employment office made me almost physical pain and mental rape. Nobody deserves it, nobody” (Budzyński 2008: 429). In the social institution „I felt like an insect and the intruder”² (Budzyński 2006: 71).

² In the research of Renata Paciorek (2009) from 2008 and 2009, the unemployed (106 subjects) using the service of Krakow Labour Offices, have expressed high levels of satisfaction with services and presented overall positive evaluation of its assistance in finding a job.

The diaries show the uniqueness of the human lives and strategies how to deal with unemployment. Gender and age played a significant role in the choice of forms of adaptation to the new situation. The roles of wife and mother were very important to the authors of memoirs, their efforts to be employed have been put in the context of a family: the care of younger children, receiving help from the older children and dealing with current problems together with a husband. The younger memoirists have develop (and have implemented) various life scenarios, assuming permanent or temporary migration, searching for unregistered work and a private enterprise. However, women above fifty have tried to use their entitled rights (pension, social insurance benefits, etc.).

However it should be noted, that:

- the memoirists described the first 10 years of economic transformation and the first experience of unemployment,
- they showed significant activity in their procedures to obtain any job, legal or undeclared,
- they experienced a long period of negative emotions: anxiety, anger, rage, jealousy, shame, humiliation, a long, sometimes chronic, psychosocial stress, and as the result they were confronted with the consequences in the form of post-traumatic disorders, – they frequently met with the dishonest and wicked – in their opinion – behaviour of strangers and the support or help from a family and friends,
- they were not socially excluded, although they limited their social contacts to family members and close friends,
- the institutional support (office work, social welfare, social security) was ostensible or had a bureaucratic nature, limited to the functions of a benefit payer (the exemplary critical assessment of the training, „it does not fit to the Polish reality. The coach turns on the video movie and is excited about American pearls of wisdom”; Budzyński 2008: 193).

Although the unemployed in the period of transformation were formally much better educated, they experienced similar experiences (material poverty, threats to a health security) and feelings (shame, anxiety, depression) as the unemployed from the 30's of the 20th century. However, they differed in the context of possibilities of using social benefits and a medical care.

2.3. THE ANALYSIS IN THE OBJECTIVIST CATEGORIES

The world of human experiences, both collective and individual, is different from the indicators and measurements of specific cases and social processes. Suffering and fear are not easily expressed with a help of a quantitative data and statistical estimates. Sociologists try to make a social diagnosis, sometimes with the intention of improving the existing situation and changing of the status quo, unfavourable for many people. For this reason I will try to complete the picture of the social problem with synthetic data. Since the creation of Małopolska voivodeship the rate of unemployment there was lower than the national average rate. It can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

The rate of unemployment for the Małopolska voivodeship (M) and for Poland (PL)

Voivode- ship	Year											
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
M	10,3	12,2	14,0	13,9	13,7	15,0	14,0	11,4	8,8	7,1	9,4	10,7
PL	13,1	15,1	17,5	18,1	18,0	19,0	17,6	14,8	11,4	9,5	11,9	11,6

Source: own research based on the data obtained from *Roczniki Statystyczne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2000–2011*

Within the period of 12 years the most of the registered unemployed (363,550) were in 2003, and the least (113,700) in 2009. The corresponding figures for the whole country were the following ones: 3 million 217 thousand in 2002 and 1 million 474 thousand in 2008. It shows that the situation of the population of Małopolska Voivodeship was more favourable than the situation of the entire population of the country, what is also confirmed by the other authors (Budzyński 2003; Budnikowski 2009). Małopolska voivodeship used to belong to the group with the lowest rate of unemployment. It is confirmed by long-term data from the study of economic activity (LFS), but usually is lower by a few percent compared with the measures of registered unemployment. For example, for Brzesko county unemployment rate was 16,0%, while the unemployment rate according to the Labour Force Survey methodology was 10,9% (in 2002, the Labour Force Survey 2002). This generally positive situation regarding unemployment did not affect the whole region. There were and there are differences between the counties, what is presented in the table 2.

Table 2

The registered rate of unemployment in the counties of Małopolska in 2002 and 2010

County	2002	2010
Bocheński	2,0	8,8
Brzeski	16,0	11,9
Chrzanowski	15,0	13,9
Dąbrowski	22,0	19,1
Gorlicki	19,0	13,8
Krakowski	7,0	11,4
Limanowski	21,0	17,2
Miechowski	2,0	9,7
Myślenicki	14,0	12,8
Nowosądecki	20,0	17,6
Nowotarski	10,0	12,4
Olkuski	11,9	14,2

Table 2 cont.

County	2002	2010
Oświęcimski	12,0	12,4
Proszowicki	7,0	11,9
Suski	6,0	10,4
Tarnowski	17,0	13,6
Tatrzański	4,0	10,0
Wadowicki	13,0	12,0
Wielicki	9,0	10,9

Source: Own research based on the *Rocznik statystyczny województwa małopolskiego* (2010) and *Aktywność ekonomiczna ludności 2002* (2004)

On the basis of table 2 we can find that in 2010 the counties with the lowest unemployment rate were the bocheński and miechowski ones, and the highest one – dąbrowski and limanowski. A comparison of the sub-regions, which consist of a few counties, shows that the best situation in 2010 was in the subregion of Krakow (the unemployment rate was 11,1%), and then in tarnowski (12,6%), oświęcimski (12,7%) and nowosądecki (14,1%). The situation in the major cities was much better than the in the small and rural ones: the unemployment rate in Krakow was 4,7%, 9,2% in Tarnow and 9,8% in Nowy Sącz. (Basic data on registered unemployed in 2010, 2012). The diversification in the unemployment rate in counties and municipalities is the natural phenomenon. It should be noted that the diversification in Małopolska Voivodeship was lower than in the other regions of the country (for example, Zachodnio-Pomorskie and Warmia-Mazury). Budnikowski (2009: 242) reports that in the Warmia-Mazury „quoted differences between the best and worst counties have even increased to 28 points”. The similar situation occurred in the Mazowieckie voivodship, where the difference between Szydłowiec (32,7%) and Warsaw (2,7%) was 30 percentage points.

While the comparisons with the other voivodeships look positive, certain socio-demographic categories of the unemployed in the Małopolska were worse other ones. The most vulnerable were young people, almost 31% of the unemployed were persons under 25 years and 57% under 35 years. People over 50 accounted for almost one-fifth of the total inactive labour population. The unemployed for more than 12 months accounted for nearly 30% of the total number of unemployed. The situation of the unemployed in the category of the level of education was diversified: Most of them had a vocational education (29%), than post-secondary and secondary vocational education (25%), and secondary and primary (21%) the least with a general secondary education (13%) and a higher one (12%) (registered unemployed by age, educational level, duration of unemployment and years of work 2012). In summary, young people were mostly affected by unemployment, as well as the long-term unemployed and people with a vocational education.

These data and the other characteristics allow us to assess the development of the labour market in the Małopolska voivodeship as the high one. Similar evaluations concerning economic and demographic development, and social development were estimated as very high (*Rocznik statystyczny województwa małopolskiego 2010. Rok XI 2010*). The voivodeship also has got the positive assessment of the foreign experts specializing in the regional researches (Bukowski 2011).

The social policy in the areas of employment and unemployment had the active character. Most of the Labour Fund expenditures were spent on programmes promoting employment (54,6%), and less on unemployment benefits (40,5%). The largest expenditure for the activation of the unemployed included scholarships, social security contributions (19,6%) and resources for starting a business (18%). Smaller funds were used to refund the cost of equipment and adjustment of the job positions (5,8%), training (4,7%), public works (2,9%) and intervention work (2,3%). (*Województwo małopolskie 2010. Podregiony, powiaty, gminy 2010*). Also in 2010 was carried out the active policy, because for the unemployment benefits dedicated 37%, and for employment promotion programs 58,5% (the structure of expenses was similar to the previous one). As a result of these programs 20,747 unemployed have been deregistered from the Labour Offices records. Most of the unemployed began training (12,760 people), start their employment at public works (3256 people), further categories of persons are people employed at intervention works (2734) and socially useful works (1997).

Help for people with a specific situation in the labour market (long-term unemployed, people with disabilities) was led by the clubs and centres for social integration. In Małopolska voivodeship were 7 clubs of social integration, of which six were carried out by the municipalities. They offered help to 1,790 people (in Poland – 9189). In the five courses of the Małopolska Centres for Social Integration was involved 180 long-term unemployed, of whom 133 completed the entire series of the course. Thus, even the most difficult clients of labour offices and social welfare centres – although in the microscale – had a chance to help in the recovery from a professional inactivity (*Województwo małopolskie 2010. Podregiony, powiaty, gminy 2010*).

Unemployment in Małopolska voivodeship has affected tens of thousands of people, of which nearly one-third – in the long run. During the period of the research local policy was to reduce the negative effects of years of forced inactivity, and was conducted according to the principles of „activating the unemployed” and „social inclusion”.

3. SUMMARY

The essence of a labour market is a division, and the most important concerns the employed and unemployed. The memoirs of the unemployed during the Great Depression and the second wave of system reforms reveal the price that people pay for this division. Based on my analysis of the subjects of personal documents it can be said that unemployment has got a very effective impact on attitudes towards work and mobilizes for its seeking and respecting. One of the memoirists summarized it: „What is harmful for me at work is that

I cannot refuse the boss. Each her request is a command for me – I do not see the problem. That's my bias after two years of unemployment. I must be in time, there is no other option. I could have been unnecessary” (Budzyński 2008: 433).

The diachronic perspective reveals continuity and change in experiencing and coping with unemployment at the regional (provincial) level. Based on the selected memoirs' material published by the Institute of Social Economy in 1933 and 2003–2008. It has made possible to compare the fate of unemployed women (with the one exception), their experienced poverty (with the one exception) and psychosocial strategies to cope with the lack of employment.

The comparison of the unemployment in Małopolska voivodeship makes possible that the other conclusions can be drawn. The most important are: better situation than in most other voivodeships in the country, the stability in taken position, moderate differentiation between counties and regions, significantly more favourable situation of the residents of major cities than in rural areas, disadvantage of the young people in opportunities to get registered employment, and the activation of the unemployed with a help of various forms of social intervention (a more favourable situation than in other regions of the country).

Public opinion research centres have showed for many years that unemployment is perceived by the public as one of the most harmful problems of the collective life (Miś, Nózka and Smagacz-Poziemska 2011). The experts, journalists, and politicians sometimes agree that lack of employment is one of the most important issues facing our country (Miś 2012). I tried to show the subjective dimension of these difficulties, and also to put them in the framework of time and space. Based on memoirs we can say that the people living in Małopolska voivodeship can be characterized in the last 12 years by their resourcefulness, both in the use of the available social and health services, as well as in an individual and family business. The fear of unemployment has contributed to the appreciation of jobs, particularly certain and long-run forms, and seeking for the other types of protection (medical, pension, retirement, family, social ones). However, quantitative indicators and regionalist research suggest that the regional social policy in this period was focused on the professional activation of the unemployed and caring for the most vulnerable categories of the social exclusion. On the basis of the collected material and prepared research it can be said that the memoirists testified individual tragedies and their alienation resulting from the unsuccessful attempts to be employed and self-employed. Official data shows the existence of the labour market policy with the activating attitude to the unemployed, and their relatively more favourable situation in Małopolska voivodeship in comparison with the most of the other voivodeships.

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BEZROBOTNI W WOJEWÓDZTWIE MAŁOPOLSKIM – PRZESZŁOŚĆ I TERAŹNIEJSZOŚĆ
PROBLEMU SPOŁECZNEGO W ŚWIETLE DOKUMENTÓW OSOBISTYCH I URZĘDOWYCH

Obecne województwo małopolskie stanowi rdzeń południowo-wschodniego regionu kraju. Małopolska przechodziła liczne zmiany polityczne i administracyjne w okresie ostatnich dwóch stuleci, w tym w okresie po drugiej wojnie światowej. W okresie zaborów Małopolska była regionem przeludnionym, ubogim i zacofanym gospodarczo. W okresie międzywojennym sytuacja się poprawiła, lecz kryzys lat 30. XX wieku spowodował masowe bezrobocie i znaczne pogorszenie warunków życia rodzin, co znalazło wyraz w pamiętnikach napisanych przez mieszkańców województwa krakowskiego. Zostały one opublikowane w klasycznej pracy *Pamiętniki bezrobotnych* pod redakcją Ludwika Krzywickiego. Doświadczenie bezrobocia lat wielkiego kryzysu zostało skonfrontowane z opisami bezczynności zawodowej w pierwszej dekadzie transformacji systemowej. Subiektywny świat bezrobotnych został uzupełniony danymi ilościowymi pokazującymi zmiany na rynku pracy województwa małopolskiego. Porównanie pamiętników współczesnych i tych sprzed 80 lat pozwoliło zauważyć różnice w zakresie instytucjonalnego wsparcia ze strony systemu opieki zdrowotnej i pomocy społecznej oraz podobieństwa w przeżywaniu bezrobocia.

Słowa kluczowe: problemy społeczne, zmiana społeczna, bezrobocie, dokumenty osobiste, rynek pracy