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**SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS  
IN THE WARSAW VOIVODESHIP 1959–1972  
(AUTHORITY, SOCIETY, PRESS)**

**SPOŁECZNE BUDOWNICTWO SZKOLNE NA TERENIE  
WOJEWÓDZTWA WARSZAWSKIEGO 1959–1972  
(WŁADZA, SPOŁECZEŃSTWO, PRASA )**

The article will focus on the social construction of schools, primarily the construction of schools “Monuments of the Polish State Millennium” – millenarian schools. Problems, phenomena and facts typical for the whole country, regional differences in relation to general phenomena and specific investment yields in the described area will be illustrated by selected examples.

The time frames referred to in the title include the functioning of two funds: the Social Fund for the Construction of Schools (SFBS) in the years 1959–1966 and the Social Fund for the Construction of Schools and Halls of Residence (SFBSiI) in the years 1966–1972, with the emphasis on the first period due to the clarity of activities and more accurate documentation in the sources. The second period, due to repeated processes, was covered only by basic statistics. The area of analysis covered the Warsaw voivodeship, with the emphasis on north-eastern Mazovia, specifically the five counties of the north-eastern part of this historical region, namely: Maków, Ostrów, Ostrołęka, Przasnysz and Wyszaków – due to the content profile of XXXI Zeszyt Naukowy OTN. In the first territorial reference, mainly statistical data and voivodeship-wide processes were included, in the narrowed one, a detailed exemplification indicating the similarities and differences between common and local phenomena. The analyses do not therefore include the capital city of Warsaw, which was then a separate administrative entity. In fact, analogous phenomena in the capital city have already been described<sup>1</sup>. Schools built for the funds provided by the Social Fund for the Reconstruction of the Country and the Capital have also been omitted.

The basic sources can be found in the Archive of New Files in the fonds: National Committee of SFBS and SFBSiI<sup>2</sup>, and also the Ministry of Education<sup>3</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> J. Gołota, *Warszawskie „Tysiąclatki”*, [In:] Idem, *Między historią polityczną a historią społeczną*. Pułtusk–Olsztyn–Ostrołęka–Warszawa 2014, pp. 394–336.

<sup>2</sup> AAN (Archive of New Files), Krajowy Komitet Społecznego Komitetu Budowy Szkół (KK SFBS) (National Committee of Social Committee for the Construction of Schools) in

PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party)<sup>4</sup>. From printed sources mainly statistical data<sup>5</sup> have been used. The documentation of selected facts is supplemented with press releases<sup>6</sup>. The main publication is *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne PRL (Architecture and Construction of Schools in PRL)*<sup>7</sup> containing the list of millenarian schools, drawn up by the officials of the Ministry of Education on the basis of: "Listy obiektów wzniesionych w akcji Tysiąc Szkół Pomników Tysiąclecia Państwa Polskiego" ("Lists of buildings erected during the action Thousand of School Monuments of the Polish State Millennium")<sup>8</sup>. The biggest difficulty consists in the inaccuracy of the numerical data on material effects, i.e. school or residential chambers given to use. Divergent data is included in the documents of SFBS, the Ministry of Education. Even in the subsequent statistical yearbooks, there are differences in the number of school chambers given to use in relation to previous years. However, the differences do not distort the essential image.

### **Polish nationwide conditions for building schools from social funds**

The shortage of school premises is one of the basic socio-economic problems of post-war Poland. The second Republic did not eliminate the backwardness of the areas under the partitions. War losses (1939–1945) in school premises were estimated at 30–40% by the Special Commission at the Council of Ministers. In the three-year plan 9.500 chambers were built or rebuilt, while only 8.283 school chambers were given to use during the six-year plan<sup>9</sup>. In the years 1956–1960, 16.740 chambers were built. The second conditioning factor of the premises

Warsaw sig. 1170; Krajowy Komitet Społecznego Komitetu Budowy Szkół i Internatów (National Committee of Social Committee for the Construction of Schools and Halls of Residence) (KK SFBSiI), sign. 1171.

<sup>3</sup> AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty (The Ministry of Education), sign. 8413.

<sup>4</sup> AAN, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, Komitet Centralny w Warszawie (Polish United Workers' Party, Central Committee in Warsaw) (PZPR, KC), No. of fonds 1354, Part V. Biuro Polityczne (Politburo), Part VII Sekretariat KC (Secretariat of the Central Committee); Wydział Nauki i Oświaty (Science and Education Department), Społeczny Fundusz Budowy Szkół (The Social Fund for the Construction of Schools).

<sup>5</sup> Roczniki Statystyczne 1958–1972; Statystyka Polski – Materiały Statystyczne (Warszawa), czerwiec 1966, Issue 4(126). Statystyka Szkolnictwa. Szkolnictwo ogólnokształcące i opieka nad dzieckiem i młodzieżą 1964/1965 i 1965/1966.

<sup>6</sup> "Trybuna Ludu", "Trybuna Mazowiecka", "Głos Nauczycielski".

<sup>7</sup> *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne PRL*. Eds. J. Dobek, Z. Huszcza, F. Krysiak, J. Łoziński, Cz. Szymanek, Z. Szymański, A. Uniejewski, T. Wysocki, Warszawa 1976.

<sup>8</sup> Listy obiektów wzniesionych w akcji Tysiąc Szkół Pomników Tysiąclecia Państwa Polskiego, AAN, KKFBS, sign. 1170, Vol. 17, pp. 8–66.

<sup>9</sup> S. Zdyb, *Potrzeby szkolnictwa podstawowego, problemy budownictwa szkolnego*. Nowa Szkoła 1960, No. 6, p. 21; Shorthand notes from the meeting of the extended SFBS Committee of 11 May 1960, AAN, KKSFB, sign. 1170, Posiedzenia KK SFBS i Komisji 1960, Vol. 19, p. 2.

situation was the demographic boom. For example, in 1957, 782.300 children were born, in 1958 – 755.500 children, in 1965 – 547.400<sup>10</sup>.

And there are yet two aspects of the construction of schools, it is difficult to precisely define the degree of their influence on decision-making. The abandonment of October slogans became apparent especially in relation to the Catholic Church. The announcement of the Great Novena by Primate Stefan Wyszyński provoked a counter-attack, which was patronized mainly by Władysław Gomułka. The idea of the millennium of Christianity in Poland was contrasted with the slogan of the millennium of the Polish state. The involvement of the society in improving the school premises was to be made one of the weapons of war in that confrontation. Simplistically, it can be said that, among others, days of voluntary work without pay for the benefit of the collective and fundraising resulting in new school chambers and apartments for teachers were to direct people's attention away from church celebrations. The second aspect, rarely noticed in historiography: millenarian schools were built during the Cold War, perhaps in the 1960s – silenced but not eliminating armed conflict from the public space. That is why some of the schools at that time were also potential hospitals and many of them were built with shelters.

The idea of social school construction came from teachers<sup>11</sup> and was explicitly articulated during the second convention of the Union of Polish Teachers (ZNP) on 2–5 May 1957 in Warsaw<sup>12</sup>. Soon its authorship was arbitrarily attributed to Władysław Gomułka, who on 24 September 1958 summarized his speech delivered during the national conference of the party education activists organized at the Central Committee, with the following slogan “1.000 schools to celebrate the Millennium”<sup>13</sup>. To implement the idea, the Social Fund for the Construction of Millenarian Schools and its National Committee<sup>14</sup> were established, which happened on 29 November 1958, during the plenary session of the National

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<sup>10</sup> *Statystyka urodzeń i zgonów po II wojnie światowej*. Rocznik Demograficzny (Warszawa) 2012, pp. 28–29 (to compare: in 2014, 375,000 children were born).

<sup>11</sup> J. Korcozowicz, *Pomnik nam nie wystarczy*. Nowa Kultura 8 June 1958, No. 23, p. 7; W. Polkowski, *Pomniki nam nie wystarczą*. Głos Nauczycielski 22 February 1958, No. 25, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>12</sup> A. Gładysz, *Oświata, kultura, nauka w latach 1947–1959. Wybrane problemy polityczne*. Warszawa 1959, p. 43; *Osiągnięcia i problemy rozwoju oświaty i wychowania w dwudziestoleciu Polski Ludowej*. Ed. Suchodolski. Warszawa 1966, pp. 210–214; *Zjazd Oświatowy 2–5 maja 1957 r.* Ed. S. Kwiatkowski. Warszawa 1958.

<sup>13</sup> *Szkoła musi lepiej przygotować młodzież do życia i pracy, wychowywać w duchu socjalizmu*. A lecture delivered by comrade Władysław Gomułka at the meeting of the party education activists, idem *Nowa Szkoła* 1958, No. 10, pp. 2–11.

<sup>14</sup> *Wysiłkiem całego narodu zbudujemy tysiąc szkół na Tysiąclecie*. *Apel Ogólnopolskiego Komitetu Frontu Jedności Narodu*. Trybuna Ludu 30 November 1958, No. 334, ed. A, p. 3; *Potrzebny jest udział całego społeczeństwa*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 1 December 1958, No. 285.

Committee of the Front of National Unity (FJN). On 14 January 1966, it was transformed into SFBSiL, with a new slogan “The nation for its youth”<sup>15</sup>.

The Marshal of Sejm, Czesław Wycech, became the head of the National Committee of both mutations<sup>16</sup>. The principles of operation, objectives, central and local structures of the Fund were regulated by “Instrukcja Ogólnopolskiego Komitetu Frontu Jedności Narodu i Krajowego Komitetu Społecznego Funduszu Budowy Szkół” (Instructions of the National Committee of the Front of National Unity and the National Committee of the Social Fund for the Construction of Schools)<sup>17</sup>. The main purpose of those organizations was to collect money and mobilize the public to build new schools and apartments for teachers.

The SFBS National Committee usurped the right to issue almost arbitrary orders to the ministries and central offices, as a consequence, the voivodeship and county committees issued directives to the local authorities. The investment projects in the region were supervised by school districts departments of education and educational inspectorates, it was also there where financial and accounting services were. However, organizational matters, or let us say enforcement matters in terms of the collection of money, were dealt with by delegated teachers – per one in each county. In addition, it was generally the pedagogues who were obliged to organize promotional events, numerous competitions, or to perform the function of money collectors wandering from farm to farm in a three-person group<sup>18</sup>.

Suitable committees were established in each voivodeship, then, in counties, towns, districts, etc. In the Warsaw voivodeship the SFBS Voivodeship Coordination Committee was established on 18 December 1958, during the meeting of the Voivodeship Committee of the Front of National Unity. Janusz Łopuski, vice-chairman of the Voivodeship National Council, became the head of the Warsaw Coordination Committee, Ignacy Klimaszewski, the Warsaw District Curator became one of the vice-presidents of the Warsaw Coordination Committee and, among others, Jakub Donigiewicz the president of the ZNP Warsaw District became one of the Bureau members, and Stanisław Panek, a teacher, was appointed

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<sup>15</sup> *Apel Ogólnopolskiego Komitetu FJN „Naród Swojej Młodzieży*. Trybuna Ludu 16 January 1965, No. 15, ed. C, p. 1; Głos Nauczycielski 23 January 1966, No. 4; Shorthand notes from the plenary meeting of SFBS National Committee on 13 January 1966, AAN, sign. 1171, Posiedzenia KK i Komisji, Vol. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the first meeting of Social Fund for the Construction of Millenarian Schools National Committee, which took place on 29 November 1958. (URM), AAN, Krajowy Komitet Funduszu Budowy Szkół, sign. 1170, p. 44, Vol. 18, p. 1. *W wielkiej ofensywnie oświatowej potrzebny jest udział całego społeczeństwa*. Lecture of comrade Aleksander Zawadzki at the plenary meeting of FJN National Committee.

<sup>17</sup> Ogólnopolski Komitet Frontu Jedności Narodu i Krajowy Komitet Społecznego Funduszu Budowy Szkół „Instrukcja w sprawie społecznej akcji budowy 1000 szkół dla uczczenia Tysiąclecia Państwa Polskiego”. Warszawa, December 1958 [no specific date].

<sup>18</sup> Letter of the Minister to teachers on the participation of schools and other educational and day-care facilities in the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State, Dz.U. MO, 10 March 1960, No. 3, item 30.

the secretary. The composition of this panel was supplemented by a representative of the United People's (ZSL), managers of construction companies, Voivodeship National Council officials and Urszula Kozirowska, a secretary of the editorial office of "Trybuna Mazowiecka". During the plenary meeting, the needs of the voivodeship in terms of primary, general, vocational, special education and childcare were assessed. For the years 1959–1965, 125 schools were planned to be built from the funds of the SFBS, alongside with 488 schools to be built from state funds. For this purpose, it was planned to raise PLN 1 billion 800 million within seven years, that is PLN 115 million a year<sup>19</sup>. The ambitious collection plan (it was planned to raise about PLN 8 billion in the whole country) proved to be unrealistic and was not carried out. However, such declaration shows how high the verve and hopes were when it came to building schools.

The objectives of the Mazovian Committee were similar to those of its counterparts in the country, which were primarily responsible for collecting money, organizing community work, producing construction materials, and social supervision in the investment process. In the Warsaw voivodeship, 33 committees of various levels were established<sup>20</sup>, also in the counties constituting the subject of these deliberations. Just after the establishment of the SFBS, Mazovian companies submitted a declaration on the construction of schools<sup>21</sup>.

### Investment processes

Schools were financed from three sources: firstly, from the state budget about 65% of expenditures depending on the voivodeship. The schools that may be allocated to this group are those, so-called founded by the military<sup>22</sup>, workplaces (especially in Silesia) and other economic entities. In the areas attractive to tourists – that is outside the described area – there were erected schools used as children summer camps facilities during holidays. The Management of the Building of Workers' Housing Estates, i.e. construction companies subject to the regional national councils were supposed to spend 5% of its resources on schools. The second form of investment was social schools, in particular millenarian schools officially named "Schools – Monuments of the Polish State Millennium" – about 30–35%. Next to the millenarian schools, volunteers built extensions of various kinds, often single chambers or sanitary facilities. An important element of the program were apartments for teachers, the union expected their number to be equal

<sup>19</sup> *Tysiąclecie tematem narady w WK FJN*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 19 December 1958, No. 301, pp. 1–2.

<sup>20</sup> AAN, NIK, sign. 1154, v. 29/416, Kontrola działalności społecznego Komitetu Funduszu Budowy Szkół. opracowanie zbiorcze, st. inspektor St. Skoroszewski, data rozpoczęcia 1 III 1965, data zakończenia 30 IX 1965, sprawozdanie poufne.

<sup>21</sup> *Zakłady pracy i instytucje fundują szkoły dla mazowieckich dzieci*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 3 December 1958, No. 287.

<sup>22</sup> *Tysiąclatka dla mazowieckiej młodzieży*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 8 September 1964, No. 214.

to the number of school chambers. Equipping classrooms for teaching physics, chemistry, biology and manual work should be regarded as a symbol of modernity.

The construction of millenarian schools is a common social-economic movement in which the state authorities, political parties, social and professional organizations became involved. In the latter, the Union of Polish Teachers (ZNP) was the leader. The press played a very important role, "Głos Nauczycielski"<sup>23</sup> took the lead, especially within the first two years. In each voivodeship the role of a promoter was taken over by the authorities of the Voivodeship Committees of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). "Trybuna Mazowiecka", in comparison with, for example, "Słowo Ludu" or "Trybuna Robotnicza", gave the SFBS little coverage, it did not report on, for example (like its counterparts in other voivodeships) current results of fundraising, did not mention leaders or those "falling behind with payments", and did not call for generosity. Often the information was provided by field correspondents, there were no reports from the area described in this article.

Fundraising for the SFBS is also a form of some kind of additional tax imposed on society – assumedly a voluntary one. Employees at their workplaces, offices, state institutions were supposed to pay 0.5% of income, farmers – 2% of annual income, members of creative unions and freelancers – 0.5% of annual income, private enterprises – 5% of annual tax, cooperatives – 10% of annual surplus. Voluntary additional contributions from institutions, workplaces were also forecast. Apart from fundraising, voluntary contribution of work was planned as well as construction materials production, income from events, fundraising organized by school pupils, common money collections in the street. The fulfilment of the "patriotic duty" met with various attitudes, from genuine voluntary contributions – especially in the places where a school was being built – to official boycott, avoidance of contributions, complaints to the editorial staff of the press, most often to "Przyjaciółka". Particular difficulties appeared in the countryside. The generosity of the counties described in this article was not impressive – in the Warsaw voivodeship in 1964, per 414.035 households in 27 counties, only 138.205 households, that is 33%, "carried out the plan" at 100%, and the lowest indicator of the plan implementation, that is less than 15%, was in the

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<sup>23</sup> Several examples: J.S., *Akcja jeszcze nie w pełni powszechna*. Głos Nauczycielski 25 April 1960, No. 39; w.m., *Budujemy szkoły Tysiąclecia*. Głos Nauczycielski 22 May 1960, No. 21; W. Schayer, *Powstaje Towarzystwo Budowy Szkół. Społeczeństwo uzupełni środki państwowe dla zrealizowania wielkiego planu budownictwa szkolnego*. Głos Nauczycielski 16 February 1958, No. 7, p. 1; *Budujemy Szkoły Tysiąclecia*. Głos Nauczycielski 8 November 1959, No. 45; Głos Nauczycielski 29 November 1959, No. 48; Głos Nauczycielski 13 December 1959, No. 50; Głos Nauczycielski 27 December 1959, No. 52.

households in the following counties: Ostrów Mazowiecka, Maków Mazowiecki and Przasnysz (outside the area of Piaseczno)<sup>24</sup>.

### Collection and investment effects

The collection achievements of SFBS in the years 1959–1965 in Poland amounted to 8.605.502 zlotys, including the Warsaw voivodeship with 471.802 zlotys<sup>25</sup>, which gave the 5th place in the country. And in the years 1966–1972, the collections for SFBSiI in Poland amounted to 13.727.524 zlotys, including 894.922 zlotys in the Warsaw voivodeship, the second place in the country<sup>26</sup>. The Katowice voivodeship was leading in terms of the collections, which was influenced by subsidies from large workplaces – in the first collection period, the Katowice committee received 1.489.809 zlotys, and in the second – 2.170.460 zlotys.

In the discussed counties, the amount of collections was similar. In Ostrołęka county, 11.799 zlotys were collected (137 zlotys per one inhabitant), Ostrów county – 11.383 zlotys (152 zlotys per one inhabitant), Wyszaków county – 6.995 zlotys (145 zlotys per one inhabitant), Maków county – 9.203 zlotys (179 zlotys per one inhabitant), in Przasnysz county – 11.186 zlotys (174 zlotys per one inhabitant) – the 1st place in the voivodeship in 1965<sup>27</sup>. The voivodeship average amounted to 197 zlotys per one inhabitant. 26 thousand people, “Who during the action very often turned into real social activists, which is also a great achievement of SFBS”, were involved in organizing the collection in Mazovia. The Mazovian summary of the action “A thousand schools for the Millennium” took place during the plenum of the Voivodeship Committee of the Front of National Unity on 1 February 1966<sup>28</sup>, when all the speakers, politicians, unionists, the head of the voivodeship military staff, the president of SFBS and SFOS thanked, expressing hope to continue the collection within the SFBSiI under the heading “Naród swojej młodzieży” (“The Nation for its Youth”).

Table 1

Overall material effects gained in the Warsaw voivodeship against the background of national achievements in the years 1959–1965

<sup>24</sup> AAN, Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, sign. 1154, p. 12, but “Trybuna Mazowiecka” reported, for example, that farmers from the Ostrołęka county in 1965 carried out the plan at 107%, vide: Trybuna Mazowiecka 25 January 1966, No. 20.

<sup>25</sup> In 1959 it was planned to collect 1.8 billion zlotys.

<sup>26</sup> *Architektura i budownictwo* ..., p. 28, 35. The report includes an approximate value – 468.066 zlotys.

<sup>27</sup> *Dorobek SFBS*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 25 January 1966, No. 20; Trybuna Mazowiecka 1 February 1966, No. 26.

<sup>28</sup> *Mazowsze czynem wieńczy obchody Tysiąclecia*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 2 February 1966, No. 27.

Specified	The number of						In total
	Objects	Didactic chambers	Residential chambers	Chambers in kindergartens	Places in dormitories	Working places in workshops	Expenditure in thousands of zlotys
Poland	1423	17.549	7258	840	3.963	3.138	8.155.365
Warsaw Voivodeship	109	1.066	901	0	250	0	451.517

Source: *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne PRL*. Eds. J. Dobek, Z. Huszcza, F. Krysiak, J. Łoziński, Cz. Szymanek, Z. Szymański, A. Uniejewski, T. Wysocki. Warszawa 1976, pp. 29–30.

Table 2

Material effects concerning school and residential chambers gained in the Warsaw voivodeship against the background of national achievements in the years 1959–1965 with the division to types of schools

	Primary schools			Expenditure in thousands of zlotys
	The number of			
	Schools	Didactic chambers	Residential chambers	
Poland	1.288	15.186	6.532	6.524.726
Warsaw voivodeship	104	960	789	389.543
Secondary schools				
Poland	41	732	274	405.249
Warsaw voivodeship	1	18	12	7.741
Vocational schools				
Poland	75	1473	382	1.077.243
Warsaw voivodeship	4	88	100	54.233

Source: *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne PRL...*, pp. 29–30.



In the Warsaw voivodeship, similarly to the entire country, primary schools were dominant. Secondary schools were built in Sierpc – a mechanics technical school, in Ciechanów and Ostrów Mazowiecka – economic schools, in Łochów – a secondary school, in Dębe – the Water Management Technical School<sup>29</sup>.

Within the investment yields in the country, the Katowice voivodeship was dominant, then the Lublin and Bydgoszcz voivodeships. The Warsaw voivodeship took the fourth place in the country. The local presidents of the voivodeship coordination committees, Jerzy Ziętek in Katowice and Paweł Dąbek in Lublin, had major influence on the success of the Katowice and Lublin voivodeships. It was particularly Paweł Dąbek who could raise investment funds exceeding the voivodeship collection effects. The Warsaw voivodeship did not have a distinctive and operative leader. During the SFBS, mainly schools were built, whereas during the continuation of the action through SFBSiI, apart from dormitories, health service buildings were established, such as health centers, clinics, cultural facilities.

Moreover, next to millenarian schools, and in the years 1956–1966 in Poland, as a result of non-institutional “spontaneous community actions”, 4.441 school chambers were built, including 269 in the Warsaw voivodeship, and 4.602 in the years 1966–1972, including 281 in the Warsaw voivodeship.

### **Similarities and specificity of north-eastern Mazovia**

The processes related to school construction were basically similar in the entire country. The management of SFBS fought in order to avoid two-chamber schools, allowing for at least four-chamber ones. Theoretically, the location of millenarian schools was supposed to be dependent on the amount of collected contributions. Money was collected in the counties but it was the voivodeship officials who made decisions about the investments. There was no rule exacting the use of the collected money in the place of collection. As far as Ostrów county was in the fifth place in the voivodeship in terms of the amount of expenditure, Wyszaków county was ranked last but one. Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki dominated with the expenditure amounting to 56.181 zlotys. A millenarian school could be “arranged” by an active local leader or an efficient official. A millenarian school was not always a fortunate gift for the local community: higher contributions, community work. Also entrepreneurs did not engage themselves willingly in building those schools, due to the not always useful community actions. They could not impose markup on the free building materials and the social supervision of works was “loafing about” the building site.

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<sup>29</sup> In the Warsaw voivodeship, special schools (3 in the country) and kindergartens (7 such objects in the country), music schools (3 in the country), school workshops (16 in the country with 3.088 workplaces) were not built within the social funds. In Poland, 21 dormitories, with places for 3.963 students, including the Warsaw voivodeship with one dormitory for 250 students, were built.

There were disputes about the standards, equipment. The view that the Memorials should be exemplary and modernly equipped, won. The carried out inspections show that construction standards in schools were high for those times, especially in comparison to “blind kitchens (with no windows)” in residential construction. For instance, in the archive of the school in the Stacja district in Ostrołęka there was preserved a project of the school with a swimming pool! A full implementation of such amenities as a central heating, running water, toilets with water flushing, showers in rural schools, was hindered simply by the lack of sewage and sanitation infrastructure<sup>30</sup>.

Table 3

Material effects of school construction in five counties of north-eastern Mazovia

Locality	County	School chambers	Laboratories	Residential chambers	Expenditure in thousands of zlotys	Date of commissioning*
Rzekuń	Ostrołęcki	5	1	6	3.728	30 Aug 1960
Wąsewo	Ostrów Maz.	7	2	18	3.370	28 Aug 1961
Budy Rządowe	Przasnysz	4	1	8	1.321	3 Sep 1961
Komorowo	Ostrów Maz.	7	2	2	3.732	31 Sep 1961
Szelków	Maków Maz.	6	1	10	3.763	22 July 1962
Zawady	Przasnysz	5	1	7	3.227	2 Sep 1962
Ostrołęka	Ostrołęka	11	2	2	5.553	1 Sep 1962
Rybieńko Leśne**	Wyszków	11	2	0	5.297	1 Sep 1963
Rzęgnowo	Przasnysz	4	1	10	2.451	1 Sep 1963
Gocły	Ostrołęka	5	3	8	1.302	2 Sep 1964
Trynosy	Ostrów Maz.	6	2	12	2.786	2 Sep 1964
Raki	Maków Maz.	8	3	16	2.643	2 Sep 1964
Wola Mystkowska	Wyszków	6	3	12	2.212	2 Sep 1964
Zębry Laskowice	Wyszków	6	1	7	1.378	2 Sep 1964
Osówiec	Przasnysz	6	2	12	2.462	2 Sep 1964
Kadzidło	Ostrołęka	7	3	12	4.146	1 Sep 1965
Żelazna	Przasnysz	6	2	9	2.678	1 Sep 1965

<sup>30</sup> Information of the general manager of the Ministry of Education Wojciech Pokora submitted during a joint meeting of the Sejm committees of construction and municipal engineering as well as the committee of education and science, which took place on 3 June 1959, A bulletin No. 45/301 of the Sejm office, the press department of 4 June 1959, p. 5.

Młodzianowo	Maków Maz.	4	1	5	2.240	30 Dec 1965
Ostrów Maz.	Ostrów Maz.	15	3	6	8.923	30 Dec 1965

Source: *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne...*, pp. 271–350; *Listy obiektów wzniesionych w akcji Tysiąc Szkół Pomników Tysiąclecia Państwa Polskiego*. AAN, KKFBS, sign. 1170, Vol. 17, pp. 8–66; *Sprawozdanie z działalności SFBS za lata 1958–1965*. AAN, KKFBS, sign. 1171.

\*According to the data from the sources of the Ministry of Education. The differences in dates depended on the interpretation: formal acceptance, the start of classes, and settlement for the construction.

\*\* *Piękna szkoła w Rybieniu Leśnym*. Trybuna Mazowiecka, 5 January 1966, No. 3.

The number of school chambers, laboratories in the counties specified in the article is comparable to other parts of Poland.

In comparison to the country, among the patrons of schools, the people or the events related to the communist ideology were not dominant. Gen. Józef Bem (Rzekuń), Stanisław Staszic (Wąsewo), The Heroes of the January Uprising (Raki) Stanisław Dubois (Ostrów). An exception might be: Col. Bolesław Kowalski (Kadzidło) and particularly Col. Michał Gniazdowicz (Żelazna). Several examples from the country: The school in Ładzyń, in the Mińsk Mazowiecki county, was given the name of The Fallen Heroes of the Citizens' Militia and Security Service. In Czumsk Duży (Rypin county) – the Fighters of the Polish Workers' Party, and after his death, Aleksander Zawadzki was dominant among patrons.

The described area is positively shown in the protocols of NIK (the Supreme Audit Office). The inspectors of this institution did not detect any irregularities, whereas for instance in the Lublin voivodeship some cases were directed even to the prosecutor. A similar situation was with workmanship. In the discussed counties, the inspection of NIK did not detect gross defective execution of works, whereas it indicated numerous examples of negligence within the entire country (leaking roofs, cracking walls, flooded basements!).

Giving to use a millenarian school was a great event with the participation of the highest authorities. An example of this is Kadzidło. The building was constructed next to the “old run-down barrack”, “in the scenery resembling the Sopot Opera House [...] 7 didactic chambers, training rooms, a gymnasium, a scout room, a physician's office, sanitary appliances... the new building was well approved by not only children but also older community members, who admired the rooms”. On a beautiful sunny day in the ceremony participated: the president of the Presidium of the Voivodeship National Council Józef Pińkowski, curator Marian Migdalski, the president of Warsaw District of ZNP (the Polish Teachers' Union) Stanisław Jeziorski, the 1st secretary of I KP PZPR Stanisław Laskowski, the president of the County National Council Ryszard Kitliński. “A nice surprise

was prepared by the Public Committee for Tuberculosis Control, whose vice-president Andrzej Krauze gave toiletries for brushing teeth to all the primary school first graders<sup>31</sup>. That was a typical scenario of a new school year inauguration ceremony in a new building. Detailed descriptions were preserved in the school chronicles, e.g. “On 1 September 1962, the inhabitants of Ostrołęka Stacja district finally managed to see the long awaited day. In the presence of... [i.a. the Minister of Communication, the Authority for Education, the Director-General of the Ministry of Education, county authorities of the communist party... – J.G.] ... at the end there was an artistic performance... and sightseeing the school... 7 classrooms, training rooms, a gymnasium, a scout room, a physician’s office, sanitary appliances... the new building was well approved by not only children but also older community members, who admired the rooms”<sup>32</sup>.

### Final conclusions

A critical view of PRL (People’s Republic of Poland), including the centrally planned economy, lack of sovereignty, the political system, determined the assessment of the great school investment effort in the 1960s<sup>33</sup>. PZPR lost the battle for the souls in politics, it did not overcome the Church<sup>34</sup>, it lost the struggle for the system, for the economic model, but the schools remained. Some of them, especially in small localities, were liquidated (e.g. Młodzianowo, Maków Maz. county) or their use was changed. The majority of schools have been functioning until the present day (all of them in towns and bigger localities) and after taking control over them by local authorities and carrying out renovations and thermo-modernizations (frequently from the European funds) they are used by the youth to this day.

In the conditions of the demographic boom, war damage, lack of passenger transport means, millenarian schools were a way to improve the conditions of education, especially in small localities. In the 1960s, the educational environment achieved success within the school construction field, frequently for the price of

<sup>31</sup> *Nowy rok szkolny*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 2 September 1966, No. 209; *Nowa Tysiąclatka w Kadzidle*. Trybuna Mazowiecka 3 September 1966, No. 21.

<sup>32</sup> Kronika Szkoły Podstawowej Ostrołęka Stacja (Ostrołęka Stacja Primary School Chronicle).

<sup>33</sup> With no wider publicity but with controversial assessment, the 50th anniversary of commissioning the first millenarian school in Czeladź was accepted, J. Podgórska, *Przepraszamy za usterki*. Polityka 8 September 2001, No. 36, pp. 92 – 97; PS, *Milenijne szkoły*. Głos Nauczycielski 1 September 2009, No. 37.

<sup>34</sup> In fact, in 1966 Gomułka triumphed: “We are celebrating the Millennium of the Polish State with great achievements of the people’s government... the gift in the form of building over 1.000 schools. The Church did not join this action – it took a completely passive position. If it had felt a patriotic duty, if it was connected to the system, the Church would have supported the action but it did not”. Gomułka’s speech made at the plenum of OP FJN on 14 January 1966, Trybuna Ludu 16 January 1965, No. 15, ed. C, p. 3; *Z obrad Sesji OK FJN*. Głos Nauczycielski 23 January 1966, No. 4.

opportunist thankful words addressed to the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and "Wiesław". The investment success is seen particularly in the context of the "great constructions of socialism": for instance Turoszów, Plock, nitrogen plants in Puławy, or the Ostrołęka cellulose factory. Within two years, more chambers were commissioned than during the entire six-year plan! Of course, we may indicate the instrumental treatment of the millenarian schools by the contemporary authorities trying to strike "the Millennium with a millenarian school". For instance, in 1964 the celebration of the "Millennium" was replaced by the "Twentieth Anniversary of the People's Republic of Poland". What may be criticized is standardization, random examples negligence, extorting subscriptions, sometimes nonsense social actions, wasting building materials. Simultaneously with the investment process, the ideologization of education was carried out, which is shown in the clearest example of the act of 15 July 1961 "O rozwoju systemu oświaty i wychowania" ("On the development of educational and pedagogical system")<sup>35</sup>, removing religion classes from school and politicizing educational goals, which popularized the process of removing crucifixes from public places. Perhaps this is why in this deeply religious area the collection effects in the countryside were clearly low, which was noticed by NIK during an inspection. Millenarian schools in those days opened the door for modernity, higher standards. School laboratories, common rooms and gymnasiums were built in millenarian schools. Finally – the scope of the phenomenon. Out of 35.939 school chambers commissioned in Poland in the years 1959–1965, 11.410 were built in millenarian schools<sup>36</sup>. Moreover, 6.935 residential rooms were made available<sup>37</sup>. It means that on average every third or fourth school in a particular county was constructed thanks to social funds. As a result of social action in Poland in the years 1959–1972, 1.423 buildings were erected for education units<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Ustawa z dnia 15 lipca 1961 roku o rozwoju systemu oświaty i wychowania, Dz.U. 1961, No. 32, item 160; *Sejm debatuje. Reforma szkolnictwa – tematem debaty generalnej*. Trybuna Ludu 16 July 1961, No. 193, p. 1, 3; *Sejm uchwalił reformę szkolnictwa. Zamknięcie wiosennej sesji parlamentu*. Trybuna Ludu 17 July 1961, No. 194, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Rocznik Statystyczny (Warszawa) 1966, p. 218.

<sup>37</sup> Prezydium Krajowego Komitetu Społecznego Funduszu Budowy Szkół, Sprawozdanie z działalności Społecznego Funduszu Budowy Szkół w latach 1958–1965, Warszawa grudzień 1965.

<sup>38</sup> This number comes from the publishing of the Ministry of Education: Architecture and construction... In literature there is different data J. Rozłuski in the statistical analysis *Rozwój oświaty na wsi w latach 1945–1973*, Warszawa 1974, determined the number of the commissioned millenarian schools in the years 1959–1965 to be 1.197. In an official report of KK SFBS it was stated that from 1959 to the end of the action 1.394 schools were put into use. Those differences are reflected in the literature, various numbers are given. They result simply from the nomenclature, as a matter of fact, millenarian schools were established only from SFBS (schools were given appropriate certificates). The schools built in the years 1966–1972 did not receive an official status of the Millennium Monument but

This is one of the most enduring effects of the post-October thaw. Building schools in north-eastern Mazovia was exceptionally needed, due to extreme shortages in school premises<sup>39</sup>. In the past, despite the peripheral nature, due to the efforts of i.a. Adam Chętnik in that region, already at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the sense of Polishness was being awakened and Polish school was fought for<sup>40</sup>.

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that name was used commonly and sometimes in the press. All in all, the nomenclature is secondary, what is important is that the buildings were raised from social funds.

<sup>39</sup> H. Maćkowiak, *Szkolnictwo na Kurpiach 1905–1939*. Łomża–Ostrołęka 1990.

<sup>40</sup> J. Gołota, J. Kijowski, *Adam Chętnik – zapiski biograficzne*, [In:] *Adam Chętnik „Z nadnarwiańskich borów”*. Ed. J. Chętnik. Ostrołęka 2015, pp. 11–21.

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## Appendix

Material effects in the counties of the Warsaw voivodeship 1959–1972

No.	County	Number of schools	Classrooms	Special rooms	Residential chambers	Total expenditure
1.	Ostrołęka	4	23	9	28	14.729
2.	Ostrów Mazowiecki	5	41	10	45	20.189
3.	Maków Mazowiecki	4	22	7	40	11.305
4.	Przasnysz	5	25	7	46	12.139
5.	Wyszaków	2	17	5	12	7.509
6.	Pruszków	4	34	8	24	20.496

8.	Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki	7	58	36	114	56181
9.	Sokołów Podlaski	4	24	6	27	12.004
10.	Mińsk Mazowiecki	6	37	11	62	16.695
11.	Żuromin	3	15	2	26	8.350
12.	Wołomin	3	37	7	17	19.526
13.	Gostynin	4	30	2	34	12.974
14.	Płock	6	43	11	42	19.686
15.	Węgrów	5	34	6	47	16.347
15.	Siedlce	5	42	6	53	24.689
16.	Łosice	3	27	6	32	12.401
17.	Płońsk	6	33	7	49	12.523
18.	Mława	4	22	6	32	9.632
19.	Pułtusk	3	18	4	29	9.052
20.	Sierpc	3	33	3	24	12.771
21.	Piaseczno	2	18	5	2	9.196
22.	Otwock	4	39	10	20	22.507
23.	Grodzisk Mazowiecki	3	25	9	14	14.790
24.	Ciechanów	4	46	7	21	24.611
25.	Sochaczew	2	22	3	7	12.370
26.	Grójec	3	25	10	25	12.708
27.	Ryki	1	15	3	8	7.114
28.	Garwolin	3	17	4	25	9.990
29.	Żyrardów	1	15	4	2	8.115

Source: *Architektura i budownictwo szkolne...*, pp. 271–350

## SUMMARY

In one of the stages of the October thaw, the insufficiency of school premises appeared. The deficiency of school chambers was deepened by the demographic



boom, which reached its peak in the late 1950s. The investment apogee in school construction took place in the 1960s. 60–65% of the financial outlays (depending on a voivodeship) came from the government budget, other outlays were supplemented by the money collected during extensive social actions by the established in 1958 Social Fund for the Construction of Schools, renamed in 1966 to the Social Fund for the Construction of Schools and Halls of Residence. As a result of the social action, 1,423 buildings for education units were built in Poland in the years 1959–1972.

### **STRESZCZENIE**

W jednej z odsłon pałdziernikowej odwilży pojawiła się niewystarczalność szkolnej bazy lokalowej. Niedostatek izb szkolnych pogłębił wyż demograficzny, którego apogeum przypadło na schyłek lat 50. Na lata 60. przypada apogeum inwestycyjne w budownictwie szkolnym. 60–65% nakładów (w zależności od województwa) pochodziło z budżetu państwa, pozostałe nakłady uzupełniły pieniądze zebrane w wielkich akcjach społecznych przez powołany w 1958 roku Społeczny Fundusz Budowy Szkół, przemianowany w 1966 roku na Społeczny Fundusz Budowy Szkół i Internatów. W wyniku akcji społecznej zbudowano w Polsce 1423 budynki dla jednostek oświatowych w latach 1959–1972.

**Key words:** school, construction, PRL

**Słowa kluczowe:** szkoła, budownictwo, PRL

