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## 'Warsaw period' (1945–1950) in Celina Bobińska's Organizational Activity for Historical Science

*'Okres warszawski' (1945–1950) w działalności organizacyjnej  
Celiny Bobińskiej na rzecz nauki historycznej*

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to present the activity of the historian, Celina Bobińska, as regards the historical science, in the years 1945–1950. With the use of the biographical method and on the basis of the mainly textual sources of the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, the activity of Bobińska in the structures of the communist party with respect to the higher education and the policy of transformation of the historical science, and her participation in the 7th General Convention of Historians in Wrocław (1948) and in the Marxist Historians Union will be presented.

**Key words:** Celina Bobińska, historians of communist party, Marxist historians, intellectual biographies of historians

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## I

The main purpose of this article is to present the part of the intellectual biography of Celina Bobińska (1913–1997) in the years: 1945–1950. Such researches constitute part, in the words of Andrzej Feliks Grabski, of the so-called ‘subjective history of historiography’<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the analysis of the works of a historian, his intellectual biography is taken into consideration as well. Rafał Stobiecki noted that ‘a life of a historian constitutes an important interpretation context for the analysis of his works’<sup>2</sup>. Biographical elements have a significant influence on the analysis of the works of a historian. The biography of a historian explains e.g. adopting of specific values and, as a result, conditions the opinions on the events and processes constituting elements of the history of Poland.

While creating the intellectual biography of Celina Bobińska, I was supported by a wide range of literature addressing the issues of the methodology of biographical research<sup>3</sup>. In the article, a part of a classical form of intellectual biography, showing the path of Bobińska to historiography and her involvement in the institutional development of Klio is presented. The main object of the analysis is the activity in the state institutions aimed at the creation of the new bases of functioning of the historical science and their political context. The creation of the intellectual biography of Celina Bobińska involved the use of the methods of work with the textual sources (the direct method), and the methods of work with the correspondence and diaries.

The period 1945–1950 in the intellectual biography of Bobińska constitutes the time of her residence in the capital city of Poland and of the involvement in the institutional policy of transformation of historiography<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> A.F. Grabski, *Kształty historii*, Łódź 1985, pp. 76–77.

<sup>2</sup> ‘koleje życia historyka stanowią istotny kontekst interpretacyjny dla analizy jego twórczości’. R. Stobiecki, *Historycy polscy wobec wyzwań XX wieku*, Poznań 2014, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> They included: *Metoda biograficzna w socjologii*, ed. K. Kazimierska, Kraków 2012; *Biografistyka we współczesnych badaniach historycznych: teoria i praktyka*, eds. J. Kolbuszewska, R. Stobiecki, Łódź 2017; *Stan i perspektywy rozwoju biografistyki polskiej*, ed. L. Kuberski, Opole 1998; See the discussion in: ‘Sensus Historiae’ 2013, 3. Therein: the articles of Jerzy Maternicki, Jolanta Kolbuszewska, Hanna Wójcik-Łagan, Mariola Hoszowska, Karolina Polasik-Wrzosek.

<sup>4</sup> As the policy of transformations, I understood the desire of the new authorities and of the historians supporting them to create the new bases and institutional mechanisms of functioning of historical science, expressed, among others, by the creation of historical party structures and the liquidation or limiting the pluralism of organizational forms, e.g. existence and functioning of associations. See: R. Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani mądra, ani piękna... ale skomplikowana. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 46, 51.

for this reason it was named: 'Warsaw period', next to the 'Moscow period' and 'Krakow period'<sup>5</sup>.

The materials from various archives, i.e. from the Archive of the Jagiellonian University, the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, and the Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences constitute the source base for the analysis. The sources include the sources of textual nature, i.e. the personal file of Bobińska, the materials of the Ministry of National Education or the Ministry of Higher Education, of epistolary nature i.e. the letters of the historians of the Polish People's Republic [hereinafter: PPR] era, and sources in the form of diaries, as they include the published memoirs of historians. The scientific and journalistic articles of Bobińska are used as well. They play a supportive role and constitute the sources of programme statements concerning the view on the shape of the historical science.

As regards the information on Bobińska in source literature, they are available in various studies on the history of historiography of the PPR period, they are related to the institutional and organizational aspect addressed in this work, the examples include e.g.: the compilations of Tadeusz Rutkowski, Jan Szumski, Rafał Stobiecki, Zbigniew Romek, Piotr Biliński and Piotr Hübner<sup>6</sup>.

In the beginning, I would like to explain the terms used in the text, i.e. the historians of communist party and Marxist historians<sup>7</sup>. The former are defined, in this text, as the members of the party, especially those, who in the period of the year 1956 openly supported the reconstruction

<sup>5</sup> Moscow period: 1913–1945. In reality: 1918–1945. She spent the first five years of life in Poland. Krakow period: 1950–1997.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce 1945–1970. Zagadnienia polityczne i organizacyjne*, Warszawa 2007; idem, *Bojowniczy ofensywy ideologicznej. O roli kobiet w procesie stalinizacji humanistyki polskiej*, in: *Kobiety na zakręcie 1933–1989*, Wrocław 2014; Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce 1944–1970*, Warszawa 2010; J. Szumski, *Polityka a historia. ZSRR wobec nauki historycznej w Polsce 1945–1964*, Warszawa 2016; R. Stobiecki, *Historia pod nadzorem. Spory o nowy model historii w Polsce (II połowa lat czterdziestych początek lat pięćdziesiątych)*, Łódź 1993; idem, *Historiografia*; idem, *Historycy*; P. Hübner, *Polityka naukowa w Polsce w latach 1944–1953: geneza systemu*, vol. 1–2, Wrocław 1992; P. Biliński, *Władysław Konopczyński 1880–1952: człowiek i dzieło*, Kraków 2017.

<sup>7</sup> These terms were used in various studies on historiography history. Rafał Stobiecki wrote that Marxist historians, in the post-war period, constituted the group, to which we can include first of all the historians educated in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [hereinafter: USSR] or staying in the USSR during the war, such as: Celina Bobińska, Żanna Kormanowa and Juliusz Bardach. Tadeusz Rutkowski, in the work on the organizational structure of the historical science after the war, uses the term: 'historians being members/activists of the Polish Workers' Party/Polish United Workers' Party'. See: R. Stobiecki, *Historiografia*, p. 167; T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki*, pp. 94, 96.

of the historical sciences in accordance with the Soviet model. In this article, the term is close, in terms of semantics, to the so-called historians-dogmatists. Marxist historians, on the other hand, refers to a group wider than the historians of the communist party. The historians, who openly supported Marxist worldview (as a theory and as a project of the world reconstruction). Sometimes also the term: 'historians with positive attitude towards Marxism' is used. It is defined as a group of historians that were less 'dogmatic' when compared to the Marxist historians. In this article, they were included in the general category of Marxist historians.

At the beginning, it is important to provide some information on the life of Bobińska before the year 1945. She was born in 1913 in Krakow. Bobińska was brought up by intelligentsia family with leftist traditions. Her father, Stanisław, was an activist of the Communist Party of Poland in the 1920s and in the 1930s. In 1918, she moved together with her mother Helena to Moscow, where her father was staying. There, she completed studies at the Moscow State University, she was granted the degree of aspirant (PhD) in 1945 on the basis of the work on the social and economic thought of Staszic. Her promoter was Władimir Piczeta, an expert in the history of Poland<sup>8</sup>. After the war, she came back to Poland and became one of the main historians striving for the methodological reorientation of the Polish historiography, which was to be based, to a large extent, on the theoretical directives of the historical materialism<sup>9</sup>. She died in 1997 in Krakow<sup>10</sup>. As a researcher, she focused on the history of agriculture of the late 18th and the early 19th century, the history of the economic and social thought of the Enlightenment, as well as on the history of historiography of the 19th century, and on the methodology of history<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [hereinafter: AUJ], Teczka Celiny Bobińskiej, ref. no. DSO 1, no pagination, Employee information card. Żanna Kormanowa also participated in the seminar. J. Szumski, *Władimir Piczeta i Żanna Kormanowa: przyczynek do polsko-radzieckich relacji naukowych*, 'Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty' 2010, 47, pp. 129–158.

<sup>9</sup> The reorientation was to consist in putting the emphasis on the history of economy and society, the criticism of heroism interpretation of the historical process, drawing attention to the research on peasants and workers. Rafał Stobiecki noticed that the post-war historians, inspired by the historical materialism, were only one of the groups aiming at the methodological reorientation of the Polish historiography and the process has already been taking place during the interwar period, which is noticeable in the works of Stefan Czarnowski, Jan Rutkowski or Franciszek Bujak. See: R. Stobiecki, *Historia*, pp. 48–50.

<sup>10</sup> *In memoriam*, 'Historyka' 1997, 27, no pagination.

<sup>11</sup> More important monographs of Bobińska: *Czasy oświecenia polskiego: (od pierwszego rozbioru do Sejmu Czteroletniego)*, Warszawa 1951; *Szkice o ideologach polskiego Oświecenia: Kołłątaj i Staszic*, Wrocław 1952; *Marks i Engels a sprawy polskie do osiemdziesiątych lat XIX wieku*, Warszawa 1954; *Historyk, fakt, metoda*, Warszawa 1964.

## II

IN THE STRUCTURES OF THE POLISH WORKERS' PARTY – THE  
ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE POLICY OF  
TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE HISTORICAL SCIENCE IN POLAND

After the war (May 1945), Bobińska came back to Poland and became one of the main historians striving for the methodological reconstruction of the Polish historiography in accordance with the principles of the historical materialism, the creation of the new socialist social awareness and of the new institutional infrastructure of Klio. Since 1945, she has been a member of the Polish Workers' Party [hereinafter: PWP]. The late 1940s is the time of the active involvement of the communist party' historians (as a matter of fact, not only members of the party) in the issues of the higher education<sup>12</sup>. According to the memoir of Żanna Kormanowa, the members of the Commission of History, created after the war as an organization attached to the PWP/PUWP – the Polish United Workers' Party [hereinafter: PUWP], for the purpose of reorientation of the historical science, included: Bobińska, Nina Assorodobraj, Stanisław Arnold, Iza Biezuńska, Witold Kula, Tadeusz Manteuffel, Wanda Moszczeńska, Roman Grodek<sup>13</sup>. Since 1947, according to Tadeusz Rutkowski, the policy of the authorities in respect of the historians community was increasingly influenced by Kormanowa and Bobińska<sup>14</sup>.

According to the source material, the latter one actively participated in the meetings of historians in the departments connected with the education, science and culture of the PWP/PUWP Central Committee [hereinafter: CC] and the bodies of ministries in the late 1940s/early 1950s and in other popularizing initiatives<sup>15</sup>. During her participation in the meeting of historians at the Department of Education, Science and Culture of the PWP CC in 1947 on the creation of the sub-faculties of political and social doctrines at the Universities, Bobińska stated that the 'ideological offensive' should be twofold

<sup>12</sup> Not only of Bobińska, but also of, among others: Żanna Kormanowa and Józef Sieradzki. See: T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki*, p. 101.

<sup>13</sup> Ż. Kormanowa, *Ludzie i życie*, Warszawa 1982, p. 209.

<sup>14</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Żanna Kormanowa (1900–1988). Szkic do portretu 'wojującej' marksistki*, in: *idem, Historycy*, pp. 215–218; T.P. Rutkowski, *Bojowniczy*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych [hereinafter: AAN], Polska Partia Robotnicza. Komitet Centralny w Warszawie [hereinafter: KC PPR], Wydział Oświaty i Kultury [hereinafter: WOIK], ref. no. 295/XVIII–57, sheets 2–3; ref. no. 295/XVII–58, sheets 96, 96c; Ministerstwo Szkolnictwa Wyższego [hereinafter: MSzW], ref. no. 663, sheet 11; KC PPR, Wydział Propagandy [hereinafter: WP], ref. no. 295/X–78, sheet 17; Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza. Komitet Centralny w Warszawie [hereinafter: KC PZPR], Wydział Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego [hereinafter: WNiSzW], ref. no. 237/XVI–2, sheets 37–44.

– it should take place separately during the lectures on the Marxist doctrine, and in the historiographical concepts<sup>16</sup>. The studies programme was also discussed later, e.g. during the meeting of programme commission attached to the Ministry of Higher Education in February 1950. Bobińska stated during the meeting that: the lectures on the dialectical and historical materialism are needed and if staff shortage makes running this course not possible, then, according to her, tutorials should be organized, during which Marx's *Capital* [*Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*] is read. The social and economic history should be divided, according to Bobińska, into the feudal period and the modern period (capitalism). Moreover, she stressed the need to introduce the lecture on the history of labour movement, the indispensability of *Logic* lecture. The historiography lectures, according to her, should be given by young, progressive professors<sup>17</sup>. The important role of the lectures on the dialectical and historical materialism, and the history of the labour movement was addressed also by Żanna Kormanowa. Żanna and Bobińska were the participants that put the greatest emphasis on those elements<sup>18</sup>. These issues were strongly accented also by the researcher of the political history of the modern period, Kazimierz Piwarski<sup>19</sup>. The celebrations of the anniversaries, especially of the 100th anniversary of the Spring of Nations in the year 1948, an important event of the modern period history, were important for the authorities because they made it possible for them to popularize their ideas. Bobińska participated in the organization of these celebrations and in the process of issuing the popularizing brochures for the youth<sup>20</sup>.

The geopolitical, economic, and social changes following the Second World War made people feel the need to be, in the words of Rafał Stobiecki, 'rooted in history'<sup>21</sup>. The new conditions required that the status quo is justified. Anniversary celebrations constituted one of the forms of creation of the historical imagination of the society after 1945, connected with the current political system. According to Marek Woźniak, such activities are aimed at the replacement of the old national motifs, myths and heroes with new ones<sup>22</sup>. However, the endeavours of this kind did not constitute

<sup>16</sup> AAN, KC PPR, WOIK, ref. no. 295/XVIII–57, p. 2. This meeting is further discussed by: P. Hübner, *Polityka*, pp. 318–319.

<sup>17</sup> AAN, MSZW, ref. no. 663, sheet 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 16.

<sup>20</sup> AAN, KC PPR, WP, ref. no. 295/X–78, sheet 177a. More about the anniversaries in the PPR era: P. Oseka, *Rytuały stalinizmu: oficjalne święta i uroczystości rocznicowe w Polsce 1944–1956*, Warszawa 2007, *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Historia*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>22</sup> M. Woźniak, *Projektowanie zadania historii, czyli polityka historyczna jako zawłaszczanie pamięci i wyobraźni historycznej*, in: *Pamięć i polityka historyczna. Doświadczenia*

only the elements of activities of the authorities and historians of the PPR era. After the year 1989, some official politics of memory have existed as well, and its purpose is to create 'proper' myths and motifs causing social integration or disintegration<sup>23</sup>. Such activities of the authorities, aimed at the creation of historical awareness of the society, were not a method applied only during the PPR era. The concept of the 'break' with the bygone PPR era, present in the public discourse of the early 1990s, was similar to the criticism of the Second Polish Republic in the years following the war. As Agnieszka Kolasa-Nowak noticed: 'The reflection on the social changes in the 1990s consisted in the comparison of the features of the new reality to the old world of socialism disappearing into the past. Frequent references to the burdens and strains of the era of the so-called people's democracy were aimed at emphasizing the difference, underlining the complete break with the past and detachment from the rejected reality. According to this way of perceiving of events, the breakthrough of 1989 resulted in the liquidation of the barriers for the country and was the beginning of the natural and beneficial social processes. For this reason, the bygone PPR era was perceived as 'freezer', delaying the modernization of Poland'<sup>24</sup>.

Although the mentioned concepts were created in different times, when different 'axiological and social orders' dominated, they are highly similar to those of the historical breakthroughs of the past. In the years following the war, the new quality of the socialist political system, and the complete break with the legacy of the inter-war Poland were emphasized. In the 1990s, on the other hand, there was a tendency to put a so-called 'thick line' on the Polish political process<sup>25</sup>.

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*Polski i jej sąsiadów*, eds. S.M. Nowinowski, J. Pomorski, R. Stobiecki, Łódź 2008, pp. 335–344.

<sup>23</sup> J. Pomorski, *Spoglądając w przeszłość. Codzienność w pamięci narodowej*, in: idem, *Spoglądając w przeszłość. Studia i szkice metahistoryczne*, Lublin 2017, pp. 158–164; A. Walicki, *Od projektu komunistycznego do neoliberalnej utopii*, Kraków 2013, pp. 199–226.

<sup>24</sup> 'Rozpatrywanie przemian społecznych w latach dziewięćdziesiątych przebiegało w logice odróżniania cech nowej rzeczywistości od starego, odchodzącego w przeszłość świata socjalizmu. Częste nawiązania do balastów i obciążeń z czasów tzw. demokracji ludowej służyły zaznaczaniu różnicy, podkreśleniu całkowitego zerwania z przeszłością i odjęcia się od odrzuconej rzeczywistości. W tym sposobie ujmowania wydarzeń przełom 1989 r. spowodował odblokowanie możliwości rozwoju kraju oraz uruchomił naturalne i korzystne procesy społeczne. Dlatego PRL-owska przeszłość była postrzegana jako 'zamrażarka' opóźniająca modernizację Polski'. A. Kolasa-Nowak, *Od idei homo sovieticus do mentalności folwarcznej Polaków. O używaniu przeszłości w dyskursie socjologicznym i publicznym*, 'Res Historica' 2018, 46, p. 306.

<sup>25</sup> The thick-line metaphor was supposed to emphasize the new quality of the social order that had grown up after the systemic transformation. Jan Pomorski, in his writings, considered the thick line as a fundamental metaphor of the Third Polish Republic. See: J.

Going back to the main topic of my work, it should be noted that in the years 1947–1948, as Tadeusz Rutkowski noticed, a group of the communist party historians was created, who played the main role in the process of implementation of the policy of the authorities shaping the historical science. It included Nina Assorodobraj-Kula, Stanisław Arnold, Żanna Kormanowa, Józef Sieradzki, Celina Bobińska. The last of the mentioned persons was a confidant of the head of the department of education and culture of the PWP, Stefan Żółkiewski. Her position was additionally strengthened by her husband, Władysław Wolski, a then minister of public administration<sup>26</sup>.

The head of the Department of Education and Science of the PWP CC, Stefan Żółkiewski, planned to employ Bobińska at the University of Warsaw as a professor deputy or an assistant professor<sup>27</sup>. She was also listed by the future head of the Sub-faculty of Dialectic Materialism affiliated with the Polish Academy of Sciences, Czesław Nowiński, together with Nina Assorodobraj and Jan Kott as the candidate for the positions of university sub-faculties heads, her appointment was to increase the influence of the supporters of the party in the scientific community<sup>28</sup>. She, herself, in 1947 stressed the willingness to run at the University of Warsaw the course called 'The history of social movements and ideas in Poland in the modern period (from the French Revolution to the end of the 19th century)'. She underlined her *willingness* to be assigned ordered lectures or to be appointed the position of professor deputy. She undertook to defend a habilitation thesis within a year<sup>29</sup>.

According to the correspondence of Tadeusz Manteuffel and Aleksander Gieysztor, pressure was exerted on University of Warsaw, in connection with this issue, by the Ministry of Education<sup>30</sup>. In 1946, she had her candidate diploma recognized at the University of Łódź<sup>31</sup>. The HR Department and the Department of Higher Education of the PUWP CC were striving to make the universities employ the scientists being

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Pomorski, *Polityzacja/mitologizacja historii, czyli w czym neuronauka (i metodologia) może pomóc badaczowi historii najnowszej?*, 'Historia@Teoria' 2017, 4, 6, pp. 36–37.

<sup>26</sup> T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki*, pp. 104–105.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 111.

<sup>28</sup> P. Hübner, *Polityka*, p. 432.

<sup>29</sup> AAN, KC PPR, WOIK, ref. no. 295/XVIII–57, sheet 7.

<sup>30</sup> Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk [hereinafter: APAN], Materiały Tadeusza Manteuffla, sheets 78–80. The recognized doctorate of Bobińska, among others, is discussed by scholars. The discussion is also referred to by T.P. Rutkowski, *Bojowniczy*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>31</sup> AAN, Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej w Warszawie [hereinafter: MEN], ref. no. 8337, sheet 107.

members of the party and supporting communism<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, they also made an effort to convince students to join the party, in order to, subsequently, employ them as officials of ministries and the party<sup>33</sup>. For this reason, intellectuals, including historians, were frequently hired by the institutions such as the establishments of a Central Party School and they were ordered to run many courses for the political activists<sup>34</sup>.

Bobińska gave lectures in the Central School of Communist Party in Łódź<sup>35</sup> in the years 1945–1950, and, since 1947, she has been giving ordered lectures at the University of Warsaw on the social and economic ideas of the Enlightenment<sup>36</sup>. She was also a vice-president of the Association of the Universities for the Working Class in the years 1945–1948<sup>37</sup>. She had the support of party authorities and Jakub Berman. The important benefits for her, resulting from that support, were the contacts among the Soviet scholars and the support of the authorities of the USSR. Moreover, since May 1945, she has been a member of authorities of the Polish Historical Society. She replaced Jan Hulewicz<sup>38</sup>.

As Jan Szumski noticed in the documentation of the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the group of historians trusted by the authorities included, among others, Bobińska and Żanna Kormanowa, Natalia Gąsiorowska and Stanisław Arnold, and, since 1949, the influence of Tadeusz Daniszewski, historian of communist party, was increasing among the activists of the Soviet activists (Daniszewski was a director of a Central Party School and a head of the Department of Party History attached to the PWP CC)<sup>39</sup>. Władysław Konopczyński, on the other

<sup>32</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Historiografia*, pp. 143–144.

<sup>33</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, WNiSzW, ref. no. 237/XVI–21, sheet 21.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. course 'Walka o postęp, o kulturę świecką w przeszłości naszego narodu' ['The struggle for the progress, secular culture in the past of our nation']. AAN, KC PZPR, WP, ref. no. 237/VIII–268, sheets 1–15.

<sup>35</sup> It is not a coincidence that Łódź is mentioned here. Jolanta Kolbuszewska demonstrated that the city was the place where many female historians of the PPR era achieved professional success. See: J. Kolbuszewska, *Łódź 'ziemią obiecaną' polskich historyczek? Drogi do samodzielności naukowej kobiet w okresie PRL-u*, in: *Historia i pamięć. Studia i szkice historiograficzne*, eds. J. Kolbuszewska, R. Stobiecki, Łódź 2016, pp. 85–103; eadem, *Droga kobiet na naukowy Olimp. Garść wspomnień w oparciu o wspomnienia łódzkich historyczek*, in: *Miedzy nauką a sztuką. Wokół problemu współczesnej historiografii*, eds. E. Solska, P. Witek, M. Woźniak, Lublin 2017, pp. 359–372.

<sup>36</sup> AAN, MEN, ref. no. 8337, sheet 107; KC PPR, WOiK, ref. no./XVII–58, sheet 238.

<sup>37</sup> AAN, MEN, ref. no. 8337, sheet 110.

<sup>38</sup> T.P. Rutkowski, *Środowisko historyczne Krakowa a Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne w początkach Polski Ludowej*, in: *Krakowska szkoła historyczna a Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne. Studia historiograficzne*, eds. P. Biliński, P. Plichta, Warszawa–Kraków 2017, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> J. Szumski, *Polityka*, p. 183.

hand, was considered to be a reactionist. The persons with the positive attitude towards the new concepts based on the historical materialism, e.g. Tadeusz Manteuffel<sup>40</sup>, were noticed as well.

### III

#### THE ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE HISTORIANS OF COMMUNIST PARTY. THE 7TH GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE POLISH HISTORIANS (1948) AND MARXIST HISTORIANS UNION

The harbingers of the ongoing offensive of the communist party historians were the 7th General Convention of the Polish Historians in Wrocław (1948) and the creation of the Marxist Historians Union [hereinafter: MHU] during that event<sup>41</sup>. According to Krystyna Śreniowska, during the convention, a confrontation of the 'young', including Witold Kula, Stanisław Śreniowski, Marian and Iza Małowist, Celina Bobińska, Bogusław Leśnodorski, with the 'old', represented by Roman Lutman, took place<sup>42</sup>. The first group proposed new research directions, i.e. the social history of the peasants and workers, economic history. According to the female researcher from Łódź, the time of operation of the union was short and its activity ended quickly<sup>43</sup>. It became active no sooner than in 1950, which will be discussed later.

The Soviet delegation (Tretiakow report), according to the works of Zbigniew Romek and Jan Szumski, appreciated the activities of the authorities and historians aimed at the reconstruction of the methodological bases of historiography. However, the attitude of delegation members towards the group of the MHU was negative<sup>44</sup>. The Marxist historians group of 25–30 persons, consisting of the representatives of the 'Soviet school', that is (Roman Werfel, Bobińska and Kormanowa), and representatives of the older generation (Gašiorowska and Arnold) did not present, according to the delegation, a high level of theoretical knowledge<sup>45</sup>.

The Soviet observers, after the Wrocław convention, emphasized also

<sup>40</sup> Z. Romek., *Historycy radzieccy o historykach polskich. Uwagi o Zjeździe Wrocławskim (1948) i Konferencji Otwockiej (1951/1952)*, 'Polska 1944–1989. Studia i Materiały' 1999, 4, pp. 184–185.

<sup>41</sup> More about the convention and its organization: *Powszechne Zjazdy Historyków Polskich w Polsce Ludowej. Dokumenty i materiały*, ed. T.P. Rutkowski, Toruń 2014, pp. 9–75.

<sup>42</sup> K. Śreniowska, *Moje życie*, eds. J. Kolbuszewska, R. Stobiecki, Łódź 2018, pp. 154–155.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 155.

<sup>44</sup> Z. Romek, *Historycy*, p. 194.

<sup>45</sup> J. Szumski, *Polityka*, pp. 98–99.

its positive aspects, i.e. the debate on the issues of the economic history and the creation of a Marxist historians group itself. In respect of that group, the observers underlined that the group at the convention was small, as it consisted of circa 30 persons, while the convention had 200 participants, while being poorly prepared as regards technical aspects<sup>46</sup>. The review of the convention included positive opinion on the paper of Bobińska: 'Sprawa polska w teorii i praktyce twórców naukowego socjalizmu w wieku XIX'<sup>47</sup>.

Bobińska, during the discussion at the convention, wanted sober, rational criticism of various pre-war schools. Moreover, she placed emphasis on the importance of the research on the economic and social history. She also addressed the questions of the history of agriculture and the balance between the economic and social issues<sup>48</sup>. Kormanowa, on the other hand, underlined the struggle for the new methodology based on Marxism-Leninism. She also stated that the transformation is to be supported by the guidelines of the PUWP and, among others, 'Short course', as well as Soviet literature. She was quite critical of the persons, who did not want to adopt the 'Marxist methodology'. Kazimierz Lepszy, on the other hand, underscored the importance of desk research and traditional methods<sup>49</sup>.

As regards the MHU, its goal was to create a centre of coordination of activities of historians, who supported the new authorities, the organizational changes, and the new theoretical and methodological assumptions, which was underlined by Rafał Stobiecki<sup>50</sup>. In addition to Bobińska, the union included Natalia Gąsiorowska, Henryk Jabłoński, Kazimierz Piwarski, Żanna Kormanowa, Marian Henryk Serejski, Józef Sieradzki, Roman Werfel, Stanisława Arnold, Nina Assorodobraj and Juliusz Bardach<sup>51</sup>.

The MHU's goal was also to actively participate in the organization of conferences and other scientific sessions. Their participation was very significant in the late 1949 and early 1950, during the organization of the 1st Polish Science Congress<sup>52</sup>. According to the analysis of source material, Bobińska participated in a few of them, assiduously taking part in the

<sup>46</sup> Z. Romek, *Cenzura*, pp. 114–115.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 132–133.

<sup>48</sup> C. Bobińska, *Głos w dyskusji*, 'Kwartalnik Historyczny' 1950–1951, 58, pp. 402–406.

<sup>49</sup> Z. Romek, *Cenzura*, pp. 148–149; about views of Kormanowa, see: H. Wójcik-Lagan, *Żanna Kormanowa o nauce historycznej i nauczaniu dziejów. Wybrane refleksje (lata 40. i 50. XX w.)*, 'Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy' 2014, 3–4, pp. 72–90.

<sup>50</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Historia*, pp. 94–95.

<sup>51</sup> T.P. Rutkowski, *Bojowniczk*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>52</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, WNiSzW, ref. no. 237/XVI–67, sheets 27–28.

discussion. During the meetings of historians in the 1950s, she postulated i.a. extending the time of the methodological course organized by the Historical Association, as well as addressed the issue of the master's theses, which should not focus on the exiguous topics. Moreover, she underlined the role of the history of political systems in the understanding of the Polish historical process<sup>53</sup>. She also spoke on the issues of extending the research on the historiography of the modern period. She underlined the importance of research on the economic and social history<sup>54</sup>.

Since late 1949/early 1950, various initiatives, aimed at the preparation for the methodological conference in Otwock, were undertaken. They included, among others, minor sessions, e.g. the celebration of the 200 anniversary of Hugo Kołłątaj's birth<sup>55</sup>, the Sciences Session dedicated to the Polish Enlightenment in Warsaw and the conferences, e.g. the methodological conference in Cieplice. In connection with that issue, Żanna Kormanowa presented the plan of her paper titled 'Zadanie polskiej nauki historycznej' to Tadeusz Manteuffel<sup>56</sup>. Bobińska was also to make a speech about the issues of historical materialism<sup>57</sup>. Kormanowa a paper on general topics, similar in terms of tone to the one presented at the science congress. According to the theses of the project, she was to speak about the reevaluation of the history of Poland and basing its interpretation on the historical materialism. The paper covered also the issues of techniques applied by historians, research staff, the organization of research, as well as the issue of creation of central archive catalogues<sup>58</sup>. During the session on the Enlightenment, Bobińska presented the paper on the social and economic ideas in the 2nd half of the 18th century, which was later reprinted in the 42th volume of 'Przegląd Historyczny' [hereinafter: PH]<sup>59</sup>.

The MHU's task was to take over some of the functions of the Polish Historical Society, e.g. to take control over the editorial board of 'Kwartalnik Historyczny' and the PH<sup>60</sup>, as the executive board included the editors of quarterlies. Moreover, the location that previously belonged to the Warsaw Scientific Association became the seat of the union, which

<sup>53</sup> APAN, Pierwszy Kongres Nauki Polskiej, ref. no. 14, Sekcja Nauk Społecznych i Humanistycznych, sheets 277–278.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 269–270.

<sup>55</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, WNiSzW, ref. no. 237/XVI–168, sheet 4.

<sup>56</sup> APAN, Materiały Tadeusza Manteuffla, sheet 181.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 75.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 182–185.

<sup>59</sup> APAN, Pierwszy Kongres Nauki Polskiej, ref. no. 142, sheet 3.

<sup>60</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, WNiSzW, ref. no. 237/XVI–67, sheets 27–28.

was, as Piotr Hübner noticed, symbolic<sup>61</sup>. The influence of the Marxist historians, who supported the authorities and became the members of the editorial staff of the PH in late 1949/early 1950, was significant in the process of transformation of the Polish historiography. Bobińska became the secretary of the PH. She supported the chief editor, Janusz Woliński. In the early 1950, she was replaced by Iza Biezuńska<sup>62</sup>.

Starting from the spring of 1950, the main activities of politicians in respect of historical science were focused on the preparation for the 1st Polish Science Congress. In January 1950, during the meeting of the communist party historians, Bobińska stated that the historians connected with the authorities are to be the coordinating factor in respect of the organization of the historical science and to carry out the activity promoting the ideology among the historians<sup>63</sup>. She underlined the most important goals of the union, which was to be created. They were to include: the organization of the Science Congress, the work on textbooks, the reform of the historical studies, the organization of the anniversary of Hugo Kołłątaj's birth<sup>64</sup>.

In February 1950, a reactivation conference of the MHU took place in Warsaw. Bobińska presented a paper during the conference. She became the president of the union, while Juliusz Bardach became its secretary<sup>65</sup>. The chairwoman defined the main goals the union was to achieve. They included the revaluation of the previous historiography, the analysis of the Krakow school and the inter-war historiography from the perspective of Marxist ideology, and the demonstration of the earlier traditions of historiography referring to Marxism (e.g. the journalism of the Communist Party of Poland and the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania)<sup>66</sup>. In her paper, she stressed the need of reorientation of the theoretical, methodological and organizational bases of the Polish historiography. Appreciating the organizational efforts of the historians with no connection with the new political system and methods, related to

<sup>61</sup> P. Hübner, *Polityka*, p. 439.

<sup>62</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, WNiSzW, ref. no. 237/XVI–2, sheet 44.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 35–36.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 26.

<sup>65</sup> P. Hübner, *Zwierciadło nauki. Mała encyklopedia polskiej nauki akademickiej*, Kraków 2013, p. 547; T.P. Rutkowski, *Bojownicy*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>66</sup> The minutes of the organizational conference of the MHU, which took place on 19 February 1950 in Warsaw in the Auditorium of the senate of the UW, type, a copy from the heritage of Nina Assorodobraj-Kula and Witold Kula. Quote from: M. Kula, *Dobrymi chęciami piekło wybrukowane. Refleksje nad marksistowskim zrzeszeniem historyków marksistów*, in: *Spółeczeństwo w dobie przemian. Wiek XIX i XX. Księga Jubileuszowa profesora Anny Żarnowskiej*, eds. M. Nietyksza et al., Warszawa 2003, pp. 463–465.

the reconstruction of techniques and organization of historiography after the war, she emphasized that there are not many historians who fully adopted Marxism as the method of research conceptualization, but also as a world view<sup>67</sup>. She wrote: 'We noticed that, in the post-war period, most of our historians, in accordance with the new political and geographic structure of Poland, focused, as regards their scientific interests, on the genuinely Polish lands and on the regained territories, discontinuing that way the detrimental nationalist and colonial idea of inter-war historiography. Recently, many scholars became interested in economic issues. The researches on this topic, extremely productive in terms of methodology for researcher himself, contribute to the Polish science in the most important respects'<sup>68</sup>.

Bobińska opposed the researches that focused on the nation, treating it as the most important element of history, and she postulated focusing on the antagonized society instead. The important elements of the reconstruction was to her the instillation of the communist ideology in the historiography and freeing it from the liberal and, of course, conservative values<sup>69</sup>. In the speech, she did not define the semantic field, when she spoke about the popularization of Marxism, however, she used the term in various meanings: as a way of solving of research problems, but also as a world view. During the speech, she also addressed the issues of interpretation of historical events and processes, e.g. the issues of historical evaluation, especially in the context of the works of Władysław Konopczyński. In addition to the criticism of the author of *Historia Polski nowożytnej*, she commented also on the works of Karol Górski, who, according to her, bases his works on the categories of Christian thought and uses idealism philosophy<sup>70</sup>. The methodical criticism constitutes less extensive part of the paper of Bobińska. It is openly critical of many foundations of the previous historiography, especially in its axiological

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<sup>67</sup> C. Bobińska, *O przełom w nauce historycznej. Na marginesie narady historyków marksistów*, 'Nowa Kultura' 1950, 2, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> 'Widzieliśmy w okresie powojennym jak większość naszych historyków zgodnie z nową polityczną i geograficzną strukturą Polski przeniósł punkt ciężkości swych zainteresowań naukowych na ziemię rdzennie polskie i na ziemię odzyskane, zrywając ten sposób ze szkodliwym nacjonalistycznym i kolonizatorskim kierunkiem zainteresowań historiografii międzywojennej. Ostatnio wielu uczonych zwróciło się ku zagadnieniom gospodarczym. Badania te niezmiennie płodne metodologicznie dla samego badacza, wzbogacają naukę polską w ogniwach najistotniejszych'. C. Bobińska, *O przełom*, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*. The works of Karol Górski and his theoretical inspirations are more widely addressed in: W. Piasek, *Historia jako wiedza lokalna: 'antropologiczne przesunięcie' w badaniach nad historiografią PRL*, Toruń 2011, pp. 151–343.

and ideological dimension and in connection with its political references. The stance presented by Bobińska in that paper can be defined as Marxism both in the theoretical sense and, in particular, as a project of social reconstruction of the society.

According to Piotr Hübner, the dogmatic views of the MHU caused its isolation, which was noticeable during the works of the history subsection of the 1st Polish Science Congress, he believed that the conference in Otwock was a complete failure. Rafał Stobiecki, on the other hand, drew attention to the poor organization and the lack of developed organizational structures of the historians of the union<sup>71</sup>. One of the initiatives of the MHU was the project of creation of the national institute of history, which would constitute a central scientific institution<sup>72</sup>. The Polish Academy of Sciences was created, however, the recruitment for the managerial positions did not go as expected by the historians of communist party at all. The authorities accepted a compromise with the historians of the older and of the middle generation. The historians of communist party faced also a passive resistance of the scientific community due to the 'dogmatic' vision of the history of Poland. The remarks were made also by the scholars in some way connected with the new idea of social order, that is Marian Henryk Serejski, Witold Kula and Marian Małowist<sup>73</sup>. The members of the MHU did not enjoy much scientific authority, they also did not have serious achievements which would make it possible for them to be widely accepted<sup>74</sup>. The Ministry of Higher Education underlined the important role of Bobińska in the 'methodological and ideological breakthrough' of the late 1940s/early 1950s<sup>75</sup>.

The Polish community of historians of the late 1940s/1950s, despite the ideological pressure, did not suffer 'purges' such as those that took place in the USSR. It resisted the radical reconstruction of science in accordance with the Soviet model. The cooperation with the experienced 'old' professors was accepted. The Soviet delegation significantly contributed to that situation, as Jan Szumski underlines. Thanks to some of them, the group of the radical historians (including Bobińska) was not supported by Moscow and had to accept failure of the attempt to gain the ability to significantly influence the historical science<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Z dziejów tak zwanego przełomu metodologicznego w historiografii polskiej po II wojnie światowej*, 'Res Historica' 2005, 19, p. 31.

<sup>72</sup> P. Hübner, *Polityka*, p. 439.

<sup>73</sup> T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki*, p. 163.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 168.

<sup>75</sup> AAN, MSzW, ref. no. 2891, Bobińska Celina. Uniwersytet Jagielloński, no pagination.

<sup>76</sup> J. Szumski, *Polityka*, pp. 168–169.

The 'Warsaw period' of the intellectual biography of Bobińska ended in summer 1950, when, by the decision of the authorities, she was transferred to the Jagiellonian University<sup>77</sup>. The reason for it were the schemes of her husband, Władysław Wolski, against Bolesław Bierut. He was removed from power, lost the position of the minister of public administration and was transferred to Krakow, to the position of voivodeship library director. The wife, in solidarity, left with him<sup>78</sup>. At the Jagiellonian University, she became the head of the sub-faculty of the History of Poland of Modern Period<sup>79</sup>. The position was held, by 1948, by Władysław Konopczyński<sup>80</sup>. Despite that fact she was not longer a resident of the capital city, she did not cease to participate in the functioning of the central political institutions, trying to introduce institutional changes in the Polish historiography.

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

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<sup>78</sup> R. Herczyński, *Spętana nauka. Opozycja intelektualna w Polsce 1945–1970*, Warszawa 2008, p. 539; T.P. Rutkowski, *Bojowniczk*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>79</sup> AAN, MEN, ref. no. 8337, sheets 1–4.

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#### STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie działalności historyka Celiny Bobińskiej w stosunku do nauki historycznej w latach 1945–1950. Za pomocą metody biograficznej oraz w oparciu głównie o źródła aktowe pochodzące z Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, zostanie ukazana aktywność Bobińskiej w strukturach partii komunistycznej wobec szkolnictwa wyższego i polityki przeobrażeń nauki historycznej, jej udział w VII Powszechnym Zjeździe Historyków we Wrocławiu (1948) oraz w Marksistowskim Zrzeszeniu Historyków.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Celina Bobińska, historycy partyjni, historycy marksiści, biografie intelektualne historyków

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