



Sexual Harassment and Violence Against Women in the Workplace in 1920s–1930s Lithuania

Dr. Ugnė Marija Andrijauskaitė

Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, V. Putvinskio St. 23, LT-44243 Kaunas
E-mail: ugne.andrijauskaite@vdu.lt

Abstract. This article discusses violence against women at work in 1930s Lithuania. Critical analysis and interpretation of primary historical sources (archival documents and workers' press) illustrate the main forms of violence experienced by women in the workplace, i.e. bullying and sexual harassment, and show the impact of a negative workplace environment on women's lives and society in general. A short case study of one factory in Kaunas, which was the temporary capital of Lithuania at that time, will help to gain a deeper knowledge of sexual harassment and other violent acts at work, and will also show how these issues were dealt with in interwar Lithuania.

Keywords: *sexual harassment, violence, gender-based violence, labour movement, work, Interwar Lithuania.*

Anotacija. Šiame straipsnyje žvelgiama į XX a. 4 dešimtmečio Lietuvoje pasitaikiusį smurtą prieš moteris darbo vietoje. Kritinė pirminių šaltinių (archyvinių dokumentų ir darbininkiškosios spaudos straipsnių) analizė bei literatūros šia tema apžvalga leido pristatyti pagrindines smurto prieš moteris formas, paplitusias darbo vietose (panieka ir seksualinis priekabiavimas) ir parodyti, kokią neigiamą įtaką šie veiksmai darė tiek darbo vietos aplinkai, tiek asmeniniam moterų gyvenimui bei iš esmės visai to meto visuomenei. Išsamesnė vieno įvykio Kauno fabrike studija įgalino išsamiau susipažinti su smurtą ir priekabiavimą darbo vietoje patyrusių moterų išgyvenimais ir leido pateikti pavyzdį, kaip su tokiais atvejais buvo tvarkomasi tiriamojo laikotarpio Lietuvoje.

Esminiai žodžiai: *smurtas, smurtas lyties pagrindu, darbas, tarpukario Lietuva, moterų istorija.*

Introduction

The world has always lived with violence; however, we still are not aware of its source or how to eliminate it from our lives.¹ Nowadays politicians and social activists frequently talk about gender-based violence, so it is important to examine it from a historical perspective. While violence is investigated by scholars of different fields, women's experiences of violence are still a rare topic among research papers written by researchers in Lithuania or abroad. We still do not know enough about the violence and harassment that women have to or had to deal with at the workplace, so it is necessary to fill this gap. The main research questions are: how common was disrespectful and/or violent behaviour in the workplace in Lithuania in 1920s and 1930s? What types of violent behaviour were experienced by subordinate female workers? What types of such behaviour were tolerated and what types not? What were the experiences of female workers?

This article will present the changes in the workplace in early 20th century Lithuania and discuss violence against women at work in interwar Lithuania.² The main sources for this research were archival documents found in the Central State Archives of Lithuania, and workers' and women's press. The critical analysis and interpretation of these primary historical sources allows the identification and investigation of the main forms of violence experienced by women in the workplace, i.e. bullying and sexual harassment, and to show the impact of a negative workplace environment on women's lives and society in general. The article includes a short case study of one factory in temporary capital Kaunas; this helps to gain a deeper knowledge of sexual harassment and other violent acts at work, and also shows how these issues were dealt with in interwar Lithuania.

In the 18th century, the factory became a place where technological and social progress was about to be born. The development of factories led them to become a symbol of a modern society. In the late 19th and early 20th century, factories were imagined to be perfect representations of contemporary life, since they valued well-organised work, rationality, technological advance, hygiene and welfare.³

The welfare of workers drew the attention of some factory managers and owners in the late 19th century: in order to improve the production rates it was necessary to take better care of workers' hygiene, diet and good living and workplace conditions.⁴ However, even

¹ HANMER, Jalna; MAYNARD, Mary. Introduction: Violence and Gender Stratification. *Women, Violence and Social Control*. Ed. J. Hanmer, M. Maynard. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987, p. 1.

² This research was funded by a grant (No. P-LIP-18-115) from the Research Council of Lithuania, and performed in cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University.

³ DRÉMAITÉ, Marija. *Progreso meteoras. Modernizacija ir pramonės architektūra Lietuvoje 1918–1940 m.* Vilnius: Lapas, 2016, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

though it became clear that the lives of workers needed improvement, this was not done on a substantial scale, therefore most factories provided poor conditions for workers.⁵

Amongst the reasons why the welfare of workers was improving in Europe in the early 20th century were the Russian revolution and other political events. For instance, when Czechoslovakia declared its independence on October 28 1918, new labour and social security laws were introduced. It was believed that these laws acted as a promise for the workers who raised social, political and economic demands and helped to ensure that these demands will be fulfilled in a democratic way preventing any revolutionary action. At the end of 1918, laws for an 8-hour working day and a 48-hour working week were introduced, while the employment of women and children younger than 16 in mines and other dangerous places, and night work for women and children younger than 14, were banned.⁶ This strategy made the working class more loyal to the state and reduced the chance of social unrest and the repetition of events in Russia. However, this was the exception rather than the rule, and most other European countries, including Lithuania, did not introduce such progressive laws, resulting in poorer social and job security for working people.

Even though we might know quite a bit about workers' welfare in industrialised countries, the situation of Lithuanian workers in 1918–1940 has still not received enough attention. There were several studies on industrial workers written during Soviet times, however, these studies are problematic because of their ideology and methodology, and they do not look deeper into women's issues from a gender studies perspective. For these reasons it was decided not to use them for this study, and to rely on primary and secondary sources instead. This short study will try to give a deeper look into the workplace environment and see how the workers' experiences influenced their well-being and mental health.

Women and workplace violence

The social politics and strategy in Lithuania were different from the previous examples. The first years of independence were very challenging for a young state and its economy. Lithuania faced a high inflation rate, and the prices of common goods were rising at a very fast pace, therefore wage earners did not always have enough income to satisfy all their needs. That is why the workers who wanted to earn more chose to work overtime. However, the situation of working women was more complicated because of wage inequality. The income of female employees was much lower than their male counterparts.

⁵ ROSER, Christoph. *"Faster, Better, Cheaper" in the History of Manufacturing: From the Stone Age to Lean Manufacturing and Beyond*. Boca Raton, London, New York: CRC Press, 2016, p. 185.

⁶ MCDERMOTT, Kevin. *The Czech Red Unions, 1918–1929. A Study of Their Relations with the Communist Party and The Moscow Internationals*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, pp. 27–28.

In 1934, Ona Beleckiene, who was active in the Lithuanian woman's movement, wrote that it is important to follow the principle of equal pay for equal work (*už lygų darbą – lygus atlyginimas be amžiaus ir lyties skirtumo*),⁷ otherwise employers might choose to hire a cheaper labour force. In 1934 a labourer (male) in Kaunas could earn 4 to 6 litas a day, while female workers could earn 3 to 4 litas a day, and some places would pay them only 1 to 1.50 litas a day. Nevertheless, the wage gap was not seen as a serious issue. Moreover, sometimes it was even argued that working women earn more than men in textile or glass factories, where skilled women workers could earn 5 to 7 litas a day while unskilled men workers would get 3 to 4 litas a day. But this was the exception, not the rule. Probably the poorest wages, working and living conditions were found among housemaids. A maid in Kaunas would usually get a tiny room, food and 15 to 25 litas as their monthly wage, while household managers, nannies and cooks could get a room, food and 80 to 100 litas a month.⁸

Another important aspect of workers' well-being is mental health: this was quite often affected by long working hours that led to poor work-life balance, so workers were prone to fatigue and depression.⁹ Organisational culture – relationships with colleagues and management – also played a big role in workers' well-being and workplace environment. Looking through the pages of workers' press we would quite often find complaints about managers name-calling or beating up workers, therefore an important question arises: how common was such behaviour in a workplace during the times of Lithuanian independence (1918–1940)? What type of behaviour was tolerated and what was not? How did workers feel under pressure and disrespect of managers, what were their fears and actions? Mental health in the workplace was influenced by many different factors, including overwork, poor management and job-related stress.¹⁰ Aforementioned managers' behaviour is a form of instrumental aggression, which aims at gaining or keeping a specific status and power in a workplace. Such behaviour is sometimes accepted as an expression of workplace management style.¹¹

A question might arise: can we call bad workplace experiences violence? According to Halner and Maynard, “violence should be understood as any action or structure that diminishes another human being and that institutions can be as violent and intimidating as individuals.”¹² Following this, we will consider such types of actions experienced

⁷ BELECKIENĖ, Ona. Darbininkų reikalai. *Darbininkų atstovybės balsas*, 1934, December 15, p. 5.

⁸ VINGĖLA, Henrikas. Kaip gyvena Kauno darbininkas. *Diena*, 1934, May 6, p. 4.

⁹ ROSER, Christoph. “Faster, Better, Cheaper” in the History of Manufacturing: From the Stone Age to Lean Manufacturing and Beyond. Boca Raton, London, New York: CRC Press, 2016, p. 185.

¹⁰ THOMAS, Jay C.; HITE, Jeffrey. Mental Health in the Workplace: Toward an Integration of Organizational and Clinical Theory, Research, and Practice. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002, p. 7.

¹¹ HOGAN, Robert; MCNULTY, John L. Anger, Hostility, and Violence in the Workplace. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002, pp. 403–404.

¹² HANMER, Jalna; MAYNARD, Mary. Introduction: Violence and Gender Stratification. *Women, Violence and Social Control*. Ed. J. Hanmer, M. Maynard. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987, p. 5.

at work as violence. The most common complaint about managers was demeaning and disrespectful behaviour. It is impossible to discover the reasons for such acts towards the workers, therefore we can only look at how often it was seen as a problem and described in workers' press. In February, 1924 "Socialdemokratas" wrote that the workers of the "Gentleman" raincoat factory were complaining about humiliation.¹³ In July of 1930 similar complaints were made by people working on the construction of the Aleksotas-Garliava road,¹⁴ then similar in December – by an employee of L. Tkačas shop,¹⁵ then again in July of 1931 by the workers of the "Liteks" and "Drobė" factories.¹⁶ Sometimes managers were abusing the workers not only verbally, but also physically. In 1924 apprentices working in the "Varpas" printing house were complaining about being beaten up,¹⁷ and in October of 1925 the same newspaper wrote about inappropriate behaviour towards workers in the glass factory in Šančiai. According to the journalist "the managers of the factory were treating the workers in a same manner as it is being done in China". This comparison was made because of repeated violence against the workers.¹⁸ In October of 1931 one owner of a tailor's shop in Panevėžys was accused of shouting at and beating up one of his female employees.¹⁹ Quite often the complaints were made about managers who came to work to Lithuania from foreign countries. In 1938 Labour Inspection was informed that foremen of the "Audiniai" factory in Kaunas were calling the workers names (*leišiai, arkliai, lietuviškos kiaulės, asilai* – horses, Lithuanian pigs, donkeys etc.) and forcing them to work overtime. If anybody complained about work conditions, they would threaten the workers by firing them.²⁰

The investigation of these examples of communication and relationships between employers and employees showed that female workers became the victims of improper behaviour at the workplace more often than their male counterparts, especially in textile and tailoring business. That is why women's experience in the workplace requires extra attention. Insults, leers, sneers, jokes, patronage, bullying, verbal violence and sexual harassment were mostly experienced by female employees. And this type of behaviour usually helps managers to keep women subordinate both as women and employees in a masculine workplace hierarchy, as well as in other male-dominated environments.²¹ According to Hanmer and Maynard, gender relations are a central factor in understanding

¹³ Iš Lietuvos. *Socialdemokratas*, 1926, February 25, p. 4.

¹⁴ Lietuvoje. *Socialdemokratas*, 1930, July 24, p. 4.

¹⁵ Susirgo – išmetė! *Socialdemokratas*, 1930, December 20, p. 3.

¹⁶ Kaip elgiasi su darbininkais „Liteks“ ponai. *Socialdemokratas*, 1931, July 11, p. 1; Akcinė b-vė „Drobė“. *Socialdemokratas*, 1931, July 11, p. 1.

¹⁷ Kas kaltas? *Spaustuvininkas*, 1924, No. 6, p. 7.

¹⁸ Mūsų žinios. *Socialdemokratas*, 1925, October 8, p. 4.

¹⁹ Lietuvoje. *Socialdemokratas*, 1931, October 3, p. 6.

²⁰ 1938 04 12 darbo inspektorius L. Neverausko pranešimas Darbo ir socialės apsaugos departamento direktoriui. *Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas* (further – LCVA), f. 381, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 50.

²¹ HANMER, Jalna; MAYNARD, Mary. Introduction: Violence and Gender Stratification. *Women, Violence and Social Control*. Ed. J. Hanmer, M. Maynard. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987, p. 5.

violence towards women,²² therefore it is important to pay greater attention to it in this and future studies of violence.

Sexual harassment in the workplace: women's experiences

Women experience the same triggers of stress as men, however they are also prone to additional stress factors when they find themselves in a male-dominated environment with a patriarchal organisation, which might lead to sexist behaviour and sexual harassment. Chances of sexual harassment at workplace are higher when managers do not pay enough attention to organisational culture and in factories or workshops where female workers are the minority, or where female workers take up positions which were considered to be traditionally masculine. It is also worth pointing out that sexual harassment at the workplace affects not only the victim, but also the whole collective who is aware of it,²³ therefore such incidents have a huge negative influence in the workplace.

Sexual harassment was seen as a problem in 1920s–30s Lithuania. Woman activists who wrote to the workers' press were proposing several changes which would make the workplace a safer place for female employees. They proposed having gendered changing rooms, leisure areas, as well as hiring female managers in businesses where the biggest number of employees were woman. The main argument and the biggest concern about it was that “young female workers who try to earn their bread quite often find themselves in a complicated and nasty situation, therefore they fall into sin, and their employers fire them afterwards.”²⁴ The most problematic work environments for female employees were restaurants, bars, cafes and hotels. Workers' press stated that “there's no secret how women are treated in these businesses. We know that sometimes men call them promiscuous or do some violent acts – once it was seen that a drunken man battered a waitress in a corridor, calling her names for no good reason.”²⁵ However, in modern Lithuanian society, workers' press and organisations defended a woman's right to choose any job since all the jobs were considered to be equally important. Nevertheless, some business owners wanted to get more customers and to make more profit, and that is why, as it was stated in workers' press, they forced “the waitresses to drink alcohol together with guests and even more [most likely to have sex with the guests – U. M. A.]. Neither the owners of restaurants nor the owners of hotels were willing to hire women who would refuse to spend time with guests.”²⁶ It is highly likely that everything was hyperbolised in order

²² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²³ PROBST, Tahira M.; JOHNS, Donna A. Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002, pp. 420–422.

²⁴ BELECKIENĖ, O. Darbininkų reikalai. *Darbininkų atstovybės balsas*, 1934, December 1, p. 2.

²⁵ MIKALAUSKAITĖ, M[?]. Neatidėliojant gelbėtinos moterys darbininkės iš skriaudėjų rankų. *Darbininkų atstovybės balsas*, 1935, September 22, p. 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

to make the argument stronger, but women's organisations were constantly working with young women who came to bigger cities looking for jobs and ended up involved in prostitution, so these problems were real.

It is impossible to find out whether sexual harassment at work in Lithuania 1918–1940 was common behaviour or not. Even today such incidents are still being not reported, therefore the offenders do not get appropriate penalty and their victims do not get proper help and support.

Some brief historical sources show us that in 1918–1940 working women in Lithuania did face sexual harassment at a workplace. Workers' press reported the fact that in 1925 four under-aged girls were fired from a glass factory in Šančiai (Kaunas), as it was stated, "for the reasons that the managers could end up in a courtroom".²⁷ It was also stated that in 1932 female employees of the Berman, Kutkevič and Šitz enterprise in Šiauliai were constantly called names (whores) by their employers.²⁸ However, the most detailed story of sexual harassment at work was described in the documents of the Labour Palace which are currently being kept at the Lithuanian Central State Archive. They follow an incident which took place in 1939 at the Volfas-Engelman brewery in Kaunas, where the foreman, Mr. L. Z., was behaving improperly towards female employees.

It is worth mentioning that it was the male counterparts who addressed the Labour Palace and asked for intervention because of sexual harassment towards female workers at the factory. They stated that the foreman L. Z. Behaved improperly with female workers: touched them, constantly grabbed their breasts or forced them to have sex with him. According to the complainants, one woman who worked in the brewery was attacked by L. Z. at a secluded place of the factory [that means during her work hours – U. M. A.] and as a result, her underwear was ripped. Because of this attack, she decided to quit. Other female employees who experienced similar behaviour of L. Z. did not fill in any official complaints since they were afraid of losing their job and income. Another reason why female employees did not take any action against the foreman might be a feeling of shame or guilt. However, in early June of 1940 a complaint about L. Z. And his actions was filed at a local police station and he was arrested.²⁹ Unfortunately, after L. Z. was sacked and a new foreman Mr. V. G. was hired to take L. Z.'s place, his behaviour was also indecent towards the female employees. He was also known for sexual harassment and verbal attacks of women who, in his belief, were responsible for the fate of L. Z. Therefore male employees of the brewery informed the Labour Palace about such incidents where their female colleagues were threatened or called names like whores and etc.³⁰

²⁷ Mūsų žinios. *Socialdemokratas*, 1925, October 8, p. 4.

²⁸ Lietuvoje. *Socialdemokratas*, 1932, May 28, p. 6.

²⁹ 1940 06 11 Socialinio skyriaus vedėjo padėjėjo Jono Plučo pareiškimas Darbo rūmų pirmininkui. LCVA, f. 928, ap. 1, b. 1190, l. 85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Verbal abuse and sexual harassment were influencing workers' mood at the workplace. The officers of Labour Palace noticed that "the workers were highly infuriated by the behaviour of the foreman L. Z. and his alternate. They were despised by all the employees, which could have led to serious incidents against managers of the factory in case L. Z. was released from jail unpunished. There was gossip that if this happened the workers would consider radical action, just like Antanas Kranauskas, since the government does not care about them at all".³¹ The reference was made to Mr. Antanas Kranauskas who was unhappy about his work conditions and the behaviour of the managerial staff of the sawmill he worked at, therefore in June 1936 he killed the owner of the sawmill Mr. Kamberas and committed suicide afterwards. The funeral of Mr. Kranauskas developed into a big political demonstration and a global strike which lasted for a couple of days in Kaunas and surrounding towns.³²

On May 28, 1940 an anonymous complaint was submitted to the Director of Labour and Social Security Department. It described the situation in the Volfas-Engelman factory. According to the complaint, nearly half of the employees, that is 47 women, experienced cruel and immoral behaviour by their managers. They suffered most from Mr. L. Z., who was using his position of power and abusing female workers. It was stated that:

"New female employees are being talked into having sex with L. Z., in exchange for a permanent job position and easier tasks. If a worker does not agree to this, she is persecuted and threatened with termination of employment.

During work hours, L. Z. quite often asks female employees to go to the company archive which is on the second floor and to bring something there, but then he follows the workers, grabs and caresses them against their will or tries to persuade them to have sex with him. If a worker refuses or runs away, she is punished with a shorter work week or threatened with a "pink slip".

After questioning the workers, two of them confessed having sex with L. Z. while at work. Female employee K. J. stated that L. Z. had forced her to have sex with him, and another female employee V. M. agreed to have sex with L. Z. because she was being followed and threatened with termination of employment. It was also guessed that there were more women who were abused by L. Z., however they kept it a secret because of shame or other reasons known only to themselves. Moreover, all the workers shared stories and examples of indecent L. Z. behaviour which was completely inappropriate for the female employees in the factory and was perceived as the biggest humiliation a woman can experience."

³¹ 1940 06 11 Socialinio skyriaus vedėjo padėjėjo Jono Plučo pareiškimas Darbo rūmų pirmininkui. LCVA, f. 928, ap. 1, b. 1190, l. 85.

³² SVARAUSKAS, Arūnas. *Krikščioniškoji demokratija nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje (1918–1940). Politinė galia ir jos ribos*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2014, p. 114.

It was also stated that:

“Being a low life, L. Z. called his employees names (e.g. sluts, whores, prostitutes and so on). Furthermore, L. Z. was very cruel and dishonest: if a female worker did not agree to have sex with him, he would give the hardest tasks as a punishment, so women had to carry boxes full of beer bottles or perform other tasks which were too hard for a woman to do. Even pregnant women were attacked by L. Z., called names and bullied. <...> Women were crying and comforting each other because of such behaviour of L. Z., however, being afraid, they kept everything quiet and unreported. V. G., the assistant of L. Z., is not as cruel as his master, according to the workers, however, he has a tendency to touch younger employees inappropriately, grab their breasts or other parts of their bodies.

Most of the workers were outraged because of such behaviour of their managers. T. B. said that she had three children, however, L. Z. was constantly bothering and touching her, which was extremely offensive. T. B. reported L. Z. to his supervisors, however, no action against L. Z. was taken and the complaint even made the matter worse since after the investigation the relationship between the employees and managerial staff deteriorated further.”³³

This document shows that sexual harassment was a continuing problem at the Volfas-Engelman brewery and that managers were informed and aware of these incidents. However, they did not take any steps to solve the problem, therefore female employees had to experience constant harassment and attacks from their supervisors.

It is also worth mentioning that the meaning of sexual harassment or rape has very little to do with a satisfaction of sexual needs. These acts are much more closely related to power since, according to Susan Brownmiller, it helps men to force women to live in a constant fear of being attacked and/or raped.³⁴ This is also confirmed by the story of L. Z. and the Volfas-Egelman brewery, where sexual harassment was a way to express the power of managers, to create a hierarchic and authoritarian structure at the workplace that helps to spread fear among the workers and suppress any worker resistance.³⁵ Unfortunately, lack of historical sources does not allow us to draw a bigger picture of sexual harassment at work in the 1930s, so similar studies would most likely be possible only when investigating later historical periods of Lithuania.

³³ 1940 05 28 Kauno miesto I apygardos darbo inspekcijos slaptas pranešimas Darbo ir socialinės apsaugos departamento direktoriui. LCVA, f. 928, ap. 1, b. 1190, l. 86.

³⁴ BROWNMILLER, Susan. Brownmiller. *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1975, p. 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

Workplace violence and its impact on mental health

Another important aspect of urban workers' mental health was (dis)satisfaction with life. Poor life conditions and poor work/life balance might lead to health conditions or an increased risk of suicide. In the 1920s it was believed that the suicide rate grows when the economy deteriorates. To put it in numbers, in 1925 the highest suicide rate in Europe was in Germany (25 per 100,000 people); in Lithuania the rate was 5 suicides per 100,000 people. The lowest suicide rate at that time was in Greece (2 per 100,000 people).³⁶ There is no research done on suicides in Lithuania 1918–1940, therefore many assumptions have to be made based on periodicals and information on suicides provided in the press. Looking at the messages about suicides we see that sometimes the reason for someone's decision to end his/her life was provided. After analysing these messages, some tendencies were found. The top three reasons to commit a suicide were: a) unrequited love; b) unplanned pregnancy; c) economic hardship.

In the first part of the 20th century Kaunas was a growing city, therefore a lot of people moved from the province to the temporary capital. The new settlers did not have land they could work and grow food; they also had to pay rent and had other expenditure, so living costs escalated. If an urban worker had lost his/her income, he/she could easily topple from a so-called social ladder and find himself/herself in poverty.³⁷ In November 1933, a young woman, A. V., was found in the centre of Kaunas, having tried to poison herself with acetic acid. She used to work as a housemaid, but was currently unemployed and could not find any job. A. V. was taken to hospital, where she stated that she “tried to kill herself because of unemployment that made her homeless and hungry”.³⁸ Unfortunately, Miss A. V. had consumed a whole bottle of acid and could not be saved. However, even having a steady job did not guarantee safety for housemaids. Working in private employment they were more vulnerable and could face sexual harassment or other indecent employer behaviour. For example, in the summer of 1939 Kaunas District Court was working on the case of J. K., who was accused of raping his housemaid. The housemaid could not deal with this traumatic experience and committed suicide shortly afterwards.³⁹ Unfortunately, the original case documents have not survived, and the story of this housemaid cannot be told.

In 1933, the workers' newspaper “Lietuvos darbo balsas”, which represented social democratic values, published an article on workers' and officers' suicides. The newspaper was worried that “young people who have just started their independent lives were choosing to kill themselves for a lot of different reasons, including fraud, money embezzlement

³⁶ Kur daugiausiai savižudybių. *Mūsų rytojūs*, 1927, October 20, p. 7.

³⁷ ROSER, Christoph. “Faster, Better, Cheaper” in *the History of Manufacturing: From the Stone Age to Lean Manufacturing and Beyond*. Boca Raton, London, New York: CRC Press, 2016, p. 179.

³⁸ Dienos įvykiai Kaune. *Dienos naujienos*, 1933, November 29, p. 3.

³⁹ Kairauskas pralaimėjo visose instancijose. *Darbininkas*, 1939, August 24, p. 12.

and various malfeasances”.⁴⁰ The author proposed more serious attention should be given to suicides and to try to find the reasons why anybody takes his/her life, suggesting that these reasons could include poor work conditions and low wages.⁴¹ At the end of the article it was proposed that “the managers should keep in mind that we are people, not robots, therefore we can run out of patience. I am afraid that suicides will happen more often, or there could also be more murders as well. We should care more about this because if a person can kill himself/herself, they might also take the life of another”.⁴² Unfortunately, in a couple of years these predictions became a reality when in 1936 a worker, Antanas Kranauskas, who was employed at Kamberiai Brothers’ lumbermill in Kaunas, shot his employer Ruvimas Kamberis and killed himself afterwards.⁴³

Looking at the main problems at the workplace we see that working conditions in Lithuania 1918–1940 were highly dependent on the size of an enterprise and its managerial culture. Urban workers were prone to infectious diseases due to poor hygiene in the workplace, and to accidents due to poor job safety. Moreover, working people had to deal with the effects that work and working conditions had on their mental health. They had to experience bullying, indecent behaviour, physical violence and sexual harassment. Such workers’ experiences sometimes led to social unrest or suicide.

Conclusion

Looking at the workplace environment in 1930s Lithuania we can see many changes related to health and safety. However, the psychological and emotional environment at work was quite often still hostile towards the workers. Insults, bullying, verbal and sexual harassment were a part of a job, experienced by working women, since they were more prone to such experiences because of their vulnerability and poorer social or/and economic status.

The study showed that sexual harassment was seen as a problem in 1920s–30s Lithuania. It was hard to fight since the victims were too afraid of losing their jobs. Incidents of sexual harassment usually affected not only the victim but the whole collective, and had a negative influence on the workplace environment. Poor managerial culture and workplace violence had a big impact both on those who experienced it and on society in general, since it increased the disillusion with the social and political system and led to such violent acts as suicide or social unrest.

⁴⁰ Kooperatyvo tarnautojas. Savižudybės kooperatyvuose. *Lietuvos darbo balsas*, 1933, August, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ SVARAUSKAS, Arūnas. *Krikščioniškoji demokratija nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje (1918–1940). Politinė galia ir jos ribos*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2014, p. 114.

Sources

1. 1938 04 12 darbo inspektorius L. Neverausko pranešimas Darbo ir socialės apsaugos departamento direktoriui. *LCVA*, f. 381, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 50.
2. 1940 05 28 Kauno miesto I apygardos darbo inspekcijos slaptas pranešimas Darbo ir socialinės apsaugos departamento direktoriui. *LCVA*, f. 928, ap. 1, b. 1190, l. 86.
3. 1940 06 11 Socialinio skyriaus vedėjo padėjėjo Jono Plučo pareiškimas Darbo rūmų pirmininkui. *LCVA*, f. 928, ap. 1, b. 1190, l. 85.
4. Akcinė b-vė „Drobė“. *Socialdemokratas*, 1931, July 11, p. 1.
5. BELECKIENĖ, Ona. Darbininkų reikalai. *Darbininkų atstovybės balsas*, 1934, December 1, p. 2; December 15, p. 5.
6. Dienos įvykiai Kaune. *Dienos naujienos*, 1933, November 29, p. 3.
7. Iš Lietuvos. *Socialdemokratas*, 1926, February 25, p. 4.
8. Kaip elgiasi su darbininkais „Liteks“ ponai. *Socialdemokratas*, 1931, July 11, p. 1.
9. Kairauskas pralaimėjo visose instancijose. *Darbininkas*, 1939, August 24, p. 12.
10. Kas kaltas? *Spaustuvininkas*, 1924, No. 6, p. 7.
11. Kooperatyvo tarnautojas. Savižudybės kooperatyvuose. *Lietuvos darbo balsas*, 1933, August, p. 4.
12. Kur daugiausiai savižudybių. *Mūsų rytojūs*, 1927, October 20, p. 7.
13. Lietuvoje. *Socialdemokratas*, 1930, July 24, p. 4; 1931, October 3, p. 6; 1932, May 28, p. 6.
14. MIKALAUSKAITĖ, M[?]. Neatidėliojant gelbėtinos moterys darbininkės iš skriaudėjų rankų. *Darbininkų atstovybės balsas*, 1935, September 22, p. 3.
15. Mūsų žinios. *Socialdemokratas*, 1925, October 8, p. 4.
16. Susirgo – išmetė! *Socialdemokratas*, 1930, gruodžio 20, p. 3.
17. VINGĖLA, Henrikas. Kaip gyvena Kauno darbininkas. *Diena*, 1934, May 6, p. 4.

Literature

1. BROWNMILLER, Susan. *Brownmiller. Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1975.
2. DRĖMAITĖ, Marija. *Progreso meteoras. Modernizacija ir pramonės architektūra Lietuvoje 1918–1940 m.* Vilnius: Lapas, 2016.
3. HANMER, Jalna; MAYNARD, Mary. Introduction: Violence and Gender Stratification. *Women, Violence and Social Control*. Ed. J. Hanmer, M. Maynard. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.
4. HOGAN, Robert; MCNULTY, John L. Anger, Hostility, and Violence in the Workplace. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.

5. MCDERMOTT, Kevin. *The Czech Red Unions, 1918–1929. A Study of Their Relations with the Communist Party and The Moscow Internationals*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
6. PROBST, Tahira M.; JOHNS, Donna A. Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.
7. ROSER, Christoph. “Faster, Better, Cheaper” in the History of Manufacturing: From the Stone Age to Lean Manufacturing and Beyond. Boca Raton, London, New York: CRC Press, 2016.
8. SVARAUSKAS, Arūnas. *Krikščioniškoji demokratija nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje (1918–1940). Politinė galia ir jos ribos*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2014.
9. THOMAS, Jay C.; HITE, Jeffrey. Mental Health in the Workplace: Toward an Integration of Organizational and Clinical Theory, Research, and Practice. *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace*. Ed. J. C. Thomas, M. Hersen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.

Netinkamas seksualinis elgesys ir smurtas prieš moteris darbo vietose Lietuvoje 1920–1930 m.

Dr. Ugnė Marija Andrijauskaitė

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Humanitarinių mokslų fakultetas, Istorijos katedra, V. Putvinskio g. 23, LT-44243 Kaunas
El. p. ugne.andrijauskaite@vdu.lt

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje keliami klausimai, kiek nepagarbus ir (arba) smurtinis elgesys buvo būdingas ir įprastas 1918–1940 m. Lietuvoje veikusiose pramonės įmonėse ir valstybės bei savivaldybės įstaigų kontorose. Su koku darbdavių ar vadovaujamojo personalo elgesiu darbuotojai taikstėsi, o kas buvo netoleruojama? Ką turėjo kęsti dirbantieji, bijodami pranešti apie netinkamą elgesį ir dėl to prarasti darbą? Kokios buvo darbininkų patirtys? Tyrėjų duomenimis, moterys darbo vietoje patiria tuos pačius stresą keliančius veiksnius kaip ir vyrai, tačiau joms gresia ir papildomi streso šaltiniai, nes moterys atsiduria tradiciškai vyrų dominuojamoje aplinkoje ir patriarchalinėje organizacijoje, todėl darbo vietoje gali susidurti su seksualiniu priekabiavimu arba prievarta.

Straipsnyje žvelgiama į XX a. 4 dešimtmečio Lietuvoje pasitaikiusį smurtą prieš moteris darbo vietoje. Kritinė pirminių šaltinių analizė ir literatūros šia tema apžvalga leido pristatyti pagrindines smurto prieš moteris formas, paplitusias darbo vietose, ir parodyti, kokią neigiamą įtaką šie veiksmai darė tiek darbo vietos aplinkai, tiek asmeniniam moterų gyvenimui bei iš esmės visai to meto visuomenei. Išsami vieno seksualinio priekabiavimo atvejo Kauno fabrike studija įgalino išsamiau susipažinti su smurtą ir priekabiavimą darbo vietoje patyrusių moterų

išgyvenimais ir leido pateikti pavyzdį, kaip su tokiais atvejais buvo tvarkomasi tiriamojo laikotarpio Lietuvoje. Nustatyti, ar seksualinis priekabiavimas Lietuvos miestuose veikusiose įmonėse ir įstaigose buvo dažnas reiškinys, deja, neįmanoma, nes apie tokius incidentus būdavo pranešama retai, bet net pranešus ne visada priekabiavimą patyręs asmuo būdavo apsaugotas, o priekabiautojui – paskirta atitinkama nuobauda. Vis dėlto galime užtikrintai teigti, kad tiriamuoju laikotarpiu darbininkės tikrai susidūrė su seksualiniu priekabiavimu darbo vietoje.

Atliktas tyrimas parodė, kad tiriamuoju laikotarpiu darbuotojai ir darbuotojos savo darbo vietose reguliariai patirdavo smurtą, be to, dėl pažeidžiamesnės socialinės ir ekonominės situacijos dažniau su juo susidurdavo moterys. Nors smurtinis elgesys ir seksualinis priekabiavimas darbo vietose buvo laikytas problema, nebuvo patikimų būdų spręsti šias problemas. Prastas vadovavimas ir geros emocinės bei psichologinės darbo aplinkos neužtikrinimas veikė dirbančiųjų visuomenę ir didino nepasitenkinimą socialine ir politine sistema, taip pat vedė prie savižudybių ar socialinių neramumų.

Gauta / Received 2019 09 30

Priimta / Accepted 2020 02 17