

Industry

Since the earliest centuries, people have been developing various technologies on the basis of the experiences of many generations. The oldest manufacture in the Koźle Region that we know of and that can be deemed "industrial" with a grain of salt, was a flint-processing workshop functioning on the Castle Hill in Koźle circa 10 thousand years ago, where tips and various stone blades for arrows, knives, sickles, etc., were made. After some time, bloomeries appeared, in which iron was smelted from bog iron and were later followed by gristmills, salt basins, and dye-houses.

It is noted that during the Middle Ages, many water wheels powering the hammers used to forge sheet metal functioned in the valley of the Kłodnica river - hence the name of the Blachownia village ("blacha" is a Polish word for sheet metal).

The industry with the capital I arrived in the Koźle Region at the very beginning of the European Industrial Revolution. Iron-smelting furnaces existed in Ortowice, Goszyce, and Stara Kuźnia as early as 1746; moreover, in 1776, a rolling mill and a spoon factory were functioning in Kotlarnia; a pottery center was developing in Pawłowiczki, whereas in many neighboring towns, there already existed local gristmills and brickyards. During the 19th century, the industry in the Koźle Region was based primarily on agricultural production: distilleries, sugar refineries, breweries gristmills, and lumber mills. Since the 18th century, Sławięcice already had factories producing sheet metal, mirrors, glass, and knives. Over time, a metallurgy furnace was built there, and so were the adjacent wire factory, watermill, and brickyard. The harbor in Koźle gave an impetus to the establishment of the Factory of Paper and Cellulose (1891-1899).

Shortly before World War II, the geopolitical and economic factors contributed to the implementation of the decision to build large chemical facilities (present Azoty) in Blachownia and Bierawa; however, the most important factor was good localization. The intersecting railroads running to the east (Katowice - Kraków - Lwów), the south (Racibórz - Morawska Ostrawa), and the northeast (Opole - Wrocław - Berlin), as well as the sailable Odra river together with a trans-shipment harbor near Kędzierzyn, served for fast transport of the industrial products, thus determining the strategic location of the facilities.

After the war, on the foundation of the remains of the earlier facilities, an industrial center was developed around Koźle, which consisted of: the "Kędzierzyn" Facilities of Nitrogen Industry, the "Blachownia" Chemical Facilities, the Institute of Heavy Organic Synthesis and the Power Plant in Blachowna Śląska, the "Metalchem" Facilities of Construction and Repairs of Chemical Devices, Mostostal (producing steel structures, with headquarters in Zabrze), the "KoFaMa" Machine Factory in Koźle, and "Damen Shipyards Koźle."