

Z TEKI CENZORA

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Czesław Miłosz in *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 1980 Censorship's interventions

When compared to previous years, 1980 was a unique year. Urząd Kontroli (Control Bureau) was forced to relax their operations, which was postulated by the Solidarity Trade Union. Under its influence (and with the support of artists) the authorities did make certain concessions, particularly in regards to the censorship act. This will formally happen a year later when the *Ustawa o kontroli publikacji i widowisk (Publication and Performances Control Act) of 31 July 1981* will be passed, thus, introducing not only a modification of the name (Główny Urząd Kontroli Publikacji i Widowisk – Chief Publication and Performances Control Bureau), but also changes to the text intervention methods.

In September 1980, *Tygodnik Powszechny* published an article revealing the legal basis for censorship operations. It quoted a regulation on the basis of which the Control Bureau operated after WWII and it also announced the passing of a censorship act “based on the settlements made by government commissions with Inter-Factory Strike Committees in the coast”¹. The article was published without any censorship deletions. Interestingly enough, *Tygodnik Powszechny* was later one of the few magazines to use one of the provisions of the new act enabling it to mark the passages where the Bureau intervened.

Czesław Miłosz and Jerzy Turowicz, editor in chief of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, one of the major socio-cultural opinion-forming periodicals in Poland after WWII, knew each other since WWII and they became friends with time. Even though Miłosz did not publish in *Tygodnik Powszechny* in the first few years after WWII when he engaged in diplomatic operations (initially in the United States, then in France), the magazine was well-disposed towards him. On 1 February

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¹ “Prawna regulacja cenzury w PRL”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1980, issue 38, p. 6, s. 6.

1951, he left the Polish embassy in Paris where he worked and abandons the diplomatic service all together. He finds refuge in Maisons Laffite with Jerzy Giedroyc where in May during a press conference he officially announced his decision, which he then explained in the Paris-based *Kultura* publishing the famous article entitled “Nie” (No)². That decision resulted in a ban on publishing Miłosz’ texts or discussing his output. The ban was not absolute, though. In some periods his name was mentioned, in other it was removed, all depending on the guidelines sent from Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (Chief Control Bureau for Press, Publications and Performances). A period of his particular presence was the thaw, especially between late 1956 and early 1957. In 1957, *Tygodnik Powszechny* published Miłosz’ poems “Miłość” (Love) from the “Poema naiwne” (Naive Poems) collection and “Giordano Bruno” (“Campo di Fiori”), two discerning and favourable reviews of “The Issa Valley”³ and “List z Warszawy” by Marek Skwarnicki, a tribute poem made to the anonymous poet⁴. Miłosz was often mentioned in *Tygodnik Powszechny* by Stefan Kisielewski in his columns.

In the late-1970s, Miłosz was referenced in literary and cultural magazines, as per the provisions of the *Księga Zapisów i Zaleceń* (Book of Provisions and Guidelines), which stated that:

2. Academic and specialist works or memoirs or monographs may include without prior consent names, quotes, discussions of output and activity of the following persons [the instructions include Czesław Miłosz – note by M.W.L.] [...]

a) it is not acceptable, however, to overrate the output of the a/m persons or present them overly favourably.

If publications discussing the life and works of one of the above-mentioned persons directly do not include such information in the text itself, they should observe the rule to include in the foreword, afterword or endnotes a short summary of the person specifying the position the person maintained or has maintained towards our political system.

Specialist, cultural, literary or socio-political press may release articles, essays or discussions regarding the listed persons while adhering to the above-mentioned rules.

Their names and the names of their works should, however, be removed from daily newspapers, radio and television with the only exception of information of critical nature⁵.

² C. Miłosz, “Nie”, *Kultura* 1951, issue 5, s. 3–13.

³ Z. Łapiński, „I z ruchu zebrać moment wieczny”, I. Sławińska, “To jest daleki kraj...”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1957, issue 16.

⁴ M. Skwarnicki, “List z Warszawy”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1957, issue 27.

⁵ “Książka zapisów i zaleceń” Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (Book of Provisions and Guidelines of Chief Control Bureau for Press, Publications and Performances) in Warsaw, in: “Czarna księga cenzury PRL”, Warsaw 1981, p. 53–54.

In the 1970s and 80s, regardless of the censorship limitations, Miłosz had a strong presence in the samizdat literature, i.e. thanks to “drugi obieg” (secondary circulation) operations. In an interview for an American magazine in early 1981, he concluded:

My output was banned in Poland, my name was blacklisted. This lasted for many years. I lived abroad, I was an émigré, for thirty years. Nonetheless, I had an audience in Poland, though it was an elite group, which consisted mainly of young people, students of literary science and philosophy. In the past two years, several of my poetry collections were published in the second circulation⁶.

The issue and the importance of the poet's presence in the forbidden literature was not that simple for everyone engaged in its creation. Joanna Błażejowska, author of a monograph on samizdat operations, wrote:

When in 1978 Adam Michnik recommended to start publishing Czesław Miłosz' poetry (one collection every three months) “there was a general discontent within KOR (Committee for Workers' Defence), particularly within the intervention office, that workers wanted training instructions while *NOWA* published some poems.” [...] Neither did the literary profile delight the printers: “we will not risk getting censored for some birdies and flowers...” they reasoned⁷.

Miłosz, though there were attempts to promote his output under censorship, was not known by the wide audience when the decision was made by the Swedish Academy. The first reactions to the Polish émigré poet winning the Nobel Prize were summarised by Maria Peisert⁸. She outlined the state of Miłosz' reception in Poland and analysed the statements about him in the Polish media since the day of the announcement, i.e. 10 October until December 1980. She divided them into informative, informative-biographical and personal statements, memoirs and reports from encounters with Miłosz, descriptions of the experiences of his readers, etc. Peisert listed the following manipulation techniques: placing Miłosz in such a context to present him as one of many, placing press notes about him in peripheral sections which did not sufficiently draw the readers' attention; underlining the collective nature of the prize, the information “diluting” strategy – placing the

⁶ C. Miłosz, “Rozmowy zagraniczne 1979–2003”, translated by M. Zawadzka, Cracow 2013, p. 29.

⁷ J. Błażejowska, “Papierowa rewolucja. Z dziejów drugiego obiegu wydawniczego w Polsce 1976–1989/1990”, Warsaw 2010, p. 274.

⁸ cf. M. Peisert, “Reakcja polskiej prasy na wiadomość o otrzymaniu przez Czesława Miłosza literackiej Nagrody Nobla”, in: “Czesław Miłosz: tradice – současnost – recepce: materiály z mezinárodní vědecké konference uskutečněné v Ostravě ve dnech 16.–17. října 2008 u příležitosti 50. výročí výtisku Rodné Evropy Czesława Miłosze”, Ostrava 2009, p. 23–35.

information among many other less important pieces, which resulted in “altering the proportions and the hierarchy between them”⁹. In reports regarding this event, she identified several types of linguistic manipulation used for downplaying his importance achieved by both lexical choices as well as “the spatial organisation of information within a specific magazine.” In the final part of her article, she juxtaposed the manipulated texts with “enthusiastic and favourable” texts published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*. One might, of course, wonder to what extent the techniques discussed by Peisert were used purposefully, however, *Tygodnik Powszechny* played a particular role in promoting the name of the Nobel Prize winner.

The aim of this article is to confront those texts, i.e. texts published in or directed at *Tygodnik Powszechny* from late 1980 with available censorship material regarding them. *Tygodnik Powszechny* is a particularly representative magazine since it probably most often referred to or attempted to refer to Miłosz. A review of those will offer a basis for answering the question of which pieces of information regarding the writer were suspended by sensors and which were released for publication.

The community around *Tygodnik Powszechny* could have unofficially known about the Nobel Prize for Miłosz or they were expecting it. As Marek Skwarnicki wrote:

The awarding of the Nobel Prize to Miłosz was received with enthusiasm not only by the intelligentsia but also the general public. It turned out, though, that censorship and a total removal of his name and output from the media, libraries and curriculums took its toll. [...]. The communities around *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*, especially the Turowiczs, the Woźniakowskis and I as well as a few more people, were exceptional as we had our personal relations with Miłosz. An undefined circle of “insider” friends, intellectuals in Cracow, Warsaw and Lublin possessed special insight into the writer’s life but no one else. Even before the Nobel Prize was awarded, censorship of the output of the author of “Rescue”, anonymous in his motherland, subsided. The copyright infringing publication of Miłosz’ poems by PIW and a print of his biblical translations were a preparation for the news of his Stockholm distinction¹⁰.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that already on 12 October 1980 the first issue of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which was published three days after Miłosz received the Nobel Prize, ran an article by Jan Błoński entitled “Wzruszenie, dialog i mądrość”¹¹. It presented Miłosz’ poetry, though the author did not mention the Nobel Prize. The article discussed Miłosz’ early poetry, mainly within the cata-

⁹ Ibid., p. 27–30.

¹⁰ M. Skwarnicki, “Mój Miłosz”, Cracow 2004, p. 156–157.

¹¹ J. Błoński, “Wzruszenie, dialog i mądrość”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1980, issue 41.

strophic theme, with an emphasis on the questions it posed and an indication of its dialogue-based nature. The text had probably been prepared and submitted for print before the news from Stockholm broke.

The censorship records reveal no traces of interventions into Błoński's text; it did not, though, include any political inklings or even references to the poet's situation at that time. When compared to previous years it was absolutely unique: the censorship was more lenient, which was a result of the activities and postulates of the Solidarity Trade Union. A more extensive presentation of the Nobel Prize recipient was included in the following issue (of 19 October), which included a cover photograph of Miłosz, his two poems: "The Song" and "The Wormwood Star" and a text reprinted from a London quarterly called *Poets' and Painters' Press* from 1967. The fact itself that the editors were able to mention in the introduction to the biographical outline the reprint from an émigré magazine was significant. The text included information that the poet published in the Paris-based *Kultura*, that he was a recipient of a *Kultura's* award (the censor only removed a sentence stating that *Kultura* used to order texts from Miłosz). Moreover, censorship did not remove a sentence stating that the poet terminated his relationship with the national government, nor a sentence about the publication of "The Captive Mind" (which the censorship probably overlooked), a book which for many years had not been allowed to be referenced even if there was no ban on writing about Miłosz. The fact that the article directly unmasks the censorship's activities towards the poet in previous years is most symptomatic. The author [only initialled as TS] stated that Miłosz:

In 1958, signed with Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing house in Cracow a contract for collected poems and "The Issa Valley", books which later could not be published because of the censorship's ban¹².

In another section the article reads:

An extract for *Tygodnik Powszechny* from "The Book of Psalms", the translation of which Miłosz completed in August 1978, was confiscated by censorship. Another selection of psalms was only published in the December issue of *Twórczość* [...]. Initially, censorship did not even allow a mention of this occurrence in *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

[...] in the first issue of our magazine this year, under the pseudonym of Adrian Zieliński (because of censorship restrictions), he published with commentary his "free adaptations" of poems by Kabir, an Arabic poet who lived in 1440–1518¹³.

¹² [oprac. TS], "Czesław Miłosz", *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1980, issue 42.

¹³ Ibid.

In one of the following issues of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, in a column by Stefan Kisielewski entitled “Miłosz” from the “Wołania na puszczy” series, the censor left the information that the poet’s name had often been removed for in previous years:

It is nice to finally be able to include Miłosz’ name without the uncertainty whether someone will remove it or not. And that was the case several times, e.g. in my book entitled “Z literackiego lamusa”, published less than a year ago [...] where instead of his name I was allowed to include a descriptive: “the author of «Three Winters»”¹⁴.

The same column offered evidence that censors, regardless of the Nobel Prize, remained consistent in removing any information about “*The Captive Mind*”. The following fragment was removed from the piece:

A loner from Berkeley won – even in the People’s Republic of Poland. Maybe someday they will forgive him for the “captive mind” as it’s a great deep historic book on Stalinism – mind you, that PAST PERIOD has already been unequivocally judged both here and there¹⁵.

The authorship information for “The Captive Mind” also disappeared from an article by Wojciech Karpiński entitled “O Miłoszu w Stanach” (issue 45, 1980) along with the information that the poet published in the Paris-based *Kultura*. It was also removed from the article entitled “Od redakcji” (there, instead of “author of «The Captive Mind»” censorship proposed: “author of «Native Realms»”). Though it seems obvious that it referred to the same person, the emphasis got clearly shifted. In the same article, the shift of the emphasis was strengthened further by a slight yet significant change – in the phrase:

[...] the crystal clear tone of the Poet’s words, probably the greatest among the contemporary, has broken through the global tumult while the fair beam of His art – through the darkness and the shadows of the cave we happen to be living in¹⁶.

the censor proposed to remove the “cave”, thus, creating the following sentence:

[...] the crystal clear tone of the Poet’s words, probably the greatest among the contemporary, has broken through the global tumult while the fair beam of His art – through the darkness and the shadows we happen to be living in¹⁷.

¹⁴ S. Kisielewski, “Miłosz”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1980, issue 44.

¹⁵ Digital issues of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (2006).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Od redakcji”, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1980, issue 45.

It is worth mentioning that it was not just a minute change simplifying the form. The removal of the “cave” meant a removal of the association a possible reader might make with a book published outside of censorship by Tomasz Staliński (Stefan Kisielewski) entitled “Cienie w pieczarze” (Shadows in the cave), which portrayed the mendacious writers’ community in the “cave” of communism. It would be hard to imagine a clearer allusion. Cracow censors, who knew the community of censored intelligentsia quite well, had no real difficulty in decoding that.

The officers also studied carefully all **mentions and pieces of information regarding the émigré community, which they filtrated closely**. The documents indicate that it was allowed to provide general information about the existence of émigré communities but it was prohibited to promote them. Thus, from Kisiel’s column entitled “Miłosz” the censor removed the date and the place of publication of Miłosz’ book on mass culture (Instytut Literacki, Paris 1959) and the bibliographic address of his review of Kisiel’s “Cienie w pieczarze” (“Duże cienie”, *Kultura* 1972, issue 301). By removing such information censorship impeded the efforts of a potentially interested reader to reach those texts. That activity entailed another: **the removal of information regarding the problems with availability of the prohibited items and their seizure by customs**. The issue devoted to Miłosz included an article by Bronisław Mamoń who indicated the exceptional value of his poetry, shared with the readers his vexatious experiences with acquiring the prohibited items, which the censor meticulously removed. After his remark that “during my short visits in Western Europe in the 1960s and 70s” he was able to “collect all the works by Miłosz” the following sentence was removed:

I smuggled them through the border hidden in dirty laundry – I’m not sure why I thought that way they wouldn’t fall into the hands of diligent customs officers armed with lists of banned books. Twice I was successful. During my third attempt I lost all copies¹⁸.

From the previously quoted column “Miłosz” by Kisielewski (issue 44, 1980), the censor removed Kisiel’s recollections of reading “The Land of Urlo”. He wrote:

I read it on the plane while returning to Poland in 1978. I read it hastily.” Further on the censor removed a section of a sentence: “Fearing that the customs officers will take it away from me. And so they did¹⁹.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Sometimes it is difficult to trace the intentions behind censors' decisions. In an article by Andrzej Sulikowski entitled "Z Miłoszem w plecaku" (issue 45, 1980), a description of the problems with the availability of prohibited items remained while the censor removed an ironic comment on the ideological aspect of prohibited items:

You need to have a note, as usual, first from the management of your home institute, then from the management of the Jagiellonian Library and finally [**the ideologically poisoned** – removed, note by M.W.Ł.] the book can be – [**while retaining almost guerrilla-like caution** – removed, note by M.W.Ł.] read in the professors' reading room and only there²⁰.

The nature of many removals was then to temper the author's spiteful or bitter reaction towards the system. In an article by Tadeusz Szym entitled "Spotkanie z Czesławem Miłoszem" the word "the exile" is replaced with a word "the émigré" (*Tygodnik Powszechny* 1980, issue 51/52). In that instance, however, one could understand the censor. The decision to leave the country was made by the poet, he was not forced to do that, on the contrary: the authorities sought to keep him in Poland, which is why after he was recalled from a post in the United States his passport was revoked in 1950.

Worth mentioning is the final example, this time of a rather peculiar intervention.

Issue 43 of *Tygodnik Powszechny* of 1980 included a text entitled "Notatki" which presented, usually positive, reactions of Western press to Miłosz winning the Nobel Prize. The author, quoting *Le Figaro*, wrote:

Poland has surely become the favoured one: first John Paul II, now Czesław Miłosz – maybe not as well-known as the Pope, at least for now, but his Nobel Prize elevated him to the covers of many newspapers²¹.

He reported what *Die Welt* and *Le Mond* had written about Miłosz, both presenting him positively. There as well it is worth pointing out a fragment which was cut by censorship. After his remark that "A majority of those comments are positive or enthusiastic even" the censor removed the sentence: "This large choir does include voices (though just a few) which see no value in his output. "He has brought nothing to the poetic art" (*Rude Pravo*)²².

Why did censorship remove a fragment which not only did not pose any threat to the authorities, but it could also serve them as it raised questions as to

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ „Notatki”, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1980, issue 43.

²² Digital issues of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (2006).

the poet's greatness and as a result it could undermine his influence? Maybe, though this is just a hypothesis, that once the censor was Krzysztof Kozłowski, an editor responsible for the relations with censorship who often personally marked the decisions of the Cracow control bureau on the texts. *Tygodnik Powszechny's* editor that time censored the text to eliminate opinions which were unfavourable towards Miłosz.

The information flow between the Main Bureau and its divisions was not efficient enough also as a result of tumultuous political changes. Control officers were not certain to what extent they could loosen control. Interventions often required contacting the chief officer or the party authorities. The decisions to retain or remove Miłosz or references to his name were often made with a justification: "removed upon consulting the GUKP (Chief Publication and Performances Control Bureau)." The regulations regarding Miłosz and many other émigré writers, which were still binding in the late-1970s, became limited in terms of their scope and influence, especially a year later, after the change of the censorship act²³. In the case of Miłosz, the Nobel Prize and his presence in the cultural circles of the West played a substantial role. It did not, however, mean a complete openness to promoting that output as the authorities feared that his name might become a synonym of the struggles for independence for the opposition.

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²³ Since the Act came into force all interventions could had been marked by the editorial board and the publishers and those censorship decisions could be appealed with the Chief Control Bureau. Furthermore, if the decision was unfavourable for the authors, they could challenge it with the Supreme Administrative Court [cf. Journal of Laws 1981 No. 20 Item 99].

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Czesław Miłosz w „Tygodniku Powszechnym” w 1980 roku wobec ingerencji cenzury

(Streszczenie)

Celem niniejszego artykułu było uzyskanie odpowiedzi na pytania: jakie zasady i wytyczne stosował Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w stosunku do autora *Zniewolonego umysłu* po przyznaniu poecie Nagrody Nobla, gdy stał się on znany na Zachodzie oraz w jakich okolicznościach – wbrew wytycznym cenzury – nazwisko Czesława Miłosza mogło pojawić się w oficjalnych publikacjach. Jako materiał badawczy przyjęto numery „Tygodnika Powszechnego” wydawane od października (po ogłoszeniu decyzji Akademii Sztokholmskiej) do grudnia 1980 roku, które pokazują, jak Miłosz-emigrant był obecny w opiniotwórczym wówczas katolickim czasopiśmie w świetle zapisów cenzury.

Słowa kluczowe: Czesław Miłosz; „Tygodnik Powszechny”; cenzura w PRL; GUKPPiW; cenzura wobec literatury

Keywords: Czesław Miłosz; Tygodnik Powszechny; censorship in Poland after 1945; literature in the light of censorship