

A c t a Universitatis Lodziensis

FOLIA LITTERARIA POLONICA

7(37)
2016

Censorship in the Polish People's Republic



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ŁÓDŹ 2016

„Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica”

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PROJEKT OKŁADKI

Stämpfli Polska Sp. z o.o.

ZDJĘCIE NA OKŁADCE

Na okładce wykorzystano fragment projektu konkursowego
Memoriału Wolnego Słowa w Warszawie,
autorstwa zespołu: Katarzyna Wojtyga, Olaf Cirut, Piotr Winkowski, Jacek Godlewski, 2013

Wydrukowano z gotowych materiałów dostarczonych do Wydawnictwa UŁ

<http://www.litterariapolonica.online.uni.lodz.pl>

adres redakcji: ul. Pomorska 171/173, 90-236 Łódź

e-mail: foliapolonica@gmail.com

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Wydane przez Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego

Wydanie I. W.07516.16.0.Z

Ark. druk. 14,75

ISSN 1505-9057

e-ISSN 2353-1908

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Piotr Swacha*

Censorship in the PSL Press within the Period of the 1946 Referendum and the Legislative Sejm Election

Introduction

The subject of this article are the activities of censorship authorities of the Polish People's Party (PSL) towards the press within the period prior to the referendum of 30 June 1946 and up to the election for the the Legislative Sejm of 19 January 1947. The time frame is between the 27 April 1946 the passing of the people's voting act by the State National Council (KRN), and the 8 February 1947 of the Sejm's approval of the government of Józef Cyrankiewicz. I analysed material developed by the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (GUKPPiW) and its regional divisions¹. I included documents confirming censor interventions in articles raising the issues associated with the conducting of both electoral actions. Archival material of the PSL stored in the Archiwum Zakładu Historii Ruchu Ludowego – AZHRL (Archive of the Historical Institution of the Peasant Movement) also served as the basis for establishing the facts. A considerable amount of information can be obtained for research into censorship interventions in the PSL press from a collection of all issues of "Komunikat", an internal bulletin of the PSL from 1946–19472, published by the Museum of the History of the Polish Peasant Movement. The periodical, because of its special form of writing addressed only to the PSL members, was not subject to censorship. "Komunikat" also included material halted by censorship in other press outlets.

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¹ To learn more about the organisation of the censorship institution in the years following WWII see: K. Kamińska, *Początki cenzury*, in: *Zwrot polityczny '48. Między polską drogą a projektem uniwersalnym*, M. Jabłonowski, W. Jakubowski, T. Krawczak (eds.), Warsaw 2013, pp. 225–235.

² *Komunikaty Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego 1946–1947*, M. Adamczyk, J. Gmitruk, J. Mazurek (eds.), Warsaw 2002.

The people's vote of 30 June 1946 and the election for the Legislative Sejm held on 19 January 1947 constituted one of the most important political events leading to the seizure and consolidation of power by Polish communists. Both events were closely interconnected in terms of legal issues, propaganda and politics. As a result of the official results of the referendum³ the Higher House of the Parliament was eliminated, thus limiting the legislative power to only the Sejm. The referendum and the election were also aimed at creating a pretence of legitimisation of the rule of the workers' party in Poland. They also served as the basis for excluding the PSL from the formal coalition of the Provisional Government of National Unity (TRJN) and prompted the process of first neutralising and finally breaking up the group⁴.

In the people's vote, the citizens were asked three questions regarding the abolishment of the Higher House of the Parliament, economic and territorial issues⁵. The main propaganda goal behind the referendum was to try to convince the PSL authorities to assume a position on the posed questions in line with the stipulations of the communist party and its satellites. As conceived by the PPR, the referendum was only a provisional form of expression of the society which could later on be considered as an expression of support and trust on the part of the citizens in the new authorities⁶. Eventually, the PSL decided to campaign for keeping the Senate in the system of legislative institutions⁷, which considering the referendum questions was the only way of differentiating its position from the stipulations of the other groups.

The political reason behind the People's Vote was the intention to postpone the parliamentary election. The communists intended elections to become a ritual in which citizens would sanction the pre-established division of seats in the

³ Both the results of the People's Vote and the election of 1947 were falsified to the benefit of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and its allies. To learn more see: *Referendum z 30 czerwca 1946 r. Przebieg i wyniki*, A. Paczkowski (ed.), Warsaw 1993, pp. 8–9; M. Skoczylas, *Wybory do Sejmu Ustawodawczego z 19 stycznia 1947 r. w świetle skarg ludności*, Warsaw 2003, p. 11.

⁴ The Polish People's Party existed as a separate party until 27 November 1949 when as a result of merging the PSL with the People's Party the United People's Party (ZSL) formed. Actually, the symbolic date of the end of independent activity of the PSL was 21 October 1947, when Stanisław Mikołajczyk secretly left Poland. To learn more about the PSL after 1947 see: T. Skrzyński, *"Wejście" do ZSL. Miejsce na scenie politycznej i losy "Odrodzonego" Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w 1948 i 1949 r.*, in: *Wież i ruch ludowy w Polsce i Europie*, vol. 1 *W kręgu historii i tradycji*, J. Gmitruk, A. Indraszczyk (eds.), Warsaw 2012, pp. 533–546.

⁵ The questions read as follows: Are you for abolishing the Senate? Do you want the future constitution to establish the economic system introduced by the agricultural reform and the basic sectors of national economy maintaining the basic rights of private initiative? Do you want the western borders on the Baltic, the Oder and the Nysa Łużycka to be established?; *People's Vote Act of 27 April 1946*, "Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland", 10 May 1946, No. 15, p. 189.

⁶ R. Buczek, *Stanisław Mikołajczyk*, vol. 2, Toronto 1996, p. 63.

⁷ R. Turkowski, *PSL w obronie demokracji 1945–1949*, Warsaw 1992, p. 139.

Sejm⁸. However, the PSL authorities did not agree to the proposals of the PPR and created a separate electoral list. As a result, during secret meetings of the PPR and the PPS (Polish Socialist Party), it was decided to once again postpone the parliamentary election by replacing it with a referendum. That enabled communists to verify the level of effectiveness of the propaganda machine and the readiness of security officers for the operation of forging votes. It also enabled them to probe the reactions of the Western world to fraud and offered a general breakdown of the atmosphere and political preferences of the Polish society⁹.

Publication resources of the PSL

The operation of their own press constituted the basis of propaganda operations for political groups which were reactivated after WWII. That was because it was the most available and the most common medium of mass communication. The political press was also used to transmit party directives, thus serving an organisational function.

In the period prior to the people's vote and the election of the Legislative Sejm, the Polish People's Party was the publisher of seven periodicals, including one daily newspaper, three monthly magazines, two weekly magazines and one periodical, issues of which were initially published every seven days and then three times a week. The first periodical reactivated after 1945 associated with the peasant movement was "Polska Ludowa", managed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk and published by the Greater Poland organisations of the PSL¹⁰. However, it was "Gazeta Ludowa" that was considered the most important periodical of the PSL, which was published beginning in the autumn of 1945 in Warsaw. It was the only daily newspaper of the PSL and had the highest circulation, which in 1946 reached 125,000 copies.

Within the studied period, one periodical associated with the independent peasant movement was closed by the Chief Executive Committee of the PSL (NKW PSL). It was the "Chłopski Świat" monthly whose editor-in-chief was

⁸ The authorities of the Polish Workers' Party stipulated the following distribution of votes: 20% for the PPS, the PPR, the PSL, and the SL each and 10% for the Alliance of Democrats (SD) and the Labour Party (SP) each while the PSL postulated that 75% of seats should be assigned to people's parties. Vide R. Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 124–127.

⁹ To learn more see: Janusz Wrona, *Jedni głosują a drudzy obliczają głosy: wybory do Sejmu Ustawodawczego RP w 1947 r.*, "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio F. Historia 1997/1998", vol. LII/LIII, pp. 442–446.

¹⁰ G. Kubicka, *Czasopisma regionalne ruchu ludowego w latach 1944–1949*, "Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej", 1986, issue 3, p. 100; To learn more about the peasant movement organisations in Greater Poland see: P. Swacha, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w Wielkopolsce (1945–1947)*, "Społeczeństwo i Polityka" 2011, issue 4, pp. 24–39.

Józef Niećka. The stern decision of the PSL's authorities was forced by the criticism published in the periodical of the PSL's decision not to join the electoral bloc¹¹. It was the only such event within the period from the start of the referendum campaign until 8 February 1947.

Titles of the PSL periodicals with circulation in 1946 and 1947 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Circulation of the press of the independent peasant movement in 1946–1947

Title	Type	Circulation in thousands of copies	
		1946	1947
“Polska Ludowa”	weekly, later issued 3 times a week	25–39	21.5–35
“Chłopski “Sztandar”	weekly	37–50	No information
“Piast”	weekly	20–35	33
“Gazeta ludowa”	daily	45–125	75
“Wieś i Państwo”	monthly	4	4
“Chłopski Świat”	monthly	10	No information
“Przebudowa”	monthly	No information	No information

Source: P. Swacha, *Polityka informacyjna Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego (1945–1947)*, Warsaw 2010, pp. 115–129.

Available data enabled me to establish the circulation of the majority of periodicals published by the PSL. Within the studied period the number of single-time issues was gradually lowered starting from the beginning of 1947. It was associated with the consistent limiting by the secret service of the publishing potential of the PSL managed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk¹².

Quantitative analysis of interventions

The currently available source material makes precise comprehensive quantitative analysis of censor interventions in the periodicals of the independent peasant movement impossible. It is mainly a result of a temporary release

¹¹ S. Stępień, *Prasa ludowa w Polsce. Zarys historyczny*, Warsaw 1984, p. 129.

¹² The fight against the press and campaigning activities of the PSL also assumed the form of physical repression and organising political court trials against the journalists and employees of the Press and Propaganda Division of the PSL. To learn more see P. Swacha, *Polityka informacyjna...*, pp. 79–80.

exclusion of GUKPPiW documents by the Archive of New Records. Therefore, in order to conduct a quantitative analysis estimation of content regulated in the PSL periodicals, I decided to use a sample in the form of interventions in *Polska Ludowa* published by the Voivodship Board of the PSL in Poznań. The reason behind the decision was the availability of the source material: reports on censorship inspections in *Polska Ludowa* are made available by the State Archive in Poznań; it can also be considered as an organised and complete collection. The periodical has been chosen as a sample also because it was published without any interruptions within the studied period; from January 1946 it was published three times a week, and in the period prior to the people's vote and the election to the Legislative Sejm it had a circulation close to the average of PSL periodicals. Moreover, the political content published in the PSL periodicals were not a result of free actions by their editorial boards. The periodicals of the peasant movement managed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk were subject to the Press Department which was part of the Press and Propaganda Division of NKW PSL. Its main task was to, i.a. **“maintain the political line of all periodicals associated with the Peasant Movement”**.¹³

Apart from similarities in the content published in the PSL periodicals, the decision to use such a sample can be further justified by the expected unanimity among the censors regarding articles submitted for inspection. In their operations, censors, regardless of their location, operated on the basis of the same instructions and guidelines sent from Warsaw. Therefore, it must be assumed that during the inspection of political content in periodicals of the same party they should proceed identically.

The number of interventions in individual thematic categories was not equal to the number of articles in which deletions were applied. That was a result of the fact that in some texts certain expressions which applied to various topics were removed. In a single article there could be deletions of both fragments regarding the repressions used against the PSL members and themes associated with election campaigning. When assigning a specific fragment to a specific thematic category I considered censor intervention justifications which were placed in the majority of instances underneath a specific press clipping¹⁴. The summary includes only texts related to the referendum and the election to the Legislative Sejm which were submitted for inspection within the studied period. Detailed information is presented in Table 2.

¹³ Archiwum Zakładu Historii Ruchu Ludowego (AZHRL), PSL 1945–1949, Organizacja Sekretariatu Naczelnego PSL, ref. no. 64, Pismo sekretarza naczelnego do kierownika Wydziału Prawnego Józefa Fabijańskiego, l. 3.

¹⁴ Those justifications constituted a part of the reports and were meant for the supervisors.

Table 2. Thematic categories of censor interventions in Polska Ludowa within the studied period

Category	Number of interventions
Electioneering and conducting election campaign	3
Repressions against PSL activists	12
Method of organisation the referendum and election	11
Instructions for voters	6
Legal provisions	6
Election protests	3
Forging of votes	12
In total:	53

Source: Own work based on archival material

Within the total number of 53 interventions in the contents of articles of “Polska Ludowa” raising the issues of the people’s vote and the election to the Legislative Sejm, the largest group constituted deletions of remarks regarding repressions towards the PSL activists and forging votes. Almost as often censors removed from print fragments presenting information on the organisation of both acts of voting. That meant that censorship intervened to a lesser extent in themes associated with the PSL’s campaigning than in texts which could disturb the image of normal political rivalry created by the propaganda.

Qualitative specification of censor interventions

In terms of qualitative analysis of censor interventions in the PSL periodicals, I used a simplified division into four main thematic categories based on the problem areas raised by the removed fragments¹⁵. The first applied to issues associated with the mode of preparing both electoral acts and the possibility of controlling their courses. The second included articles of a campaign nature which expressed the position of a group and encouraged citizens to vote for the PSL. The third applied to the repressions used against the activists of the PSL managed by

¹⁵ I based the qualitative analysis on wider source material than the qualitative analysis. I used, e.g. reports (collected before the GUKPPiW collection was excluded from releasing) on censorship in “Gazeta ludowa” and other published documents.

Stanisław Mikołajczyk who were engaged in conducting the election campaign. The fourth consisted of attempts to inform the population on irregularities and filed protests.

Before the referendum and the election to the Sejm, the PSL tried to undertake several press initiatives aimed at informing the general population on the methods of organising both events. The first initiative which could be included in this category was the attempt to raise the topic of the date of the election. Pursuant to the provisions of the conference in Yalta the election was supposed to be held as soon as possible¹⁶. In order to ensure a win communists tried to postpone it as much as possible. Based on their Hungarian experience¹⁷, their goal was to develop the security machine and prepare other party and state institutions to forge votes. Therefore, the issue of the date of the election became an inconvenient topic for the “new rule”, consistently being removed from legally published periodicals. People’s parties did not attempt any direct presentation of the reasons for the communists’ postponing of the election, and yet any mention of the issue exceeding the official position of the PPR in that matter was removed. One instance of such activities were the interventions in the article entitled “**Konieczność szybkich wyborów**” [The necessity for prompt election] submitted for publication in the Greater Poland periodical of the PSL. Its author tried to state an opinion that a lack of clear political decisions creates a sense of temporariness and a lack of stability, which in turn lead to the formation of social pathology. The censor decided that “the lead idea of the article is murky and beguiling”¹⁸ and excluded it from printing in its entirety.

Within the context of preparing for both acts of voting, any reports on the compositions of election committees were consistently being removed. Eliminating such information enabled the party-state propaganda to create an image of a routine electoral rivalry. An example of a typical operation of censorship, which not only removed certain content but also led to manipulating the meaning of the entire text, were the interventions in the article entitled “**Ordynacja wyborcza do Sejmu**” [Electoral system for the Sejm]. It included an announcement that KRN shall accept the legal regulations regarding the election and a statement of the

¹⁶ *Komunikat z konferencji szefów rządów Trzech Wielkich Mocarstw, tzw. Konferencji Krymskiej*, in: *Historia powszechna 1919–1991. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, L. Mularska-Andziak (ed.), Pułtusk 1997, p. 95.

¹⁷ The parliamentary election in Hungary was held on 4 November 1945. It was won by the Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP), which was considered as occupying the same stream of the peasant movement as the PSL. The event complicated the seizure of power by communists in Hungary. To learn more about FKgP see: M. Földesi, K. Szerencsés, *Historyczna rola partii chłopskich na Węgrzech po II wojnie światowej*, in: *Dzieje partii i stronnictw chłopskich w Europie*, vol. 2, *W podzielonej Europie*, Pułtusk–Warsaw, pp. 123–130.

¹⁸ State Archive in Poznań (APP), WUKPPiW, ref. no. 140, Sprawozdania z ingerencji dotyczących Polski Ludowej, l. 41.

PSL's expectations. Censors approved for publication an opinion stating that commissions of various levels should be composed of representatives of all groups but they removed a fragment which could have suggested that such a regulation shall not be implemented and it will not be applied during the referendum¹⁹. Thus, the readers, unaware of the stated concerns, could have assumed that the postulated solutions would be accepted.

Censorship not only prevented the propagation of information on the acceptance in the electoral system of provisions limiting the control over the course of the election but also tried to block any information on voter rights. The knowledge of electoral provisions could eliminate the possibility of introducing irregularities or could enable the PSL to gather information on those irregularities. Therefore, e.g. in "Chłopski Sztandar" censors removed a fragment of an article encouraging the readers to read the applicable Polish laws, particularly the "provisions of the Penal Code, which are associated with elections"²⁰. In that context, censorship undertook a special "fight" against texts referring to the secret nature of voting. It was a response to the operation of the PPR and its allies of promoting demonstrative and overt voting for bloc parties. Since it exceeded regular display of support for those groups and their main goal was to exert influence or even force people to vote for communists, the PSL tried to inform people about their right to cast their votes in a secret ballot. According to the argument in one of the articles eventually removed in its entirety: "no one can demand voters to vote overtly, to show their ballots to the chairman of the committee before placing them in the official envelope as it is already being promoted in some regional commissions. That constitutes electoral abuse which is subject to prosecution"²¹. PSL periodicals also attempted to limit the possibility of exerting direct pressure on citizens who would visit the polling stations. Journalists of the Party managed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk seeing the help of uniformed services in conducting the campaign by the bloc parties wanted to draw the readers' attention to the fact that during the vote no representatives of Milicja Obywatelska [the police] or any other state power ministries were allowed to be present in the stations. There were two attempts at conveying that piece of information, once in a quite unique form. Voices indicating the possibility of such instances were presented as baseless gossip spread by the "enemies of the People's Republic"²². Even though the

¹⁹ APP, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 142, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety "Polska Ludowa", l. 22.

²⁰ Annex 19: "Do Generalnego Komisarza Wyborczego", in: *Dokumenty fałszerstw wyborczych w Polsce w roku 1947. Drugi memoriał Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w sprawie wyborów w Polsce złożony z załącznikami w dniu 18 I 1947 roku Ambasadorom Stanów Zjednoczonych, Wielkiej Brytanii i Związku Radzieckiego w Warszawie*, M. Adamczyk and J. Gmitruk (eds.), Warsaw 2002, pp. 94–95.

²¹ AAP, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 143, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety "Polska Ludowa", l. 1.

²² AAP, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 141, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety "Polska Ludowa", l. 75.

text emulated the party-state propaganda discourse, censorship halted it. Probably because even the fact of mentioning the issue was considered unfavourable for the ruling party.

In the context of the organisation of the election, the PSL periodicals also tried to inform the readers about the accepted procedural solutions which could have caused confusion among the supporters of the peasant movement. One example was the process of assigning the PSL different electoral list numbers in every district. Censorship banned any comments about it, allowing for only the announcement of the PSL's electoral lists in individual regions of the country. Accordingly, censors removed any suggestions indicating that it was not accidental²³ or reminding that similar situations occurred during the pre-WWII elections²⁴. They also banned any information about the distribution of ballots, which could have resulted in the PSL's sympathisers casting invalid votes. That was associated with the accepted form of voting. Citizens received at polling stations only stamped envelopes into which they had to put a ballot with a personally entered number from a given list. Before the election, there were ballots being distributed which included the PSL's electoral list number, similar to those created by the party, but with an invalid imprint. An attempt to warn against using them was blocked by censorship²⁵.

During the initial months after the formation of the Provisional Government of National Unity, one of the tasks of censorship was to protect the propaganda-created image of a political system in which the official discourse was presented as democratic. Therefore, any information which could have indicated the existence of any persecutions of the representatives of legally operating political parties were removed from the press. The removal of content related to repression against the opposition constituted an element of the general strategy of eliminating any information indicating a lack of political liberties in the post-WWII Poland, but those activities were intensified considerably around the time of the referendum and the election, when censor decided to remove several articles in their entirety, which was a rare practice, even considering the institution's restrictive disposition towards the PSL periodicals. Such actions were taken against texts which directly reported on the situation. For example, the censors removed from "Gazeta Ludowa" such articles as: "Rzeczywistość przedwyborcza w Polsce. Represje wobec PSL" [Pre-election reality in Poland. Repressions against the PSL], "Aresztowania przedwyborcze wzmogły się. Wiadomości nadesłane z Krakowa i Poznania" [Pre-election arrests intensify. Reports sent in from Krakow and Poznań]; "Natężenie aresztów trwa. Wiadomości z województw: lubelskiego, łódzkiego,

²³ APP, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 143, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety "Polska Ludowa", l. 6.

²⁴ Ibidem, l. 4.

²⁵ Ibidem, l. 8.

kieleckiego i innych” [Intensified arrests continue. Reports from voivodships: Lubelskie, Łódzkie, Kieleckie, etc.], “Terror wyborczy szaleje” [Electoral terror rages on], “Gwałty wyborcze dochodzą szczytów” [Electoral violations reach their peak], or “U.B. torturuje Polaków. Przeszło 100 kandydatów na posłów PSL w więzieniu” [UB (Secret Service) tortures Poles. Over 100 candidates for the PSL deputies in prison]²⁶. For the institution regulating the contents it was insignificant whether a given article was an expression of a journalist’s opinion or, an attempt to reprint the official statement by the PSL authorities²⁷. Censorship also removed content suggesting even indirectly the existence of repressions. One example of such a report was an article submitted for “Polska Ludowa” in the latter half of November 1946 which anticipated an intensification of the political conflict between the peasant movement and the bloc parties. WUKPPIW officers decided to remove from the text sections anticipating the intensification of the pre-election struggles²⁸ even though no specific examples were provided. With time, censorship began to halt all expressions which utilised metaphors associated with struggle or fight.

During the press campaigns prior to the referendum and the election to the Legislative Sejm, the PSL periodical was more likely to receive interventions into texts regarding repressions or the voting procedure than into texts promoting the position and candidates of the PSL. However, censor activity reports include material indicating instances of blocking content which was in no way aimed against the bloc parties and their removal was presumably meant only to hinder campaign efforts. One example was the ban on publishing a complete list of names of PSL candidates running for Sejm deputies²⁹. A special example of censors’s limiting the campaign activities of the PSL was the removal of information regarding rallies organised by the PSL, for example, fragments indicating high attendance during such events³⁰.

Another stage of censorship’s activities towards the content published by the PSL periodicals started after the execution of both acts of voting. After the referendum as well as the election, censors’ main task was to block any information which might have indicated forging votes. Journalists associated with the peasant movement attempted to convey that information using various forms of press releases. Original articles usually did not include any remarks indicating any direct

²⁶ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 3, folder 1/4 – “Gazeta Ludowa”, l. 43; l. 50; l. 52; l. 54; l. 61; AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 3, folder 1/17 – “Gazeta Ludowa”, l. 9.

²⁷ For example, from an article prepared by the “Polska Ludowa” editorial board, censors removed one of nine resolutions of the Chief Council of the PSL; APP, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 141, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety “Polska Ludowa”, l. 66.

²⁸ APP, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 142, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety “Polska Ludowa”, l. 51.

²⁹ K. Bagiński, *Cenzura...*, p. 8.

³⁰ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 3, folder 1/3: “Gazeta Ludowa”, l. 71.

and specific examples of polling fraud. Neither did those include any phrases related to “forging”. They attempted to publish that content mainly by describing or quoting official resolutions of the authorities of the PSL³¹. Another method was to quote the statements of the PSL leadership³². Neither of the methods did, however, offer the expected results.

In original articles journalists from the PSL newspapers did not formulate any direct accusations and sought expressions which in an allusive manner suggested that irregularities occurred. One such attempt at trying to “by-pass” censorship were the deliberations regarding the time it took to count the ballots after the referendum. As it was noted in one of the articles, first partial data from the people’s poll from large districts such as Krakow were announced and only a few days later from much small districts³³. Those remarks, though insignificant at first glance, were consistently removed from the periodicals³⁴. The use of such a form could have been a result of two factors. First, the journalists already possessed some experience in contacts with censorship and could expect that such content would be blocked consistently. Second, in less than six months after the referendum in Poland the Secret Service (UB) commenced an operation targeting persons responsible for the PSL’s communication policy, arresting, e.g. Zygmunt Augustyński, editor-in-chief of “Gazeta ludowa”³⁵. Such actions must have had an influence on the attitudes of the journalists working in the PSL periodicals.

Conclusion

The Polish People’s Party, being a legally operating political party in post-WWII Poland, officially possessed the ability to conduct information and press activities. In reality, though, through restrictive activities of preventive censorship, the PSL was not able to propagate via press any communication which clashed with the interest of the PPR. It was particularly visible in reports of censor interventions made in articles devoted to the people’s vote or the election to the

³¹ APP, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 143, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety “Polska Ludowa”, l. 15.

³² AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 3, folder 1/5: “Gazeta Ludowa”, l. 95.

³³ APP, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 141, Ingerencje dotyczące gazety “Polska Ludowa”, l. 84.

³⁴ It is possible that the removal of the article was also caused by the author’s use of the example of Cracow. In that city there was a strong Municipal Association of the PSL thanks to which, unlike in the majority of district and regional people’s vote committees established throughout Poland, those in Cracow did include representatives of the PSL. Since the results from Cracow diverged from the results in other large cities, in August 1946 the PPR and the PPS commenced a press campaign discrediting the voters from that city.

³⁵ To learn more about the arrests of PSL journalists see P. Swacha, *Polityka informacyjna...*, pp. 79–80.

Legislative Sejm. According to the intention of the PPR leadership, a high result of the bloc parties was to constitute a basis for legitimising the “new rule” and facilitate the process of eliminating the opposition from the official political life.

The results of an analysis of the interventions in articles prepared by PSL activists about the referendum or the election to the Sejm indicate that the main intention of the authorities was to limit the propagation of any information regarding three areas. The first one applied to the repressions and terror which the PSL activists suffered. The second applied to the irregularities in preparing both acts of voting. The third was an attempt to inform the public about the committed forgeries. Considering the propaganda communication which accompanied the announcement of the official forged results of the referendum and the election, one must notice a close cooperation between censorship and the party-state propaganda. In that context, the task of censorship was to eliminate any communication that might have disrupted the creation of the image of the course of both events.

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Piotr Swacha

Censorship in the PSL Press within the Period of the 1946 Referendum and the Legislative Sejm Election

(Summary)

The main goal of the article is to analyse censorship interventions made in articles raising the topics of the referendum and the election to the Legislative Sejm which were prepared for print in the periodicals of the Polish People's Party. The material developed by the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in Warsaw and by its regional divisions constituted its basic source of information. I conducted a quantitative analysis of the interventions using a sample of the reports of the censorship institution regarding the "Polska Ludowa" periodical. I have also discussed the content removed from print. Within the studied area, censorship most often prevented the PSL periodicals from publishing information regarding the repressions of the PSL's activists, informing about the organisation of both events and suggesting the fact of forging votes.

Keywords: "Polska Ludowa", Polish People's Party, PSL periodicals, Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in Warsaw, censorship after 1945

Kamila Budrowska*

Literary Competitions Organised by the Ministry of Culture and Arts in 1949–1950 in the Light of Archive Records

The resources of the Archives of New Records (AAN) in Warsaw include the heritage of the institutions of People's Republic of Poland (PRL), including those responsible for the development and the shape of culture. This article is based on archival materials left by the Ministry of Culture and Arts (MKiS) that are still fairly unused for research purposes. The studied documents proved to be a motherlode of information on culture and Polish literature (including *inedita*), offered answers to many questions and helped verify assumptions. Those from the late-1940s and the early-1950s were the most interesting for a researcher of institutional control of speech as they recorded the dramatic process of changing and adjusting culture to the vulgar requirements of Socialist realism.

To begin, I refer to the studies of Janusz Maciejewski on the relation between the authorities and literature. Maciejewski presented three possible models: 1. The authorities are not interested in literature and there is the rule of the market (liberalism); 2. The authorities conduct a certain cultural policy; 3. The authorities, alienated from society and literature, do not need literature or use it against society¹. To determine which model applied in Poland in 1949–1950 is not an easy task and, in my opinion, it falls somewhere between the propaganda of the authorities own activities (cultural policy) and their use of literature against society. I will support my opinion with examples drawn from archival records.

In 1949–1950, MKiS announced a series of meticulously arranged literary competitions, the goal of which was to increase the general interest in topics preferred by the authorities and to include the community in the broader process of the social change. They could be considered as a transition between the time of relative creative freedom in 1945–1948² and the period of Socialist realism. They

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¹ *Literatura i władza*, Sarnowska-Temeriusz (ed.), Warsaw 1996, pp. 223–265.

² Some researchers believe that the cultural structure of 1945–1948 was a revolutionary ending to what was happening to our culture in the late-1930s and during the WWII occupation (c.f. H. Gosk, *W kręgu "Kuźnicy"*. *Dyskusje krytycznoliterackie 1945–1948*, Warsaw 1985, p. 27).

received applications from writers of various political orientations, including those who were not printed in the Stalin era. In addition, some of the proposed works went against the newly accepted directives. Gradually, as the methods of Stalinist literature management grew in strength, disobedient artists, often of great talent, withdrew entirely while those of mediocre skills came to the forefront. At the same time the situation of younger artists was quite interesting. They were treated harshly, without any concessions, even when they showed real skills. The all-out nature of the Ministry's intentions is also worth mentioning. It announced competitions for texts in virtually all recipient categories covering a whole host of themes and literary genres, for readers with high cognitive competencies, readers with lower competencies, and for children.

The analysed archival records are rich. In this article, I present only the most interesting matters and the topics that seem worth pursuing.

The 3rd limited mass song competition³

The mass song competition was organised by the Literature Division of the Department of Artistic Works. Its guidelines stated that the themes should include notions directly related to contemporary times, for example, competitive work, the worker-peasant unity, rebuilding⁴. All poems should be 3–4 stanzas long and be easily “musicalised”. The deadline for submitting the works was 1 March 1949.

It was a limited competition devised for a selected group of writers. 56 works were submitted, of which 36 were rejected, 8 were sent for editing and 12 texts received awards and were sent for musical adaptation. The authors who received the awards were: Dobrowolski, Głuszczyński, Jaworski, Kubiak, Lewin, Wirpsza, Woroszyński, Wygodzki, Zagórski – all except Wiktor Woroszyński⁵ and the undeniably outstanding Tadeusz Kubiak, were “stars” of only their era. The real surprise is found in the group of the rejected texts. It included two poems signed by the young Tadeusz Różewicz.

Poems entitled *Ręce w kajdanach* [Shackled Hands] and *Kartka z bloku meldunkowego* [A Sheet From the Registration Booklet] are included on two typescript pages. The creases indicate that they were folded and sent by post. The sheets were stamped with the Ministry's stamp bearing the date 31 Jan 1948 (probably a mistake as it should be 1949). They were read and reviewed by all members of the jury (abbreviated signatures on the sheets): Wanda Melcer (Pol-

³ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 498.

⁴ Ibidem, l. 1.

⁵ An extended presentation of W. Woroszyński is available in: A. Bikont, J. Szczęśna. *Lawina i kamienie. Pisarze wobec komunizmu*, Warsaw 2006.

ish Writers' Union – ZLP), H.G. Michalski (MKiS), Zofia Litte (lection unclear) (MKiS), Zygmunt Mycielski (Polish Composers' Union – ZKP), Aleksander Maliszewski (ZLP). I quote the complete texts:

Ręce w kajdanach

Na kraty spływa jasność
 na niewidzące oczy
 na beznadzieję godzin
 na nocy beznadzieję
 Usta otwarte jak rana
 i ręce, ręce w kajdanach
 i matki będą płakały
 nad umęczonym ciałem
 Ręce matczyne są słabe
 od męki drżące i trwogi
 niech słowo stanie się ciałem
 a jasność niech stanie się z Bogiem
 Toć nasi synkowie też byli
 Jak Twój, słabiutki, maleńki
 dla Niego dla synka Twojego
 i naszych osłoń od męki
 A gwiazda w kraty wpleciona
 ośleptym oczom jaśnieje
 na beznadzieję godzin
 na nocy beznadzieję.

Shackled hands

Onto bars light falls
 on unseeing eyes
 on the despair of hours
 on the despair of night
 Lips spread like an opened wound
 and hands, shackled hands
 and moths will mourn
 the tortured body
 Mother's hands are weak
 shaking with pain and fright
 may the word become flesh
 and may the light be created with God
 As our sons were just the same
 As your, weak, tiny
 for Him for Your little son
 and for ours cover them from pain
 And the star weaved between the bars
 brightens for the blinded eyes
 on the despair of hours
 on the despair of night.⁶

Kartka z bloku meldunkowego

Jak pomieścić tęsknotę
 w czterech zwrotkach wiersza
 i o czym zameldować?
 że dziś moja noc pierwsza
 że tu stanowisko moje
 (stracone... wiem o tym)
 że noc się srebrzy gwiezdna
 bzy się wiośnią wśród płotów...
 tak! na pewno, na pewno
 rozpoznałem już wroga:

A Sheet From the Registration Booklet⁷

How to fit longing
 within just four verses
 and what do you report?
 that this is my first night
 that this is my post
 (lost... I know that)
 that the night is lit up with stars
 lilacs in the fences smell of spring...
 yes! for sure, for sure
 I have identified the enemy:

⁶ Ibidem, l. 34.

⁷ The typescript bears handwritten corrections by the author who moved the question mark in the first stanza to the end of the second line.

własne serce tęskniące	our longing heart
oczy, usta Twe – Droga...	eyes, lips of Yours – my Dear...
I...już więcej nic nie wiem	And... I don't know anything else
bo chyba już wszystko	because I think everything else
Twój – Jedyna – na zawsze	Yours – My Love – forever
(stopień – funkcja – nazwisko)	(rank – position – surname)
a legenda do szkicu	a legend to a drawing
bardzo, bardzo prosta	very, very simple
sercem trzeba przeczytać	must be red through your heart
że.... musimy się rozstać.	that... we must part ⁸ .

In early 1949, Tadeusz Różewicz had already authored two collections: *Anxiety*, a collection of works from 1945–1946 published in Cracow in 1947 by the Przełom publishing house, and *The Red Glove*, a collection of texts from 1947–1948 published a year later, also in Cracow, but by a more prominent publishing house this time: Książka (later renamed to Książka i Wiedza). None of these collections included the poems submitted for the competition. At this point it is difficult to conclude whether *Ręce w kajdanach* and *Kartka z bloku meldunkowego* were included in those collections only to be removed by censorship⁹, but it is possible. In the following collections: *Pięć poematów* [Five Poems] (1950), *Czas, który idzie* [Time That Is Coming] (1951), *Wiersze i obrazy* [Poems and Images] (1952), *Wybór wierszy* [Selection Of Poems] (1953), *Równina* [Plateau] (1954), *Srebrny kłos* [The Silver Ear] (1955), *Uśmiechy* [Smiles] (1955), could not fit considering their themes.

The mystery of the origins of those poems only becomes clear when one reaches for *Echa leśne* [Forest Echoes]. The writer's debut collection was created in 1943 as a bulletin, affixed to a division notice board, entitled "A voice from a bush". It was later typed and published by the underground in 1944. Its first post-WWII publication occurred 40 years later.

In the 1985 afterword Tomasz Jodełka-Burzecki emphasised the authenticity of the document, the reliability of the testimony and the superb quality of the artistic form:

The entire collection is a simple soldier's report on the situation of a Home Army troop, which in the summer of 1943 Tadeusz Różewicz was a member of. The young author captured in the field the reality of partisan life. (...) Cadet Satyr is a man of

⁸ Ibidem, p. 35.

⁹ GUKPPIW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) material regarding censorship of poetry before 1948 has survived in a fragmented form (cf. K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL. 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009).

few words: even poems are basically army reports, though a practised Polish reader will not easily skip the fervent prayer for the Unknown Soldier of the Polish Underground, a brother in arms, entitled *O ciebie się modlę* [I Pray For You]¹⁰.

The collection includes a few quotes from Słowacki, short stories as well as fraszkas (a type of epigrams) and poems: *O ciebie się modlę* [I Pray For You], *Ręce w kajdanach*, *Kartka z bloku meldunkowego* (signed Janusz Różewicz), *Dla żołnierza tułacza* [For the Vagrant Soldier] (signed Z.S.) The *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* [Contemporary Polish Writers And Literary Researchers] dictionary states that the poems *Kartka z bloku meldunkowego* and *Dla żołnierza tułacza* are poems by Janusz Różewicz, the poet's late brother¹¹.

The poem *Kartka z bloku meldunkowego* submitted by Różewicz for the mass song competition turns out not to be his! In addition, the contemporary themes expected by MKiS that included notions directly related to contemporary times, competitive work, the worker-peasant unity, and rebuilding were by no means fulfilled by the texts submitted by Różewicz. It is difficult to say whether it was just an oversight or an intentional move by the author invited to participate in the competition. Nonetheless, religious poems with wartime themes must have been quite shocking for the reviewers. Bear in mind that those poems were written by Home Army soldiers, which shows how complicated post-WWII times and, in turn, literature were.

Interestingly, in 1989, Tadeusz Różewicz published letters from editors refusing to print his texts, yet there is no mention of the rejection of the poems submitted for the 1949 competition¹².

Lyrics competition (1950)¹³

This competition, just as the one previously discussed, was organised by the Literature Division of the Department of Artistic Works. No report with competition guidelines survived, only the literary texts. Considering their uniform Socialist realism themes, one might assume, though, that the rules were announced somewhere (a ZLP meeting, maybe in one of the journals?) The file includes manuscripts of the works as well as their typed versions (probably by MKiS).

¹⁰ T. Różewicz, *Echa leśne*, Warsaw 1985, p. 71.

¹¹ *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*. J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), vol. 7, Warsaw 2001, p. 91.

¹² T. Różewicz, *Różne oblicza cenzury*, "Odra" 1989, issue 4, pp. 52–56.

¹³ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 506, no pagination.

Poems which were to be supplemented with music are marked with emblems and at the bottom, the manuscripts include the author's surname, address, and sometimes occupation.

Only one well-known poet applied: Wiktor Woroszyński with a poem entitled *Wiatr pokoju* [Wind Of Peace]. Underneath some texts, there appear notes by reviewers, e.g.: "to be established with the author, rework the first verse".

A considerable value was assigned to the possibility of musicalisation. Some texts were rejected only because they were "not musical enough". The intention to use the poems in combination with music seems a carefully devised method of propagating the poems: it is easier to reach the mass audience with texts which are short, melodious, and rhymed than with blank verse with a complicated structure. Therefore, it is clear that the authorities encouraged artists to create those simpler forms. A proof that the strategy bore desired results is seen in the *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego* [Dictionary of Socialist realism] where the entry "Konwencje i gatunki literackie" [Conventions and literary genres] stated that in 1949–1955 lyric poetry was made inferior and the value of epic poetry was boosted¹⁴.

The unlimited form of the competition and simple themes associated with everyday life were supposed to help find new talent (notes: "to be established with the author"), and enrich the community of writers by adding people originating from the working-class or peasantry.

Sports poem competition (1950)¹⁵

The competition was announced by the Department of Artistic Works of MKiS and the Division of Propaganda and Publications of the Chief Physical Culture Office. The expected poems were required to be used as lyrics. The themes were to consider the role and the tasks of sports in the People's Republic of Poland. The deadline for submitting the works was set to 1 Oct 1950. For the first stage, 273 works were submitted out of which only 3 received awards and 4 distinctions. There were no well-known personalities among the authors. The second stage of the competition consisted of the musicalisation of the works¹⁶. The typescripts of the poems included reviewer notes regarding text quality, they were graded and the highest grade was assigned to a poem entitled *Marsz sportowy* [Sports march] (*Lighthouse* emblem, no surname of its author).

¹⁴ *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, Z. Łapiński, W. Tomasiak (eds.), Cracow 2004, pp. 108–112.

¹⁵ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 503.

¹⁶ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 502.

At this point two issues are worth mentioning. First, the sports poem expected by the jury was not supposed to exist on its own, but rather become an element of a verbal and musical composition. Thus, once again the notion of propagating lyrical poetry through music and the subordination of text to music appeared. Secondly, it is possible that it was inspired by the international Literary Competition at the Summer Olympics.

During the 14th Summer Olympic Games in London in 1948 a contemporary arts competition was held which covered many areas including literature. Each nation could submit 9 literary texts, 3 in each category (poetry, drama, prose) featuring sports themes. Compositions of up to 20,000 words had to be submitted by 27 Mar 1948 in their original form with an accompanying summary in one of the official languages.

Before being sent to the United Kingdom, Polish texts were pre-screened by MKiS. 155 envelopes with works were submitted in total, 55 works were identified as meeting the competition criteria and only 2 were sent to London. No first prizes were awarded in drama and prose while in poetry the first prize was awarded to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz for *Ody olimpijskie* [Olympic Odes].

The justification statement read:

The inspector (Kazimierz Wyka – K.B.) motioned to award the first prize to the author of *Ody olimpijskie* (“Cypress and laurel” emblem) underlining its poetic qualities in its discrete affinity to the works of French literature (good rhetoric, flow, and clarity) and the comprehensive presentation of the attitude of contemporary Poland towards culture and historical events. The reading of *Ode IV* further convinced the present members of the legitimacy of the assessment. Aleksander Wat highlighted the desired feature of the poem’s easy “translatability” to other languages¹⁷.

Ody olimpijskie received in London a diploma of recognition (Grażyna Bacewicz for her musical composition entitled *Cantata olimpijska* [Olympic cantata] was also recognised). They were published in Paris translated into French in 1949, and in Poland – a year earlier¹⁸.

Iwaszkiewicz’s success and the interest in the Olympic competition (155 works submitted!) was not overlooked by the Ministry. That might had been the source of the idea for a new sports poem competition. It did not, however, had such spectacular results.

¹⁷ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 500, l. 4.

¹⁸ *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 3, p. 322.

Serial novel competition (1949–1950)¹⁹

In late 1949, MKiS established a Commission for Serial Fiction, the goal of which was to “promote entering the area of serial fiction among renowned writers who had previously avoided this type of works” and initiate serials. The creation of this advisory entity was a result of a visible decline in the level of these works printed in the press. It is worth noting that after WWII such a form of publication was widely popular among the readers considering the still low saturation of the book market²⁰. During the first meeting of the Commission held on 20 June 1949 negative voices were raised on the poor condition of such texts and the fact that serials were mainly translations²¹. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, being the chairman of the ZLP, was a member of the Commission.

A limited competition for novels appropriate for a serial was announced in December 1949²². A list of writers who were invited to participate in it indicates that the Ministry intended to involve renowned writers; there was a blatant reference to “acquiring writers”. By the first deadline, the following writers applied: Kazimierz Koźniewski with an outline of *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* [The Five from Barska St.], Kornel Filipowicz with a Baltic fisherman’s log, Adam Bahdaj with *Drogą do kraju* [Road back to the country] (unrecorded text), Irena Krzywicka with a proposal for a novel about the issues of women’s labour, Magdalena Samozwaniec with a completed *Czy pani mieszka sama?* [Madam, do you live alone?], which did not satisfy the expectations of the Commission. On 13 Feb 1949, an additional list of names was devised which included artists whose involvement was particularly important for the Ministry. The 19 selected persons included: Tadeusz Breza, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Mieczysława Buczkówna and Stanisław Piętak²³. Interesting, such well-known writers as Andrzejewski, whose fame after the success of *Ashes and Diamonds* (first published as a serial) was at its peak, appeared side by side with Buczkówna, only debuting with her collection of poems entitled *Rozstania* [Partings]. The origins of the idea that a poet could write a good serial remains unclear.

Between November 1949 and January 1950 38 novels and 4 layouts were analysed in view of their possible publication. It should be stressed that not all texts

¹⁹ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 487.

²⁰ H. Gosk, *op. cit.*

²¹ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 487, l. 26.

²² I have previously written about the competition: K. Budrowska, *Tajne pismo cenzury. “Biuletyn Informacyjno-Instrukcyjny” w latach 1952–1955*, in: *Komunikowanie się Polaków w latach 1944–1989*, K. Stepiński, M. Rajewski (eds.), p. 57 and the following; it was also referenced by J.M. Bates in the context of Koźniewski’s novel entitled *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* (cf. J.M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, “Teksty Drugie” 2000, issue 1–2, pp. 114–117).

²³ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 487, l. 118.

were written specifically for the competition. Some were already completed texts which the authors decided to submit as fit for such a publication. *Uczta Baltazara* received the highest evaluation. The report read: "It is the view of the reviewers that the novel entitled *Uczta Baltazara* can become a breakthrough moment in the artistic life of Breza, who is today one of the leading writers"²⁴. It was printed in the *Świat* journal in 1951–1952 (issues 1–23 and 1–6)²⁵, yet bibliographies fail to record the fact that it was submitted for the competition.

The fortunes of Koźniewski's text were also interesting. According to John M. Bates' findings Koźniewski reworked the layout several times at the request of the competition committee introducing ideological and compositional corrections; then, censorship intervened into the completed text²⁶. The novel was eventually published in 1952 and in the same year it was recognised with the 3rd degree National Artistic Award while in 1954 it became the basis of a film script²⁷. Regardless of its undeniable success it was never published as a serial.

Andrzejewski, of whom the authorities expected much, did not submit anything for the competition. In general, between 1949 and 1955 he did not produce any valuable text. Eventually in 1957 he published in instalments in *Przegląd Kulturalny* (issues 12–17) the interesting *Ciemności kryją ziemię* [Darkness Covers The Land]. But that was a completely different time and a completely different text, which would have probably never been approved by the Commission for Serial Fiction.

Literary competition for developing a Polish folk tale (1949–1950)²⁸

Fable themes were prepared by the Ministry with the help of Prof. Julian Krzyżanowski: *Jak Bartek został lekarzem* [When Bartek became a doctor], *O chłopcu, jego kotku, piesku i lewku* [About a boy, his cat, dog and lion], *Nadzwyczajni pomocnicy* [Extraordinary helpers], and *Żona szuka utraconego męża* [Wife looking for her lost husband]²⁹. Fantastic elements should be removed from tales for children aged 8–10 and instead replaced with folk elements.

As many as 80 people responded to the competition. The first stage, however, did not offer satisfactory results. In the post-meeting report the jury even

²⁴ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 487, l. 133.

²⁵ *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 1, p. 275.

²⁶ J.M. Bates. *op. cit.*, pp. 114–115.

²⁷ *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 4, p. 355.

²⁸ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 501.

²⁹ This was discussed in detail in: K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury...*, p. 213–214.

stated scornfully that “everyone thinks that anyone can write stories for children”. Therefore, in 1950, a second stage of the competition was held, this time in a limited form, issuing invitations to six female authors of texts for children: Hanna Januszewska, Irena Jurgielewiczowa, Mieczysława Buczkówna (since 1949 publishing in children’s magazines), Wanda Grodzieńska, Janina Porazińska and the author duo – Anna Milska and Wanda Markowska. All the authors responded to the competition and Hanna Januszewska was announced its winner. Her collection entitled *Baśnie polskie* [Polish Fables] was published by the Czytelnik publishing house in 1952.

Limited competition for revolution and socially-themed lyrics for children (1950)³⁰

In the case of this competition the previous mistakes were avoided thus proposing a limited form³¹. 23 writers were invited to participate, again including Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim and Januszewska. The task to create revolutionary and socially-themed lyrics for pre-school children proved difficult. Only 10 authors participated in the competition. 1st prize was not awarded and the 2nd prize was divided between Maria Kownacka for her *Ochocza drużynka* [Eager Crew] and Karol Szpalski for his *Piosenka 1-Majowa* [May 1st Song].

The archival records include typescripts of the texts of all the competition participants, only 21 works in total.

In reference to both children’s text competitions, it is worth noticing their clear propagandist nature. The goal was to create works different from traditionally understood children’s literature. Researchers of Socialist realist children’s literature have indicated the switch to specific themes, saturating the texts with an air of ideological zeal, and their gradual secularisation. What is interesting, they highlight in the case of poetry the fact that adult literature was imitating children’s literature, not the other way around. That was required by the convention of expression: placing a strong emphasis on its communicative nature and simplicity³². Mariusz Zawodniak wrote:

And so, the post-WWII years shall probably remain the only period in the history of literature when the role and status of children’s and young adult literature has been virtually equated to that of adult literature. Socialist realism in particular did

³⁰ AAN, MKiS, Department of Artistic Works, Division of Literary Works, ref. no. 505.

³¹ In detail: K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury...*, p. 206.

³² Z. Jarosiński, *Nadwiślański socrealizm*, Warsaw 1999, pp. 277–297.

not differentiate literary works in this respect; on the contrary, it placed even works primarily for younger audiences within current events, thus transforming them into literary creations which became well-known and important, which received awards, and which even became role models for other (...) One example: the popularity of *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* by Kazimierz Koźniewski, a success based on the previously released Soviet productions (...)³³.

NB, *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* was written for a competition organised by the Ministry of Culture and Arts.

The discussed features of Socialist realist literature for young audiences are clearly visible in texts produced for Ministry competitions. Moreover, one can also see the methods which were used to achieve the required results.

Let us return to the issue of the relations between the authorities and literature in Poland in 1949–1950. Using the analysed archival records one has a unique opportunity to look into the mechanisms of cultural change. To see not only the effects but also the process of introducing or even creating new guidelines. MKiS documents constitute operational material, i.e. confidential. That is why they include directly stated opinions, not found anywhere in press releases of that time, revealing the brutal reality. One such example was the competition for a folk tale: when it failed to deliver expected results (even though 80 authors responded), the authorities simply changed the rules.

In view of the discussed archival records, the official cultural policy acquired a rather different tone: a system of incentives, large prizes, attractive themes, considerable diversity and number of competitions on the one hand and the rejection of very good texts which did not meet political expectations, the manipulation of the rules, multiple corrections to final layouts and texts on the other. Many writers were perfectly aware of the ambiguous nature of the Ministry's offer and did not accept invitations. Top writers could afford this without considerably hurting their careers but for younger writers, those taking their first steps in the area of literature, to reject such offers was equivalent to non-existence. Therefore, that resulted in a negative selection and destroying the authors' potential. Mind you, in the mass song competition, Tadeusz Różewicz was vanquished by, i.a. Dobrowolski, Głuszczyński or Jaworski.

Through the competitions the authorities manipulated not only the authors but also the audience. A considerable decrease in the expectations towards texts (short, simple, for a mass audience, in instalments) directly translated into decreased expectations on the part of the audience. People were supposed to enjoy uncomplicated works which preferably can be easily "musicalised". The notion

³³ M. Zawodniak, *Dziesięciolecie 1945–1955 (historia literatury i przedmioty badania)*, in: PRL. Świat (nie)przedstawiony, A. Czyżak, J. Galant, M. Jaworski (eds.), Poznań 2010, p. 178.

of a society with a passion for singing in the late-1940s and early-1950s could be considered amusing if it was not so bitter, yet, as we know, the enforced optimism masked difficult political and social issues. If, as Jerzy Drygalski and Jacek Kwaśniewski maintain, the intensity of propaganda should be measured not based on the intensity of persuasion but on the intensity of the information blockade³⁴, one should ask what issues the decision-makers who organise the competitions for a sports song, a revolution song or a contemporary serial were trying to conceal (Socialist realist, as we know from the records). Undoubtedly political terror, lack of any civil rights, hunger, destitution, terrible living conditions in the cities and in the countryside.

However, trivial themes were used mainly to conceal one single theme central to the Polish 20th century literature: the experiences of the Second World War and the occupation. We know that the efforts were successful in 1949–1955. But that is something to be pursued in another paper.

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³⁴ J. Drygalski, J. Kwaśniewski. *(Nie)realny socjalizm*, Warsaw, 1992, p. 261.

Kamila Budrowska

**Literary Competitions Organised by the Ministry of Culture and Arts in
1949–1950 in the Light of Archive Records**

(Summary)

The subject of this paper are these literary competitions organized by Ministry of Culture and Arts in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Analysys of the materials from archives enabled to tackle the issues: these competitions are one of the many aspect of stalinism offensive. Competitions encouraged writers for moving problems of socialist realism, they enforced artists for submission in accordance with Government of country. In article characterized six competitions. Most curious was “Third competition on mass song”, in which took part important writer Tadeusz Różewicz.

Keywords: literary competitions, Ministry of Culture and Arts, censorship after 1945, literary life after 1945

Wiktor Gardocki*

Errata to the Stanisław Czernik's Biography: 1949

Stanisław Czernik (1899–1969), a writer, poet and commentator, somewhat forgotten today, had an extraordinary life. He was born in Zochocin near Opatów where he attended the Opatów Municipal School. He went on to graduate from the Teachers' College in Jędrzejów and the Rescue Committee Middle School in Olkusz. In 1918, he enlisted but was later discharged from the army for his poor health. After 1920 he worked as a teacher in several public schools. He simultaneously studied at The University of Poznan, graduating in 1925 from the Faculty of Law and Economics. He made his *début* in 1922 with an article published in *Życie szkolne*. While living in Gostyń he was editor-in-chief first of "Głos Gostyński" and later of "Ziemia Gostyńska". In 1926, he returned to working as a teacher. In 1931–1932, he fulfilled the function of headmaster at the Humanities Middle School in Ostrzeszów. In the early-1930s, he focussed on his creative work publishing in numerous journals. He wrote articles, reviews, prose pieces, and translated foreign texts. In 1939, Stanisław Czernik participated in the September Campaign. Later he emigrated to Algiers through Romania, where he spent six years. He was the headmaster of the Polish Middle School and High School. After WWII, he lived in Italy and England, where he also fulfilled the function of a headmaster. In 1947, he returned to Poland and in 1948–1951 he worked as a senior advisor and manager of the Office of Original Output at the Department of Artistic Output of the Ministry of Culture and Arts¹.

This article shall discuss only a small section (the year 1949) of the life of the founder of authenticism. According to a study entitled *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* [Contemporary Polish writers and literary scientists], upon his arrival in Poland after WWII, Stanisław Czernik published three books: *Siedem nocy* [Seven Nights] (a poetry collection, 1948), *Bezprym. Dramat w 3 aktach*

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¹ K. Jakowska, *Podręczny słownik pisarzy polskich*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 101–102; P. Kuncewicz, *Leksykon polskich pisarzy współczesnych*, vol. 1, A–M, Warsaw 1995, pp. 169–170; *Słownik pisarzy polskich*, E. Zarych (ed.), Cracow 2008, p. 91; *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury*, J. Czachowskiej i A. Szałagan (eds.), vol. 2, C–F, Warsaw 1994, pp. 106–109.

[*Bezprym. A Drama In Three Acts*] (1949) and *Smolarnia nad Bobrową Wodą. Powieść historyczna z XI wieku* [Wood Tar Factory on the Bobrowa Woda. An 11th Century Historical Novel] (1949). In the meantime, he submitted to the publishing house at least three more compositions.

Before the book was published the typescript was sent for review to the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (GUKPPiW). In the event of a negative review, an appeal was possible: through the Department of Artistic Output of the Ministry of Culture and Arts (MKiS) or through the Polish Writers' Union. It is difficult, however, to trace, at least in the case of 1949, the precise process of the publication of Stanisław Czernik's works because of gaps in the documentation. It is possible that publishing houses submitted his books with the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows; any records, though, have not been found. But MKiS documents have survived. The probability of the typescripts of Czernik's works being sent directly to MKiS, and omitting GUKPPiW, is rather low, but such a possibility cannot be rejected altogether. What is interesting is that his works were reviewed by the institution of which he himself was an employee.

It is worth studying how state officers, employed at the same institution as Czernik, evaluated his works. All the reviews referred herein can be found in a single file in the Archives of New Records (AAN)².

In 1949, Czernik finished, among other works, the drama entitled *Bezprym*. Since the reviewer's³ evaluation completed in March of the same year indicated that the work had no value whatsoever, it is surprising that it was one of the few that actually got published at that time. When issuing her review, the officer used the reviewer form applicable at that time, which clearly stated features which a work was required to include. The form included such points as: "the manner in which the topic is approached", "**environment**", "**time period**" and **many more to prevent a reviewer from omitting any significant issues**. Thus, the officer accused *Bezprym* of "a lack of clearly stated theme" adding that "the drama is not politically destructive". Since the action takes place in the 11th century, emphasising the latter seems a result of excessive meticulousness. The officer also referred to the theme of religion ("unclear position") and the possible social resonance ("none"). To the question "what is the preferred group of readers of the book" she concluded tersely: "no one"⁴. Yet the most expressive and outright opinion was stated in the field "artistic value" where the reviewer noted: "Mediocre. Topic has not been exhausted. Superficial approach and lack of material attitude to the topic. On the whole, vapid and uninteresting". Finally, in the "final proposal justification" she stated: "No one needs a tragedy approached in this manner and it cannot be staged anywhere". In order to dispel

² AAN, Ministry of Culture and Arts, Department of Artistic Output, Publishing Division, ref. no. 704, no pagination (reviews are organised according to the names of authors of the works).

³ Her name could not be identified because of illegible handwriting.

⁴ Under "no one" there are also some illegible notes written in fountain pen.

any lingering doubts, the “final conclusion” field also included a negative opinion. It would seem that such a crushing assessment of Czernik's work would, at least for some time, condemn *Bezprym* to non-existence, but it was sent for a secondary review with a note... “positive”. Since the form includes sentences written using a typewriter as well as hand-written sections (using a fountain pen and red pencil) it is difficult to conclude what was the cause of this sudden change. The section “Motion of the Publishing Division” of the form includes a note: “considering the work is not destructive: positive”. Unfortunately, the brief note does not explain anything.

Another work by Czernik published in 1949 was *Smolarnia nad Bobrową Wodą*, a historical novel which, similarly to *Bezprym*, took place in the 11th century. That publication proposal was evaluated by Zofia Banaszekiewicz on 11 February of that year. She evaluated its level as average and she proposed some corrections. She was, for example, disturbed by... the character of a Hindu fakir who possessed “supernatural powers”. She also noted that “the book is politically neutral, i.e. it is not destructive nor does it include any new progressive approach towards the past”. Apart from that, being a “good historical read” though “free of any major value”, it could be recommended to all readers. As a result, the reviewer stressed: “fit for publication upon introduction of corrections”. The review form also includes a signature of another person, probably by the name of Michalski. The signature is located where Banaszekiewicz granted the work a positive evaluation.

In the same year, Stanisław Czernik submitted to the publishing house. The novel received two reviews from the Ministry of Culture and Arts. The first, by H. Wielowiejska, was definitely favourable. The reviewer emphasised the presence of positive characters in the novel and the promotion of values despite the rather sensitive nature of the place and time of action (1939 Polish-German borderlands. The review was positive for Czernik: “the novel, being proper in terms of its literariness, should be published”. The book, unequivocally for “all adult” readers, “deserves to be published” in the eyes of Wielowiejska. The reviewer's evaluation was shared by the Publishing Division of MKiS; the form bears a note: “positive”. Unfortunately, as there is no date stated, it cannot be concluded when the review was written.

Neither was the second review of *Wichura* marked with a date. It was created by Michał Szuląga. Interestingly enough, the officer received a 136-page copy of the typescript while Wielowiejska received a 138-page copy. The reviewer spent a large portion of the review on summarising the novel and finally drew the following conclusions:

The book suggests Nazi theories. It does not pose any major artistic value. Promoting biological hatred towards all Germans is also untimely⁵.

⁵ AAN, Ministry of Culture and Arts, Department of Artistic Output, Publishing Division, ref. no. 707, no pagination (reviews are organised per the names of authors of the works).

At this point, it is interesting to quote Wielowiejska, who evaluated the novel in this respect quite differently:

(...) there is no nationalism present. And Germans have honest reactions, like Fryderyk, in any case, the best example (...) is the character of a young German communist who joins partisan forces or the underground to fight the Nazis⁶.

Szułaga concluded his review by stating that it “**does not deserve to be published**”. Nonetheless, the “Motion of the Publishing Division” section of the form includes a note “positive”. Eventually, *Wichura* was not published until 1958. In this case one might assume the novel was sent to GUKPPiW where it was rejected only to be permitted for printing after several years.

The next two works by Czernik submitted for publication in 1949 are nowhere to be found in the *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* study or *Polskiej Bibliografii Literackiej* [Polish Literary Bibliography]. The first one was *Aparat Jasia Kowasia* [Jaś Kowaś' Apparatus]. A summary of it created by a reviewer is worth quoting at this point:

Four Adams and one Jaś decided to build an apparatus. They established a small cooperative so that they could [illegible word] and they invited Zosia, who had a wooden board, which was necessary to build the apparatus.

A very beautiful and precise apparatus was constructed and only then did they start wondering what might its usage be. Jaś Kowaś [illegible] them: for studying what people have in their heads. It turned out Zosia was thinking about a tasty dinner. Four Adams run away unwilling to undergo the test. Jaś remained alone and dreamt of giving the invention to [illegible]. To the Academy for the benefit of the entire world and the glory of Poland. But suddenly the apparatus fell and broke on a stone. And Jaś was woken up because it was already late and he had to get up to go to school. The wonderful invention is a dream of a boy who had a passion for technical sciences⁷.

Aparat Jasia Kowasia has a verse form, was nine-pages long and was written, according to the reviewer, for children aged 7–10 years of age. The officer, whose signature is illegible, issued a positive evaluation, dated 28 October 1949. Regardless of the positive review, the work has probably never been published. It has not been recorded in any available study. Of course, it is possible that it passed unnoticed in some lesser known magazine.

The review form of *Aparat Jasia Kowasia* included an attached “card of book submitted for publication”. It becomes even more interesting considering that,

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Ibidem.

based on the document, the composition was submitted for publication while bypassing GUKPPiW or it was not even submitted, thus not engaging the unit at all. The card is blank, it only includes (again illegible) the name of the reviewer, book details, name of publishing house (Krakow-based Wydawnictwo Książek Popularnych), the date of submitting the composition with the Department of Artistic Output and the date of notifying the publisher about the decision which is unknown today as it was not recorded on the card. The composition is rather short, however, according to MKiS material, it was planned to be published as a separate book.

Considering the fact that *Aparat...* was written in 1949, there is a chance it was published in the press. Any search is hampered by the fact that at the turn of 1950 Czernik was not affiliated (at least no one indicated that) with any literary journal. If it was not published anywhere, it can be treated as *inedita*. Additionally, it would be an undeniable literary discovery to locate the text of the work.

In 1949, Biblioteka Dzieł Wybornych [Library of Excellent Works] expressed a will to publish Stanisław Czernik's 50-page drama entitled *Wielkie powroty* [Great Returns]. The date when the typescript was submitted with MKiS remains unknown, however, it is known that the reviewer received it on 2 February and he issued his report on the 25th of the same month. Just as in the case of *Aparat...* *Wielkie powroty* were also not recorded in the *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* study. It is highly probable that the composition was not announced anywhere. Thus, it is worthwhile to know its plot:

In a village in Regained Territories mutual aversion of the local population and the newcomers from the East clash. A local by the name of Kukuła dislikes Poles who humiliate him by calling him "German". He is local. Neither Polish nor German. His son Janek already feels Polish, his other son Fryderyk is near Berlin and is supposed to marry a German woman, which aches his father. There are, however, v. valuable people among the Poles and Kukuła begins to like them. He warms up to Jagusia, who loves rabbits just like his Fryderyk, the teacher who wisely solves the conflict between the man and his son and Żarecki suffering from "linden". By spending time with the Jew Różycki he also changed his view about the Jewish issue. Kukuła finally accepts the reality he lives in but wishes that Fryderyk came back to the land. So he writes him a letter, forbids him from getting married and orders him to return. But he does not receive any answer.

On Kukuła's 50th birthday, guests come bringing him their wishes. Janek and Kasia, the teacher's daughter, have been friends for a long time and they prepare the party together. The guests arrive and according to the old Kukuła custom are greeted with beer and cheese. Suddenly, Fryderyk arrives who understood his marriage with the German woman would not bring him happiness, so he broke up with her and returned to his people.

And thus great returns take place. Silesia returns to Poland, Poles return to Regained Territories, Fryderyk returns to his hut and Różycki wishes to return to the land of his fathers to which he remained faithful for 2000 years⁸.

The reviewer believed that the book was very helpful as “the local people in R.T. are very valuable individuals and they should be treated with respect and love”. He also stated that the drama should also reach the largest possible group of readers. He praised its composition, dialogues, linguistic flawlessness and “the feel of the stage”. **He considered the artistic value of the drama as “high”.** He proposed, changes, though minute, to the story, but since the work is not currently available there is no point in quoting them. The reviewer’s decision was positive.

Another officer reporting on *Wielkie powroty*, apart from summarising the plot, formulated several conclusions. He wrote, that “the story about the spiritual changes of old Kukuła is not convincing” and he noted that the writer was not able to “truly” present the change. He considered other characters of the play as “artificial and paper thin”. Only Fryderyk’s story could constitute a “surprise” for the reader, though in that instance as well, the “**artificial**” nature is striking. **Summing up the officer wrote: “almost no social and political focus, though there was a place for it [reviewers underscore]. The play is not fit for publication (because of the above reasons). It is redundant, though the topic raised by the author is interesting and current”⁹.** The reviewer’s name and the issue date of the evaluation remain unknown.

Wielkie powroty have probably never been printed. Just as in the case of *Aparat...* they might have appeared in a journal and therefore the title was not included in *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury* or *Polska Bibliografia Literacka* studies. One cannot even state for certain whether *Wielkie powroty* have ever been staged. Whether the typescript of the play has survived remains unknown.

What is interesting is the question of the extent that Stanisław Czernik’s employment at the Ministry of Culture and Arts influenced the way in which his works were treated. The reviews, some more some less careful, seemed objective. The officers, since they knew whose work they were evaluating, probably did not give it a “free pass”. If a piece turned out inferior, they simply issued a negative evaluation. The only unclear situation occurred in the case of *Bezprym*, a play almost completely crushed by the reviewers eventually was published the same year (1949). Other works, however, which were evaluated positively have never seen the light of day. Two of those, in the light of available documents, could be considered as inedita.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem.

In the Stanisław Czernik case, when considering 1949, something else is extraordinary: the writer, an employee of the Ministry of Culture and Arts at that time, worked at a department which reviewed his works. A folder marked 704 includes, together with seven reviews of works by Czernik, reviews of other work; this time the reviews were written by Czernik.

He reviewed *Zygzyki* [Zigzags] by Antoni Bernat, *Antologia o matce i dziecku* [Anthology On The Mother And Child] by Jan Bersa, *Żyto kwitnie* [Secale Is Blooming] by Jerzy Bińczak, *Żywe ściegi* [Live Stitches] by Kazimierz Czachowski, *Jak patrzeć na teatr* [How To Perceive Theatre] by Edward Csato, *Branki w Jasyrze* [Women In Jassir] by Jadwiga Łuszczewska (a.k.a. Deotyma), *Święty miecz* [Holy Sword] by Jan Dobraczyński, *Dzieje polskości miasta Zabrze* [The History Of Polishness Of The City Of Zabrze] by Paweł Dubiel, *Wolni i plemię jaszczurze* [The Free And The Lizard Tribe] by Jan Gaweł, *Les jours maigres* by Georges Govy and *Przyroda w twórczości Elizy Orzeszkowej* [Adventure In The Works By Eliza Orzeszkowa] by Bolesław Hryniewski.

He was a very factual and meticulous reviewer, best confirmed by his carefully filled out forms. He never refrained from issuing stern opinions, sometimes clearly indicating that a given book was not worth much.

When discussing Czernik's reviews one must start with establishing what, in his opinion, was most interesting. Even though there are no studies which could confirm this, it can be assumed that Stanisław Czernik fulfilled the function of manager of the Office of Original Output at the Department of Artistic Output of the Ministry of Culture and Arts in 1948–1951 not by accident. Who else then knew more about folklore and peasant output than the initiator of authenticism.

On 28 February 1949, Czernik received for review a collection of poems by Józef Bińczak entitled *Żyto kwitnie*. This was how the writer-officer described that collection:

It is a début of a typical “original” talent. The author, living in the countryside, without any scientific background, has been writing poetry for over twenty years. Before WWII he did not have the chance to perfect his work and so he wrote emulating former folk poets, such as Antek z Bugaju or Fryderyk Kuraś. Only after WWII did Bińczak gain the proper circumstances for considerable development and managed to reach an artistic level within a modest yet characteristic scope.

The collection consists of wartime and personal poems and pastorals¹⁰.

Stanisław Czernik emphasised that the artistic value of the book was “medium”, nonetheless it “deserves to be published”. He stressed: “Bińczak's début is another very characteristic proof of the possibility of artistic development of

¹⁰ Ibidem.

peasant poets in the altered circumstances of the present day". His opinion was surely a major reason why the book was published under the same title as in the application already in 1949. The author later published a few more works.

The literary career of Antoni Bernat was quite different. His book was sent to the Ministry of Culture and Arts, probably relegated by GUKPPiW (the review form states GUKPPiW as the publisher, which obviously was not true – it probably indicated the previous institutions that reviewed Bernat's book). Stanisław Czernik received *Zygzaki* on 25 March 1949. The collection, according to the description by the reviewer, consisted of three parts: "serious" poems, erotic poems and satires. Additionally, the collection was preceded by a foreword where Bernat vigorously criticised Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński and Władysław Broniewski. The evaluation of *Zygzaki* issued by Stanisław Czernik was crystal clear:

In general, the author possesses mediocre poetic skills. Some of the initial poems indicate that had he applied strict discipline, he would have had achieved some results. Unfortunately, when it comes to erotic themes, he falls for banality resembling "candy" poems. The satirical and humorous poems are insipid, some of them could, at the most, be used in some inferior humorous magazines, but do not deserve to be published as a book, and on top of that the author's lack of good manners results in such improper behaviour as, e.g. wishing Broniewski to die ("Starszemu Panu" [To The Elderly Gentleman], p. 36)¹¹.

Zygzaki has never been published and Antoni Bernat, who in *Polska Bibliografia Literacka* was not even mentioned once, has never been recognised as a writer. His name has never appeared in the index: neither before nor after 1948. The main reason for that was probably his lack of talent, as indicated in Stanisław Czernik's review. Antoni Bernat did not publish *Zygzaki* because of its political content, but because of its low artistic value. Unfortunately, the collection's typescript is not available in the files of the former MKiS.

Another book reviewed by Czernik in 1949 which is worth considering was *Antologia o matce i dziecku* by Jan Bersa, another writer that has never gained any acclaim, though the reviewer in his evaluation did not exclude the chance of his finding success in the future. Bersa's collection, as Czernik described it, consisted of poetic works, prose fragments as well as aphorisms and maxims. However, he noted that:

Arrangement of poems random. The author appears to have used some thematic criteria but it is not visible anywhere. The selection of poems and authors raises some doubts. Several unknown authors: Kazimierz Siwiński, Kazimierz Skowroński, Ed-

¹¹ Ibidem.

ward Chłopicki. Their poems are rather trivial and should not be included in the anthology. (...) poems inferior in terms of their artistic value raise doubts, e.g. the poems by Elżbieta Szemplińska and Felicja Kruszevska. A fragment of the Prologue of Part III of *Dziady* is too artificially extracted from the whole. Certain reverence towards Mickiewicz prohibits this kind of mutilation of works¹².

Stanisław Czernik did actually see a way to publish the anthology but proposed radical changes, for he understood the sensibility required for publication. The collection could not include works selected at random and it should be edited by, in the words of the reviewer, “a good literary critic”.

The story of another proposed publication, a collection of articles of literary critics entitled *Żywe ściegi* by Kazimierz Czachowski, is also intriguing. Theoretically, there should have been no problem publishing the book. Its late author (1948) was, at that time, an acclaimed writer, who had worked in the Ministry of Culture and Arts. In 1945–1946, Czachowski fulfilled the function of director of the Department of Literature and the Office for International Cultural Cooperation¹³.

Stanisław Czernik evaluated *Żywe ściegi* unequivocally positively. He stressed the lack of good “critical and informative” publications on the market; Czachowski’s book, being a follow-up to *Obraz współczesnej literatury polskiej* [Image of contemporary Polish literature] and *Najnowsza polska twórczość literacka* [Latest Polish literary output] by the same author, could change this state of affairs. However, some remarks in Czernik’s review were puzzling:

Particularly interesting are post-WWII articles, especially the study opening the book entitled “**Zamówienie społeczne w literaturze**” [Social commission in literature] (1947). It is an argumentative articles in which the author stands against the “officious” understanding of the relationship between literature and life. The author thus expresses his final view: “The state and the society should care for arts, yet they cannot interfere with the process of artistic creation. One should never forget that managed art stops being art and the artist who lacks the sense of artistic freedom ceases to be an artist¹⁴.”

Regardless of how one approaches this quote, it becomes obvious that by placing it in the review form section entitled “**short plot**” the reviewer was clearly attacking censorship. In short, Czernik summarised the very essence of what, had he wanted to have a positive influence on the decision of the Division, he should not have stated. It is obvious that the Ministry would not “let through” a publication

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, p. 76.

¹⁴ AAN, Ministry of Culture and Arts, Department of Artistic Output, Publishing Division, ref. no. 707.

proposal, even one which received a positive evaluation, if it remained in opposition to the censorship policy and Socialist realism, just emerging at that time in Poland (1949). The following fragments, even though free of any critical statements, were quite straightforward for the reader of the review:

(...) the following studies: “Sztuka organizuje narodową wyobraźnię” [Art organising national imagination] (1945) and “Literatura a życie” [Literature and life]. The author emphasises the irrational factor in art and literature thus approaching the issue: “In the most practically regulated social life it is necessary to give some leeway for irrational factors through which we release ourselves, even for a moment, from the shackles of worldliness to be able to admire beauty, rise above one’s personal needs and extent one’s imagination towards what is unknown, mysterious and remote”¹⁵.

The above words, when juxtaposed against the contemporary social and political situation, where a rather poor attempt at promoting the book. The situation did not improve much with other sections of the book, which, as Czernik noted, were devoted to: “the output of specific authors from 1937–39”. Thus, a work whose artistic value was supposed to be undeniable and unequivocally fit for publication, eventually was not published; and the positive review in fact became... negative. The review form included a postscript “negative” and a signature, which means Czernik’s evaluation was revised.

It would be difficult to assume that Czernik purposefully wrote his review to both positively recommend the project and send a clear message that it should not be continued. If that had been the case, he would have probably written that *Żywe ściegi* is, indeed, a valuable read, but in the face of literature which is supposed to be “close to reality”, to publish it would be dangerous; he would have possibly recommended to remove the most “drastic” articles, thus salvaging the less controversial ones. It may be the case that when he was reviewing it (15–31 March 1949) Czernik did not yet have detailed guidelines as to what deserved particular attention; thus, the puzzling undertone of his review. The form also included a subsection “social and political views suggested by the author”. Czernik wrote there:

The author declares he supports contemporary transformations in literature and art, but he emphasises his personal views similar to the concepts of French intellectuals seeking synthesis and practical solutions to the antinomies of contemporary world¹⁶.

The above opinion seems to be meticulous and factual, but it applied to the artistic attitude of the author of *Żywe ściegi*. The fact that Czernik knew that

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

both realms (artistic and “social-political”) could not be viewed separately suggests that he must have had some guidelines. How extensive their influence on his evaluation and the shape and the “odd” undertone of the review was remains unknown.

Fortunately, the majority of Czachowski's works proposed for publication were published in journals before WWII and they managed to reach at least a portion of the readers.

The case of Stanisław Czernik: a writer, reviewer and an employee of the Ministry of Culture and Arts, perfectly illustrated the state of affairs in Polish literature at the turn of the 1950s. He was a well-known writer who was artistically active after WWII on the one hand but a reviewer on the other. He was the one who evaluated and who was evaluated by others.

This study constitutes a first step into further research and surely does not exhaust the topic, more so considering the fact that the Archives of New Records and, probably, other institutions still hold much valuable material which still remain undiscovered.

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Wiktor Gardocki

Errata to the Stanisław Czernik's Biography: 1949

(Summary)

The subject of this paper is the writing activity of Stanisław Czernik in 1949. Czernik was an esteemed writer but concurrently he worked as censor in The Ministry of Culture and Art. He reviewed novels of many writers in the same department of Ministry where his novels were reviewed too. This paper discusses a number reviews wrote by Czernik and some reviews of Czernik' books wrote by another censors of The Ministry.

Keywords: Stanisław Czernik, Ministry of Culture and Art, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature, literary life after 1945, literary criticism.

Magdalena Budnik*

Combating Adult Illiteracy in the People's Republic of Poland (on the Example of Selected Documents of the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Combating Illiteracy in 1949–1951)

From today's perspective, combating illiteracy seems like cultural prehistory. And yet it was a much more recent problem, still present during the early years of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL).

It is interesting to see how the state attempted to eliminate the phenomenon. How it tried to "find" the illiterate in the society and encourage them to learn. How they were helped so that they could attend courses. Answers to those and other questions can be found in, e.g. the Archives of New Records (AAN) in Warsaw, in the documents of the Ministry of Education and of the unit: the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Combating Illiteracy (BPRdoWA). The specified archival material is even more interesting because sometimes it constitutes a record of the correspondence and official notes, which, as one might expect, were not intended for publication.

The process of combating illiteracy has already been discussed¹, which is why this article focuses only on some of the more interesting moments of its planning and implementation. It uses example conference and inspection reports. The efforts to combat illiteracy were one of the nationwide operations undertaken by the PRL government. It started with an act regarding the elimination of illiteracy passed in 1949². On its basis Stefan Matuszewski became Government

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¹ Cf. i.a. S. Mauersberg, M. Walczak, *Szkolnictwo polskie po drugiej wojnie światowej (1944–1956)*, Warsaw 2005, pp. 249–253; P. Osęka, *Naucz się czytać, napisz Stalin*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 2009, issue 167, pp. 23–24; S. Majewski, *Likwidacja analfabetyzmu w Polsce w okresie powojennym (w 40-lecie ustawy o likwidacji analfabetyzmu)*, "Nowa Szkoła" 1989, issue 7, pp. 435–440; D. Jarosz, *Książki pod strzechy. Z badań nad politycznymi uwikłaniami czytelnictwa wsi polskiej w latach 1949–1956*, in: *Z badań nad książką i księgozbiorami historycznymi*, Warsaw 2008.

² The Illiteracy Elimination Act of 07 Apr 1949, J. of L. No. 25 Item 177.

Plenipotentiary for Combating Illiteracy. The state established the Chief Social Commission for combating illiteracy as well as voivodship, powiat and communal commissions. The official completion of the project was announced in December 1951³. After three years of work, 600,000 illiterate and semi-illiterate persons up to the age of 50 had been trained. The report of the government plenipotentiary on eliminating illiteracy as a mass phenomenon of 21 Dec 1951 included a more “optimistic” figure of 845,402 persons who were registered and who had been taught how to read and write⁴. The difference is chiefly a result of balancing the number of registered persons and those who completed the training courses. Many of the registered persons did not start the training or stopped attending the classes at some point. There were also instances such as the one described in the report after the inspection in Silesian Voivodship:

During the June registration many persons who refused to fill out the questionnaire or filled it out in an illegible manner /e.g. pharmacists, students, etc./ were classified as the illiterate or semi-illiterate⁵.

The reported figure applied to the operation alone. If one adds the number of persons trained in the years prior to the operation and after, the resulting figure would exceed 1 million people who underwent basic training⁶.

The authorities strived to include the entire society by expanding the operation as much as possible. Towards that end they used propaganda present in the press, the radio, films and propaganda specific for separate social groups (students, soldiers, paramilitary youth organisation members, prisoners, specific professional groups, etc.)

During a conference on the establishment of “**the Social Council for combating illiteracy**” Leonard Sobierajski from the *Wieś* magazine proposed to:

“(…) gather a team of writers, who being aware of the issue, shall start a press campaign. The fact of training 40,000 or 50,000 illiterate persons will not solve the issue; it is necessary to use all available means to ensure the success of the operation. It must be indicated that the path to promotion of peasant or worker masses leads through education. The *Wieś* editorial board devotes an entire column in every issue to the operation of combating illiteracy”⁷.

³ Cf. AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 12, meeting report of the committee of the Chief Social Commission for Combating Illiteracy of 11 Dec 1951.

⁴ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 169, l. 8.

⁵ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 61, l. 2.

⁶ S. Mauersberg, M. Walczak, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

⁷ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3449, l. 375.

The 1950 “Trybuna Robotnicza” included a statement by Minister Matuszewski who openly declared that:

The issue of combating illiteracy cannot be treated separately from international political events (...) neither can it be considered separately from the struggle of progressive forces against war instigators. It is inextricably linked to the entirety of political, economic and cultural issues. The struggle cannot be fully developed until there are still citizens in this country who are not made aware, particularly those who cannot read or write⁸.

Apart from many “normal” articles reporting on the course of the efforts for combating illiteracy, another interesting form of propaganda were press satire pieces. Those were mainly small sketches with short descriptions. “Dziennik Łódzki”, for example, published a sketch where an elderly man who is reading something waves his hand to leave him alone. The caption read: “The hell with this fight with illiteracy! Ever since they taught grandpa how to read, you cannot take him away from his books and newspapers”⁹. *Pierwsi z kolei* [First in line] – this wordplay was used for reporting the elimination of illiteracy in the railway operatives’ union [“kolej” – a word with dual meaning of “railway” and “order, sequence”]¹⁰.

Apart from the press, the radio was an important carrier of propaganda. The authorities even established a special Radio Sub-commission at the Government Plenipotentiary for Combating Illiteracy. A decision was made that during the “Illiteracy Combating Week” the slogans were to be repeated often throughout the day. The goal was for the citizens to hear numerous appeals, speeches, reports, discussions and radio dramas from a model lesson¹¹. One example of such a radio show was “An interview with persons who thanks to combating illiteracy gained reading and writing skills and entered the ranks of conscious citizens”¹².

The film’s potential had also been recognised. A post-meeting report of the Editorial Commission of the Chief Commission for Combating Illiteracy stated that “the Commission ought to make contact with Film Polski (film company) to develop a slide primer of films for reader units so that school children could enjoy interesting views and at the same time learn to read or practice reading”¹³.

⁸ *Walka z analfabetyzmem musi być prowadzona równolegle z walką o produkcję*, “Trybuna Robotnicza” 1950, (8 Mar), p. 7.

⁹ *Skutki walki z analfabetyzmem*, “Dziennik Łódzki” 1951, issue 97 (9 Apr), p. 7.

¹⁰ *Na apel CRZZ pierwsi kolejarze zlikwidowali w swoim związku analfabetyzm*, “Express Wieczorny Warszawa” 1951, issue 105 (17 Apr), p. 4.

¹¹ An example of a radio announcement supporting the efforts to combat illiteracy: *Dom* television series, episode 6: *Nosić swoją skórę*, time: 17:53.

¹² AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 204, l. 3.

¹³ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 39, l. 36.

Ever since the beginning, and, it seems, throughout the operation, there were some problems. When presenting the result of the registration, the Department of Education of the Wrocław School District (10 Dec 1947) concluded that:

(...) The main difficulty in registration operations was caused by people's stubbornness. The illiterate avoided the registration for the fear of possible forced learning. (...) Considering huge distances (and low numbers of registrants) it was impossible to reach every location, particularly as the population was often out or was hiding on purpose¹⁴.

Even mud and the lack of proper infrastructure prohibited the officials from reaching the population. In a letter dated 1 Feb 1947, the Office of Studies and Statistics concluded that: "(...) but the date of the registration should be delayed past 15 March, preferably to the beginning of May when the roads and paths will be dry"¹⁵.

The course of the efforts to combat illiteracy, at its every stage, was carefully supervised by the Ministry of Education. Inspections constituted one form of such supervision. The operation began with a registration of the illiterate. An inspection at the Gdańsk Shipyard (on 4 and 6 Oct 1949) resulted in a report which specified the methods of finding the illiterate among the shipyard operatives:

386 persons at the Shipyard unable to read or write were registered in June this year. Many people avoided registration. Currently, the number of registered illiterate persons increased to 736 (350 persons registered during an additional registration), supplementary registration is ongoing. All workers must sign the payment confirmation list. Those who cannot sign it and write in words the amount they earn are registered as illiterate or semi-illiterate persons¹⁶.

A report from Łódź included yet another (at surely more effective) method of finding the illiterate:

Auxiliary registration is conducted on a permanent basis in residency registration offices, insurance agencies, banks and other institutions where an illiterate person is identified while attending to official matters. If a person cannot sign a document, such a case is reported to the field social commission¹⁷.

Basic training courses faced many problems. In the section "Dezyderaty i życzenia Wojew. Komisji Społecznej" [Propositions and requests of Voivodship

¹⁴ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3449, l. 311–312.

¹⁵ Ibidem, l. 63.

¹⁶ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3446, l. 9.

¹⁷ Ibidem, l. 59.

Social Commission], a report after an inspection of the work of the Social Commission for Combating Illiteracy in Wrocław (3–5 Oct 1949) stated: “Influence centrally the authorities responsible for electricity distribution so that conservation limitations would not divert electricity from basic training courses”¹⁸. The problem of insufficient lighting was often raised in official documents: “Lighting is insufficient at virtually all classes. Too few small kerosene lamps make work difficult”¹⁹. At that time, the easiest way to improve lighting was to deliver more gas and kerosene lamps: “Make efforts to improve lighting during basic training courses by delivering more lamps”²⁰.

In a document from the Education Department of the School District in Łódź, an inspector bitterly noted:

Based on conducted inspections and incoming reports from School Inspectorates it must be stated that the illiterate report for the training very reluctantly. Considering the fact that in the cities, where Workers' Unions use such sanctions as: exclusion from the Union, suspending clothing materials and revoking holidays, it is not always successful, then in the countryside the issue in many instances is very serious”²¹.

In the time when empty stores were not an uncommon sight, facilitating (or hampering) access to uncommon material must have been a strong argument for the illiterate to decide to start basic training: “Zgierz supplied the illiterate who participate in course with special ID cards, using which they could skip the queue to acquire staple products”²².

Extended forms of social aid were another form of encouraging people to participate in the courses. An example of a post-inspection report in Katowice (4–5 Oct 1949):

Various forms of social aid in Silesian Voivodship are used /acquiring artificial fertilizer, meal sponsoring, supplying glasses, free holidays, benefits, etc./ but not in all poviats. A social aid campaign is particularly needed at the workplace. Company councils and directors have showed too little interest and initiative in this, which is reflected in the turnout²³.

A similar example can be found in a report from Rzeszów (7 Oct 1949): “In order to ensure good turnout at training courses, stimulate social organisations

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, l. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, l. 75.

²⁰ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3446, l. 76.

²¹ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3449, l. 37.

²² AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3446, l. 60.

²³ *Ibidem*, l. 29–30.

to organise social aid for the illiterate attending the courses and their families through collective help in agricultural works, organising substitutes for work, meal sponsoring for those learning directly after work, care over children of mothers during their training, shuttle service from remote locations, facilitating participation in cultural events (theatre, concerts, cinema, trips), financial aid, etc²⁴.

Some help for women must have been offered since: “**Community organisations** (Women’s League, Z.M.P., Z.H.P.) look after the children of mothers who participate in the training (...)”²⁵ While “for mothers with small children, S.P., Z.M.P. and the Women’s League organise personal sessions”²⁶. Course participants could also be dismissed from work for the time of the training and received free medical care²⁷.

A post-inspection report from Toruń (5 Oct 1949) indicated an entirely different problem, this time of a psychological nature. It seems that the illiterate were ashamed, and not only in relation to their families and neighbours:

Audit of primary school children in Chełmża

Primary school no. 2 offers two courses: one for men and one for women. The division was requested by the women who were ashamed in relation to the men (...)

Audit of basic training course in Grzywna (Chełmża commune village)

(...) Absent students are busy during the sugar-making campaign. The village “mocks” the illiterate. Country Commission and local organisations did not create a friendly attitude amongst the community towards the course participants (...)”²⁸

The struggle to combat illiteracy was one of the highest points in the history of early-PRL. In it, however, the authorities strove to build a modern socialist state. Therefore, they never abandoned their ideological motivation. During a conference with the press, Tadeusz Pasierbiński, Ph.D., the director of the Department of Education and Culture of Adults at the Ministry of Education, stated, e.g.:

Education is an instrument with the use of which the state shapes new citizens for the fulfilment of its goals. Poland’s position is that every school, every educational entity is an agency of the Education institution, which fulfils the goal of maintaining the achievement of people’s democracy, freedom and the ability to live together within the large family of the nations of the world²⁹.

²⁴ Ibidem, l. 72.

²⁵ Ibidem, l. 6.

²⁶ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3446, l. 37.

²⁷ Ibidem, l. 70.

²⁸ Ibidem, l. 39–40.

²⁹ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3449, l. 318.

Therefore, it comes hardly as a surprise that the program's list of training results, apart from such areas as reading, writing or speaking, also listed:

Learning about Poland and the contemporary world.

Orientation on the map of Poland: Poland's borders /the western and the maritime borders in particular/, rivers: the Vistula and the Oder, mountains, major cities and ports. What the People's Republic offers to peasants and workers /agricultural reform, nationalisation of heavy industry, etc./ Who is the president of Poland. What is the Sejm. List Slavic nations and countries and what is associated with them. The threat of Germany and fascism³⁰.

Archival documents indicate the operation was conducted simultaneously among various institutions and social groups and organisations. The report by the Voivodship Social Commission for Combating Illiteracy in Warsaw read:

(...) A representative of S.P. (Służba Polsce) discussed the issue of combating illiteracy within the ranks of S.P. Young cadets crave for education. During the 1st camp, 700 illiterate persons from specific regions of Poland have been trained³¹.

The Służba Polsce organisation was a paramilitary organisation conducting compulsory civil defence training, military training and ideological indoctrination among the youth³². Reading and writing training was conducted in-camp³³.

The document unit of the Ministry of Education included documents regarding the training of Security Service (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, abbreviated to UB) operatives, systematic supplementary education of adult inmates, repolonisation courses for repatriates, supplementary training for war invalids, training at Women's Protection Homes, Polish Army officers, Milicja Obywatelska officers, Ministry of National Security employees³⁴.

The authorities also tried to promote the effects of the efforts for combating illiteracy. Towards that end they used letters and testimonials of the illiterate, their literary output, their biographies (often dramatic) written down in the form of memoirs and exhibitions.

³⁰ Ibidem, l. 257.

³¹ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 34, l. 18.

³² Act of 25 Feb 1948 on the general obligation to attend civil defence, physical education and military training by the youth and on the organisation of the matters of physical culture and sports, J. of L. No. 12, Item 90.

³³ An example of basic training for cadets: *Dom* television series, episode 5: *Ponad 200 czwartków*, time: 39:31.

³⁴ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 3305, l. 43 [U.B.], l. 59 [inmates], l. 71 [repatriates], l. 103 [war invalids], l. 200–203 [W.P.H.], l. 204 [officers], l. 206 [M.O.], l. 209 [employees of the Min. of Nat. Sec.]

This is one such example of a letter of a former illiterate person, by Zygmunt Zwierzak addressed to the Communal Commission for Combating Illiteracy in Dąbrowa:

I could not write or read 3 months ago. Today, I can write a letter by myself. I am 24 years of age before the war I could not attend school because I worked as a boy at a brickyard. I worked for the whole family and there were 7 of us. Now, in free Poland, I enrolled into the training course and I'm glad I can finally read and write in Polish. I would also like to thank the State for organising such courses and I would like all those like me to take advantage of them³⁵.

Another letter from the same town:

I am glad I am learning at the basic training course in our village. A few months back I could not read or write. Neither before the war or under the Germans I could not attend school. Now that we have freedom I can learn and I intend to continue my education. I can already read gromada and other newspapers by myself and I will borrow books from the library. I would like to appeal to all women in Poland so that there isn't a single one in the country that could not write or read. I wish to thank all who organised the courses mainly the communal Commission and our Manager who is teaching us³⁶.

The creative output of already trained former illiterate persons was also often published. This is an example of a biography of a basic course graduate and his poem, which he wrote under the impression of an image in a primer for adults:

Born on 2.1.1892 in Stanisław Dolny. When I was 3, my right arm and leg got paralysed. I did not attend school as there was none where I lived so I'm a self-taught person because I can read and write without learning that anywhere. When I was 18 I was employed by a company to construct navigable canals in the position of lubricator and when I got my first pay I cried with joy that I, a cripple, earned money with his own hands. 1919 I married and had two daughters. During German occupation I was a trader. I bought pieces of garments from German soldiers, leather and ready footwear and I sold it to people in the village. I currently repair footwear. I work with my left hand and only with my four fingers as I suffer from fifth finger contracture. I do not acquire no supplies from anywhere. My name is Oprychał Józef³⁷.

³⁵ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 222, l. 38. Original syntax, spelling and punctuation have been preserved.

³⁶ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 222, l. 39.

³⁷ AAN, BPRdoWA, ref. no. 204, l. 59.

Co widziałem na obrazku

Budują fabryki, osiedla wspaniałe –
 Sobie na użytek, Ojczyźnie na
 chwałę.
 Bo polski robotnik okryty jest
 chwałą –
 Odbudujemy Polskę piękną
 i wspaniałą.
 Bo polski robotnik ma tę wadę
 w sobie –
 Przestanie pracować aż go złożą
 w grobie.
 Tu zaś rolnik pługiem czarną ziemię
 orze.
 Bo się wiosna zbliża, trzeba zasiać
 zboże.
 Niech pracę rolnika błogosławią
 nieba –
 By w naszej Ojczyźnie nie zabrakło
 chleba.
 A wrony za pługiem na skiby siadają,
 One to szkodliwe owady zjadają.
 Na karych konikach sierść się
 połyskuje
 Parobek ich godzi, z bata potrzasku-
 je.
 To nasz port nad morzem, tu dźwigi
 pracują
 Towary z okrętów na ląd wyładują.
 Tu wielkiej potrzeba techniki i siły,
 By bałwany morskie portu nie
 rozbiły.
 Gdy bałwany morskie o port uderzają
 Wtenczas robotnicy ciężką pracę
 mają.
 A tu znów spod dłuta aże ogień
 pryska,
 Tu robotnik toczy do maszyn łożyska
 Tu idzie robota, motory turkoczą.
 Bo i inne rzeczy tutaj także toczą.

What I saw in the picture

They are building factories, magnificent
 housing complexes –
 Benefit for them, for the glory of the
 Motherland.
 Because the Polish worker is clad in
 glory –
 We will rebuild Poland beautiful and
 magnificent.
 Because the Polish worker has that in-
 nate flaw –
 He will stop working when they put him
 to his grave.
 Here the farmer ploughs the black earth.
 Because spring is coming, cereal must
 be sown.
 May the heavens bless the farmer's work
 –
 So that our Motherland never be short
 of bread.
 And the crows land on the ridges behind
 the plough,
 They eat the pests.
 Manes glisten on black horses
 The farm-hand strikes them, snaps
 the whip.
 This is our port on the sea, that is where
 cranes work
 Unloading the goods onto the land.
 This where great technology and
 strength is needed,
 So that sea breakers do not destroy
 the port.
 When the breakers hit the port
 The workers' work is hard.
 A here flames burst from under the
 chisel,
 Here the worker turn machine bearings
 This where work happens, where engines
 rumble.
 Because they also turn other things here.

Po pracy w świetlicy bawią się wesoło.	When the work is done they relax mer- rily in the common room.
Jest tu założone amatorskie koło.	An amateur group operates from here.
Starsi znów gazet i książki czytają I fachowe pisma też w świetlicy mają	Those older read newspapers and books once more
Panienka w świetlicy służy dobrą radą.	And there are as well professional maga- zines in the common room
Przeczytane książki z powrotem układa.	A lass offers her advice in the common room.
	She puts books back in order.

An exhibition entitled “Jak Polska Ludowa zlikwidowała analfabetyzm” [How the People’s Republic eliminated illiteracy] was also supposed to familiarise society with the results of the operation. Its script indicated a special section called: “Nauka umożliwiła mi awans społeczny i zawodowy” [Education enabled my social and professional promotion]. Underneath were displayed photographs with captions confirming the (often spectacular) social promotion of basic training graduates, e.g.: “**Elżbieta Kowalska, she used to be a cleaner, after the professional training she has become a station traffic orderly in Gogolewo**”. **And another caption:** “Karol Kaniora, a sharecropper from Wojsław collective, Grodzisk Poviát – he became village leader, chairman of the production cooperative and a plenipotentiary for combating illiteracy”.

Even though the operation was concluded after three years, the authorities realised that the efforts for combating illiteracy had to be ongoing. Therefore, the authorities established the Readership and Book Council³⁸ and later issued an ordinance by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture and Arts of 9 Apr 1953 regarding the organisation of readership units among basic training graduates³⁹. The main issues raised by the units included: the fight for social liberation; the construction of the basis of socialism in the People’s Republic; model, friendship, help for USSR; fight for peace – as one might rightly expect, the topics rather discouraged people from participating in meetings, which were not attended by many.

Any assurances that illiteracy was eliminated from PRL were not entirely true. 300,000 people did not appear for the classes, several thousand more terminated their education before it ended. The one-time operation did not bring about expected results⁴⁰.

³⁸ Resolution No. 4242 of the Committee of the Government of May 1952.

³⁹ The units also offered a chance to study the curriculum of elementary grades and pass exams regarding particular subjects and grades. That was made possible through a Resolution of the Minister of Education of 1 Jun 1953 regarding examinations for external students within the scope of primary school curriculum. St. Majewski, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

⁴⁰ S. Mauersberg, M. Walczak, *op. cit.*, p. 249–253.

The intentional selection of themes included in the material for teaching adult illiterate persons may cause some doubts. When considering the primers it is difficult not to assume that ideology was much more important than combating illiteracy. Numerous methodological errors also support this assumption. The primers prepared the students not for learning how to read and write, but mainly for participating in the socialist reality.

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Magdalena Budnik

Combating Adult Illiteracy in the People's Republic of Poland (on the Example of Selected Documents of the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Combating Illiteracy in 1949–1951)

(Summary)

The subject of this article is combating adult illiteracy in the People's Republic of Poland. The existing knowledge concerning the topic has been supplemented with the analysis of the archival documents, currently being in possession of the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. It describes how illiterates were recognised in the society, in what way they were encouraged to train new skills and how attending the courses was made possible for them. The analysed documents include censors' reviews of manuals, press articles, letters wrote by former illiterates and other valuable records.

The communists were combating illiteracy not only in the name of the social progress, but mostly motivated by their quest to broaden the possibilities of ideological indoctrination – during the courses organised for illiterates and later on. This is why the selection of manuals and other publications addressed to former illiterates was propagandist. The strategic importance of the matter was expressed by Vladimir Lenin himself: “Socialism cannot be built by illiterates” (W. Ozga, *Education in the six-year-plan and the revolutionary changes of the society and economics in the People’s Republic of Poland*, Warsaw 1951, p. 124).

Keywords: adult illiteracy in the People’s Republic of Poland, Ministry of Education, combating illiteracy in the years 1949–1951

Elżbieta Dąbrowicz*

Out of Date Remarks on the 1951 “Index of Books to be Immediately Excluded”

Book collections and librarians

In 2002, the Wrocław-based Nortom publishing house published a document from the history of censorship at the beginning of the People’s Republic of Poland entitled *Index of books to be immediately excluded 1 Oct 1951*, approved by the Central Management Office for Libraries at the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Zbigniew Żmigrodzki, a valued specialist in library science and bibliography as well as a commentator¹, presented the list of prohibited items in the *Afterword* as one of the instances of “the tragedy of Polish books” after 1939². He, in fact, viewed the actions of the authorities of post-WWII Poland as the planned destruction of Poland’s cultural heritage under German and Soviet occupation. He also outlined the effects of such practices³, which can be felt even today. In his opinion, the consequences of these administrative measures could have only been amended through government-level decisions. In 1989, an opportunity for “the restitution of Polish books” appeared. It should had been conducted “in the possibly fullest range and scope” considering the world-wide diversity of Polish literature and all its circulations⁴. Żmigrodzki lamented that during the political transformation

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¹ His most recent book was entitled *Państwo Jednej Partii* [Single-Party state], Wrocław 2012.

² Z. Żmigrodzki, *Posłowie*, in: [Cenzura PRL]. *Wykaz książek podlegających niezwłocznemu wycofaniu 1 X 1951 r.*, Wydawnictwo Nortom, Wrocław 2002, p. 78.

³ Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz reflected on the cultural results of the devastation laid upon the generation whose childhood occurred during the Stalinist era. K. Heska-Kwaśniewicz, *Przed czym chciano chronić młodego czytelnika w PRL-u, czyli o czyszkach w bibliotekach szkolnych lat 1948–1953*, in: *Młody człowiek w świecie książki, bibliotek, informacji*, K. Heska-Kwaśniewicz (ed.), Katowice 1996.

⁴ Z. Żmigrodzki, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

the restitution program did not become a governmental priority, as a result of which, for example, literature with a catholic world-view was not able to balance the losses which it suffered in the People's Republic of Poland and thus could not successfully compete with "literature of a secularising, ethically and socially "liberal" nature"⁵. The latter has come to dominate Polish cultural life.

The author, of course, used a journalistically sharpened theses. I shall not discuss his view of the relations between the left- and right-wing trends in culture⁶, though the issue is important and surely deserves a closer consideration. However, he was certainly right about the fact that the post-WWII management of book collection as per the needs of the communist authorities caused extensive and irreversible results⁷. Not only were there no attempts at amending them but also the social-political atmosphere after 1989 did not encourage a broader reflection.

I analyse the 1951 *Index of books to be immediately excluded* not to lament the "abandoned restitution". Today, that would be impossible. Moreover, it would also be impossible to get any media coverage of the debate regarding the need for such a restitution. In this age of the digital revolution, such a demand would appear obsolete. Even though the cultural losses resulting from decisions made in post-WWII Poland for propaganda purposes cannot be undone, it is important to

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ In his remarks, Żmigrodzki did not consider the Church as one of the national political powers when in 1989 the bishop's conference enjoyed a much stronger position than in the early-1950s.

⁷ The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage relentlessly seeks information on wartime cultural losses. Yet it seems to forget any post-WWII losses. Its website states that: "Since 1992 the Ministry of Culture has been collecting information regarding wartime losses of Polish libraries and works of art from the territory of Poland within the borders after 1945. Initially, the records were maintained by the Office of the Representative of the Government for Polish National Heritage Abroad. Since 2001 the Minister of Culture has fulfilled his responsibilities and the work was continued by the Department for the Polish National Heritage Abroad, currently Department of Cultural Heritage. In 1998, a portion of the competences of the Representative of the Government regarding Polish-German talks regarding the settlement of WWII effects in terms of culture was taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Until now appropriate institutions have been able to gather documentation regarding the losses of over 40,000 libraries in Poland. That is only a portion of the stock from before 1939, but it does include the most important book collections and it is representative in terms of typology. On that basis as well as other sources one might assume that institutional libraries and private book collections of the interwar period included approx. 70 million volumes, 70–75%, i.e. over 50 million volumes, are considered wartime losses. Out of those 1.2 million (some documented; presumably much more after WWII) originated from special collections of literary artefacts of great value which cannot be neither recreated nor repurchased. School and educational libraries lost over 90% of books, post-WWII professional and private approx. 70%, post-WWII academic 50–55%. It need be stressed that in this circumstances, the losses were selective in nature: only the most valuable works were removed. Documents, destroyed by the occupying forces on purpose, suffered even greater losses than books. The materials gathered by the Department are later processed and published in printed form": <http://www.mkidn.gov.pl/pages/strona-glowna/kultura-i-dziedzictwo/ochrona-dziedzictwa-kulturowego/objekty-utracone-w-wyniku-wojny.php> [accessed on: 15.09.2012].

at least realise their extent. I will present the complexity of this matter by analysing one of the 1951 *Index*'s three parts in particular. An important reason behind the study was the noticeable increase of interest in recent years interest in the world which emerged from the Second World War, including interest in the pre- and post-WWII history of Central and Eastern Europe⁸. I am mainly referring to *Bloodlands* by Timothy Snyder (Warsaw 2011)⁹, *Poisoned Peace* by Gregor Dallas (US edition 2005, Polish translation 2012), *Moscow, 1937* by Karl Schlögel (Cambridge, 2012) and *Wielka trwoga* [Great Fear] by Marcin Zaremba (Kra-kow 2012). In view of those publications the *Index* is something more than just a document discussing the “tragedy of Polish books”, as referred to by Zdzisław Żmigrodzki, since it offers an account lifted from the “bloodlands”, an account of Cold War sentiments and practices and an account of the time of the “great fear”. Though discussing books, the *Index* touches upon human fortunes and tragedy.

The document consists of three lists of authors and their works in alphabetical order. First names are abbreviated. The first list is untitled, the second includes “books out of date” and the third – “children’s books”. Some authors in lists 1 and 3 are marked “all works”.

Why some of the books listed must be “immediately excluded” is justified only in the second list: because they are “out of date”. As for the first and the third list, it seems it must have been absolutely obvious why some authors and works had to be excluded from circulation. The initial “remark” to the third list also informs readers that the books had to be excluded not only because of their reprehensible authors or titles but also because the place of publication could have been “inappropriate”¹⁰.

Even though the *Index* was written as if caused by a sudden necessity, it was not the first or the last of such documents in the post-WWII Poland¹¹. What makes it stand out from the others is that it was the largest. The course of its creation was traced back by Marcin Zaremba in an article *Amputacja pamięci* [Dismembering memory]. The order came from top brass – from the Office of the Political Bureau

⁸ I also decided to undertake the subject in relation to the “Banned Books Week” (30 Sep – 6 Oct), which is a Polish counterpart of the American event organised since 1982.

⁹ Snyder visited the Historical Festival in Wrocław held on 12–16 May 2012.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

¹¹ In Marcin Zaremba’s article one might read the following about the indexes of unwelcome books: “Between 1949 and 1957 at least three extensive indexes of books intended for exclusion were created”. M. Zaremba, *Amputacja pamięci*, “Polityka” 1996, issue 2064, http://www.niniwa2.cba.pl/amputacja_pamieci.htm [accessed on: 15.09.2012]. The issue of ministry “operations” was discussed to a larger extent by Dorota Degen in “...szkodliwe, zdezaktualizowane i bezwartościowe...”. *Zarys działalności Komisji Oceny Wycofywanych Wydawnictw (1954–1956)*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy. Ograniczanie wolności słowa na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w.*, D. Degen and J. Gzella (eds.), Toruń 2010. The issue was also raised by Stanisław Adam Kondek in *Papierowa rewolucja. Oficjalny obieg książek w Polsce w latach 1948–1955*, Warsaw 1999.

after a meeting of 11 May 1951 which gathered included Bolesław Bierut, Jakub Berman, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Hilary Minc, Franciszek Mazur, Zenon Nowak, Edward Ochab, Aleksander Zawadzki and Roman Zambrowski. The Press Division of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR), managed by Stefan Staszewski,¹² was responsible for the list of books for “immediate exclusion” but the work began at the Division of Evaluation and Selection of Books of the Central Management Office for Libraries¹³. Apparently, the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences also helped with the development of the index. The size of the bureaucratic machine used for this effort was astounding: Secretariats, Bureaus, Institutions, Divisions, Institutes... In spite of, or maybe because of, all these various agencies, the work on the *Index* continued sluggishly and it was not released for printing until the end of 1951. The directive of the Central applied to all public libraries in the country. According to Zaremba, 2,000 copies of the brochure were printed, much too few to reach all 80,000 libraries and library stations nationwide. Therefore, the order to exclude the listed books was weakened because of the inability to quickly implement it. How to justify that incoherence? An answer can be found in the period's style of management. The copies were not meant for individual librarians, so the volume of brochures was not aligned with the number of entities it actually applied to. Małgorzata Korczyńska-Derkacz recently discussed the organisational details of the operation. According to the accounts she quoted, appropriate documents were to be held by three-person teams of Party officials supervising the “top secret” operation. Edward Ochab, Secretary of KC PZPR¹⁴, communicated with Voivodship Committees in that regard.

The operation's organisation demonstrated that its aim in addition to removing “harmful” books included in the, by its nature, limited list, was also verifying the library staff and encouraging them to maintain or accept the required attitude. Since librarians could not read the list of banned books and only heard about it, and the verifications were obviously not held on the same day everywhere, all were considered suspects. The feeling of uncertainty was conducive for overzealous behaviour. Library employees received a chance to show their loyalty to the state by properly, somewhat independently, engaging in browsing library stock, thus, taking pre-emptive actions in relation to the control commission's doings.

¹² In 1934, Stefan Staszewski (one of the people mentioned in *Oni* by Teresa Torańska) moved to the USSR where he taught at a Party school. In 1936, he was sent to a camp in Kolyma, from which he was released in 1945.

¹³ The Central Management Office for Libraries was established in 1951 replacing the General Directorate of Libraries.

¹⁴ M. Korczyńska-Derkacz, *Książki szkodliwe politycznie, czyli akcja “oczyszczania” księgozbiorów bibliotek szkolnych, pedagogicznych i publicznych w latach 1947–1956*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy: ograniczanie wolności słowa na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku. Zbiór studiów*, D. Degen and J. Gzella (eds.), Toruń 2010, p. 345.

The boundaries between accepted and reprehensible behaviour as perceived by the communist authorities were anything but clear. Was it an intended result of the procedures for implementing orders or just a side effect or a reflexive action showing the extent of indoctrination or a feeling of threat among the state officials? It is difficult to decide that today. Researchers of that era often are faced with a question: intentional or just inert? A devious plan or chaos? Consider even the lexical choices made in official documents regarding library collections. Circulars and official reports from various years consistently referred to the “cleansing” of libraries¹⁵. The discussed *Index* also read: “When cleansing collections, pay particular attention to...”¹⁶. From today’s perspective, the word seems like a euphemism. In post-WWII years, however, it brought about specific associations.

Cleansing

In the title of his article on “cleansing” the book collections, Marcin Zarembo used an original and graphic metaphor of “amputation”, thus reflecting the depth of the intention and the long-term effects of the discussed activities. When ordering a “cleansing”, the authors of official documents in the 1940s and 50s did not demonstrate their linguistic prowess but only drew from a previously used discourse of power. The use of the term in relation to the limitation posed on books has a long tradition (*Index Expurgatorius*). But in the post-WWII years “cleansing” was not used as an association to church indexes but with far more recent practices. On the one hand, it was supposed to be associated with political “cleansings” in the USSR¹⁷. On the other: it brought to mind Nazi propaganda, which extensively discussed racial purity, operations of “cleansing” areas of Jewish inhabitants and all other hostile individuals (also, contemporary discourse uses the term of an “ethnic cleansing” as a technical term). When ordering “cleansing” in the period right after WWII, a state official was using a word extremely tainted with still vivid memories of its usage in the context of Stalinist terror and the Nazi policy of extermination. It is difficult to define to what extent that was a purposeful decision to refer to those issues and to what extent just a linguistic habit. It is certain, though, that when discussing post-WWII Poland one must bear in mind the experiences in the context of which the solutions of the communist rule were

¹⁵ Many examples of this style can be found in quotations from official documents included in the article by M. Korczyńska-Derkacz.

¹⁶ [*Cenzura PRL*]. *Wykaz książek*, p. 58.

¹⁷ The “cleansings” in Russia were covered extensively, e.g. in the pre-WWII *Robotnik* magazine. The term “library cleansing” appeared in a library conference report of 2 Mar 1949. M. Korczyńska-Derkacz, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

being implemented. The 1951 *Index* need also be treated in relation to the actions undertaken by both occupying forces: Soviets and Nazi Germans.

Zbigniew Żmigrodzki had this idea, but he used it in a questionable manner when he focussed on assessing the diversity of the techniques used by both occupying forces. “Soviet occupying forces” destroyed all libraries and books that they got a hold of while Nazi Germans operated methodically: first they recorded all the destructive Polish books and only then checked the collections, eliminating the “destructive” items. He also mentioned the burning of books in Germany in 1933. He considered that public mode of annihilation less morally harmful than destroying them in paper mills, without much publicity or many witnesses, which was the practice in Poland¹⁸. The question remains whether there is any point in posing moral assessments while ignoring the accompanying circumstances. Instead of hastily assigning different assessments it would be better to ask what goal was fulfilled in burning books publicly and not destroying them without publicity. The goal of the organisers of the Berlin spectacle was obviously different from the intention of the decision-makers who ordered the “cleansing” of Polish libraries after WWII. During the book burning in the Opera Square on 10 May 1933 there was an appearance by Goebbels who explained to the crowd what they were participating in. Fragments of that speech are quoted by Eugeniusz Cezary Król in his book entitled *Propaganda i indoktrynacja narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945* [Propaganda and indoctrination of National Socialism in Germany in 1919–1945]. The act of destruction, said the creator of Nazi propaganda, was to symbolise “external and internal cleansing of the nation”¹⁹. Therefore, as intended by its organisers, the event in the Opera Square was a ritual performance of purification. In the sacred fire, which consumed the books, the nation was supposed to restore itself, its untainted identity. This is how Roger Caillois described the holiday paroxysm characteristic of primitive societies:

All transgressions are permitted as it is in transgressions, waste, orgy and act of violence that the society expects its regeneration, where it seeks a hope for new strength enabling impulsive development until another state of exhaustion²⁰.

Regardless of all other considerations, could anyone image a similar spectacle directed by the communists in post-WWII Poland? Where would it be staged? Obviously not in Warsaw, which still had not risen from the rubble. It would also

¹⁸ “Such a public ‘death’ of a book was, at least, overt and, thus, honourable”. Z. Żmigrodzki, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁹ E.C. Król, *Propaganda i indoktrynacja narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*, Warsaw 1999, p. 376.

²⁰ R. Caillois. “Wojna i sacrum”, in: *Antropologia widowisk. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, A. Chałupnik, W. Dudzik, M. Kanabrodzki, L. Kolankiewicz, (eds.), Warsaw 2005, p. 264.

be impossible because of the new authorities' opposition to any form of retrospective utopia or to any local history.

The moral detriment of the method of eliminating unwelcome books used in Poland is revealed not as much when compared with the Berlin spectacle as when discussed together with the parallel efforts made right after WWII to rescue the cultural heritage from ravages of war. Mind you, this careful approach was applied not only to Polish, but also German books²¹. It would seem that all saved copies were of incalculable value. 1946 *Przegląd Biblioteczny* journal published a report on organising the book collection of the National Library. In 1945, it was in a deplorable condition and the building on Rakowiecka St. (new prints division) was very close to a section completely destroyed during the methodical destruction of left-bank Warsaw by the Nazis:

(...) missing window panes, frames, leaking roof, damp floors with torn out tiling, rain and snow dripping in upper floors, wind raging through the cabinets, litter, dirt and rubble everywhere mixed with scattered and pieces of paper, files and documents flying around. (...) Some inconsiderable portions of books remained in place, on the shelves, in the storage. A majority of them was lying in a large disarray, getting wet and becoming moulded on the floor; under tables and cabinets, on window sills, etc. Thus books of the National Library, some bound in packets, other chaotically in bags ready to be removed, filled every nook and cranny of the building²².

In the first years after WWII, *Przegląd Biblioteczny* often included texts about the losses, revindication and restitution of book collections whereas the "cleansing" operations conducted at the same time were not the subject of any official reports²³. Yet librarians participated in both restitution efforts and in destroying book resources. It is difficult to assume that, when reviewing a memoir entitled *55 lat wśród książek* [55 years surrounded by books], Bogdan Horodyski did not realise that, according to the new official classification, the majority of

²¹ On rescuing book collections in the Regained Territories read in: R. Nowicki, *Działalność Stanisława Sierotwińskiego w latach 1945–1946 jako delegata Ministerstwa Oświaty do zabezpieczenia księgozbiorów opuszczonych i porzuconych na Ziemiach Zachodnich*, "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 2006, issue 50; R. Nowicki, *Rezultaty działalności Zbiornicy Księgozbiorów Zabezpieczonych w Szczecinie w latach 1947–1950*, "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 2007, issue 51. Zbiornica Księgozbiorów Zabezpieczonych [Secured Collections Storage] in Szczecin existed since May 1947 until the initial months of 1950. Post-German book collections were segregated there.

²² H. Więckowska, *Z prac nad odbudową Biblioteki Narodowej*, "Przegląd Biblioteczny" 1946, vol. 1–2, pp. 109–110.

²³ In an article by Józef Grycz published in the first issue of the occupation magazine re-established after WWII, one could only read that among the "secured" books, Nazi propaganda material will be sent for recycling. J. Grycz, *Problemy biblioteczne obecnej doby*, "Przegląd Biblioteczny" 1946, vol. 1–2, p. 21.

Świętokrzyska Street's used book stores' offerings, to which Jan Michalski, author of the memoir, was referring, would be considered as "bourgeois" rubbish²⁴. Or maybe this thought was conveyed through the nostalgic tone of the review:

(...) we wander with the author around a Warsaw which is no more [the author of the memoir died in 1946 – E.D.]. We visit the well-known used book stores in Świętokrzyska St., we recognise the Kleinsigers, the Baumkolers, the Jablonkas, the Jonaszes, and the Fiszlers. And only there do we realise that nothing remains of the entire community of people, stores, and piles of books gathered there. No even ashes survived (...) ²⁵

Even if some copies of the books by the anti-communist Ferdynand Ossndowski or by Adam Nasielski (a popular author of crime stories) had survived those piles, there would had been no place for them in the general post-WWII libraries.

By placing the post-WWII "cleansing" of book collections closer to the Soviet rather than Nazi methods, Zbigniew Żmigrodzki simplified the image too much. In the case of the Polish version of the operations aimed at book collections, what was important was not only the fact that they were conducted in the Soviet area of influence but mainly that the communist authorities used, appropriately to their talent and will, a rich repertoire of strategies which had been used in Poland by both occupying forces. Thus, there did not occur a plain appropriation of the Soviet model but a rather sequential diffusion of the state strategy.

Referring again to the previously quoted book by Król, he discusses there the functioning of the political-bureaucratic machine in the Third Reich (the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, the Reich Chamber of Culture or the Reich Chamber of Literature) which supervised literature and writers. The tasks of those institutions included removal from the market and libraries books considered "destructive and unwelcome". The title of the 1935 list of prohibited items, devised by the Reich Chamber of Literature, was exactly that: *Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums*. The second index was created in 1939, the next one in 1940 and the final one in 1945²⁶.

The works of specific authors and thematic groups fell victim to those cleansings, including political literature of various focuses, books presenting a positive attitude towards the Weimar Republic, pacifistic publications and a significant portion of religious texts. Many publications from within the social and medical sciences were con-

²⁴ One of the "book collection selection" reports mention "littered" libraries. Vide M. Korczyńska-Derkacz, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

²⁵ B. Horodyski, a review of a book by J. Michalski. *55 lat wśród książek. Wspomnienia, wrażenia, rozważania* (Wrocław 1950), "Przegląd Biblioteczny" 1951, vol. 1–2, pp. 143–144.

²⁶ E.C. Król, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

sidered unwelcome and destructive, including books on women's liberation, sexual life and abortion. Finally, the authorities fought with "trivial" literature: mainly crime stories, erotic stories, Western fiction and *science fiction* novels²⁷.

As for the type of literature that was recommended for removal, the Polish prohibition lists displayed many similarities with their Nazi counterparts. Hence, someone could draw a conclusion that all totalitarian regimes are analogous, regardless of their physical location, and the similarity of their procedures result from the same characteristics or rather the structure of the totalitarian rule. However, in the case of the immediate post-WWII period, the question about the diffusion rather than the structure of the system will prove more cognitively promising. Just as in the co-existence of restitution and extermination of book collections, a somewhat similarly schizophrenic attitude by the authorities towards Nazi heritage could be observed. Officially, its relics were sentenced for extermination but, in practice, the heritage of the Third Reich offered a great catch for the victors. They seized not only material goods but also their extensive intellectual, organisational and logistics achievements. 1946 *Tygodnik Powszechny* magazine included warnings addressed to left-wing politicians against abusing propaganda towards a society which had been subjected for several years to Goebbels' techniques²⁸. Thus, the authors rather unambiguously suggested that the communists used Nazi methods for their benefit. Even if the goal of the *Tygodnik Powszechny*'s journalist in using the above-mentioned association was to radically discredit left-wing politicians, the statement did not lose its significance as evidence for the diffusion theory. It proved, at the very least, that such usage of enemy achievements was something acceptable in those times. Mind you, it would probably be difficult to decide, just as in the case of the word "cleansing" discussed earlier, where the borderline lay between intentional usage of propaganda techniques and being involuntarily "infected" by them. The debate in the post-WWII press on being "infected by death" was vivid. It could surely be extended to include other toxins. The adoption and progressive incorporation of the language of propaganda from the WWII occupation period was exemplified, in a fragment of Władysław Szpilman's recollections recorded by Jerzy Waldorff, which was exactly why the fragment was questioned by censorship as including "alien" language. In the uncensored version Szpilman recollected:

In order to describe our lives in those terrible times in the most accurate way, only one comparison comes to mind: bedbugs. Once you find in a dirty flat a nest of those insects and you start pouring poisonous powder on it, the bugs will scatter in all

²⁷ Ibidem, pp. 380–381.

²⁸ Paweł Jasienica wrote that "the organism of the nation produced anti-toxins against propaganda". P. Jasienica, *Nieporozumienia*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 1946, issue 42.

directions and run around in circles to find a way out, but, either because they are dazed by the sudden attack or affected by the poison, instead of going straight as far as possible, they run around in circles re-entering their previous paths, unable to pass the borderline of the deadly circle and... they die. So do we, run around in circles, from dawn to dusk, helpless, dazed, falling in one trap, then another one, bouncing off the wall and returning to the ghetto, everyone in search of being saved from death, which was inevitable²⁹.

It seemed inappropriate to compare Jews to bedbugs. The text was altered:

In order to describe our lives in those terrible times in an accurate way, only one comparison comes to mind: an ant colony in danger. Once the brown foot of a mindless cad starts destroying their colony with his shod heel, ants scatter in all directions and run around in circles trying to find a way to escape, but, either dazed by the sudden nature of the attack or completely consumed by their attempts to save their offspring and the remains of their property, as if poisoned, instead of going straight as far as possible, they run around in circles re-entering their previous paths, the same locations, unable to pass the borderline of the deadly circle and... they die. The same happens to us...³⁰

In the uncensored recollections, by being compared to bedbugs, Jews are deprived of any human features, while when transformed into ants, though in a panic, they retain some humanitarian reaction: they worry about the fate of their children and their property. In the original version of *Pamiętniki*, the act of killing bedbugs in a flat is something absolutely normal and legitimate. Everyone would do the same. Who does not react to bedbugs with disgust? So, if Szpilman compared himself, his loved ones and his compatriots to bedbugs, he was emulating the dehumanising method of perceiving them by the oppressors³¹. He seemed to accept as his own the anti-Jewish perspective of the Nazi propaganda. The ant colony, on the other hand, is destroyed by a “mindless cad”. **He commits an action which he does not understand.** The positive aura of the insect victims was strengthened by literary traditions, e.g. through association with Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz’ patriotic poem entitled *Mrowisko* [Ant Colony].

The bedbug perspective of the fragment of *Pamiętniki* from before the censorship intervention would have been somewhat similar to the lagered man from

²⁹ AAN (Archives of New Records), GUKPPiW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows), ref. no. 170 (32/32).

³⁰ *Śmierć miasta. Pamiętniki Władysława Szpilmana 1939–1945*, J. Waldorff (ed.), Warsaw 1948, p. 96.

³¹ The dehumanising perception in the relations between own and alien groups, vide *Poza stereotypy. Dehumanizacja i esencjalizm w postrzeganiu grup społecznych*, M. Drogosz, M. Bilewicz, M. Kofta (eds.), Warsaw 2012.

Tadeusz Borowski's prose. The *Index of books to be immediately excluded*, so similar in terms of its form to Nazi indexes, evoked a similar impression as the "bedbugs" in Szpilman's recollections; this was yet another point of view for reading the index of prohibited items.

By referring to the operations of adapting book collections to the needs of the communist rule as "cleansing", their mandators treated unacceptable books as rubbish. Some were sent for milling. One must also remember that the fate of a book was often painfully intertwined with the fate of its author. The discussed regulations caused no harm to deceased or foreign authors. The lists of books to be "excluded" did, however, also include names of authors who survived WWII and remained in Poland. In such cases, they took on the features of proscription lists. When libraries were being "cleansed", some writers were imprisoned while others were probably seriously entertaining that possibility. The first list of the 1951 *Index* included Jerzy Braun (*Książka harcerska, Kultura polska na bezdrożach, Szopka harcerska*) and Jan Hoppe (*Myśli społeczne, Wybory w r. 1935*) sentenced to lifetime imprisonment for, as the judgement stated, "an attempt to overthrow by force the new political system"³². General Stefan Moszor ("all works") tried at another widely known lawsuit for anti-state activities, received a similar sentence. In 1950, Stefan Łoś was arrested for a short period of time (again in 1954, this time for a year); he was listed in the *Index* because of his two novels: *Strażnicy* and *Szajki*³³. Waław Kostka-Biernacki ("all works") and Adam Czekalski (*Dżungla, Łuny nad Hiszpanią, Rekordy*) were also imprisoned. For many other writers, being listed in the Indexes meant they were cut off from income. Joanna Siedlecka discussed the careers of several poets destroyed through imprisonment or banned reissue in her book *Oblawa. Losy pisarzy represjonowanych*. While some writers listed in the Indexes felt inclined to abandon the profession of a writer, others felt stimulated. When undertaking new challenges, one had to strive for the authorities' approval. There was a reason why the second list was named "books out of date". In a sense, all the items listed in the 1951 *Index* belonged to that category.

The terror of currentness

The clear political profile of the books included in List No. 1, which included mainly books published in the interwar period, but also the core items of contemporary literature, indicates that its goal was to "cleanse" libraries of relics of the

³² J. Siedlecka, *Oblawa. Losy pisarzy represjonowanych*, Warsaw 2005, p. 46.

³³ Siedlecka writes about, e.g. Jerzy Braun, Stefan Łoś and Helena Zakrzewska.

past era. In the same period, official publications placed the interwar period on historical trial, or rather dealt it the highest of penalties. Sanation Poland was to be expunged without a trace. Everything had to be reorganised in the “cleansed” areas. Communists, who treated the past as a burden, positioned themselves as modernisers. Interwar Poland was to be removed from perception so that it would not interfere with the march towards the future. Elisabeth Eisenstein has described this defined relationship between the past and the future, between memories and creative abilities, as a feature of modernisation discourse which developed thanks to the dissemination of the printing press³⁴. However, even though this discourse was usually characterised by the “obsession of novelty”, the post-WWII Poland discourse should be understood as an obsession of currentness.

List No. 2 of the *Index* included books issued after WWII and no longer relevant. It seems unbelievable now, but the list considered such items, among others, as reports from concentration camps as not deserving to be read again. Which poses a question about what the word “current”, so commonly used both in the press and official discourse, really meant? What was expected of writers when they were incited to create “current” works? The expected result was not so much about current issues, but rather the ideological and political engagement of the writers in their output. During a 1947 convention of Wrocław Professional Union of Polish Writers (ZZLP) in a paper entitled *Aktualna problematyka literatury współczesnej* [Current problems in contemporary literature] Stefan Żółkiewski highlighted a significant shortcoming of post-WWII works in the form of a “still uncombated heritage of the outdated alien in terms of ideology literary traditions”³⁵. “Outdated”, in the understanding of the quoted sentence, meant “alien in terms of ideology”.

Maria Jarczyńska, who published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, lamented in 1946 in an article entitled “O aktualności w sztuce, o dyletantyzmie i o Breughelu” [On the currentness in arts, on diletantism and on Breughel] the omnipresence of the term and the terror it carried:

We have a complex of currentness. One cannot glimpse an inspiring personality from a past era just like that, casually gape out of unbiased admiration without immediately being asked: actually why someone should do that and what that person will receive in return. The present and its worries constitute the limitations of any interests, the measure of all problems, and any instance of thinking of something else than the present is perceived as a kind of disloyalty³⁶.

³⁴ Vide E.L. Eisenstein, *Rewolucja Gutenberga*, translated by H. Hollender, Warsaw 2004.

³⁵ As cited in: M. Radziwon, *Iwazkiewicz. Pisarz po katastrofie*, Warsaw 2010, p. 248.

³⁶ M. Jarczyńska, *O aktualności w sztuce, o dyletantyzmie i o Breughelu*, “Tygodnik Powszechny” 1946, issue 51–52, p. 6.

While demanding her right to admire Breughel freely she presented him as the ideal realist, a painter who was not swayed by illusion. The contemporary spokespeople of "currentness", **contrary to what they proclaimed, were no realists**. Their "currentness" was a test of loyalty not so much to their own times as to the communist rule.

Obviously, censors were also finely tuned to this understood "currentness". They welcomed any manifestations of it. In a 1952 review of Paweł Jasienica's *Świt słowiańskiego jutro* [Dawn of the Slavic tomorrow], the reviewer noted that the author's historical hypotheses "are of current nature". He evaluated the book as "undeniably advantageous"³⁷. In a 1953 review of Leopold Staff's *Wiklina* [Willow Twigs], the censor focussed on a few poems with "current themes" (fight for freedom, rebuilding). In general, however, there was very little "currentness" in the collection: a view too humanistic, with only traces of realism, an insufficiently articulated "resonance of our epoch". The censor hankered: "Alas, one cannot define precisely in which period the poems were written"³⁸. He postulated to mark each of them with dates so that the readers would not think that they manifested "uncurrentness".

The uncurrentness was sometimes an argument for halting a publication. That was the justification for finishing off *Dziecię Starego Miasta* [Child of the Old Town] by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (Przełom publishing house wanted to re-issue it)³⁹. A study by Wiktor Szramm and Helena Szrammówna entitled *Materiały do osadnictwa i spraw gospodarczych we wsiach doliny Tarnawki i Hoczewki Ziemi Sanockiej* [Materials on the settlement and economic issues in the villages of the valley of the Tarnawka and the Hoczewka in the Sanok land] was found suspicious for the same reasons. The reviewers found the old-fashioned "spirit of solidarity" in the studied rural community as troublesome⁴⁰. But sometimes the situation was quite the opposite. Publications were halted because the topics they referred to were not yet "quite historical", as in the case of the study by Roman Reinfuss entitled *Lemkowie jako grupa etnograficzna* [Lemkos as an ethnographic group]. The reviewer concluded that the issue of Lemkos had been settled completely partly by repatriating them to the USSR and partly by relocating them to other areas of Poland, but the issue was so recent that it was impossible to write about the group without referring to the contemporary context⁴¹. At times, the requirement for currentness resulted in some ridiculous ideas. The censor reviewing the libretto to *The Haunted Manor* concluded that it was about time (!) to replace it with a new one⁴².

³⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 386 (31/132).

³⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 386 (31/124).

³⁹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 173 (32/43).

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Ibidem.

Currentness was something that ensured publication, though it also entailed the danger of quickly becoming outdated, which is confirmed by List No. 2 of the *Index*. It included several works referring to the theme of the Regained Territories (Z. Bednorz, *Od Opola do Wrocławia*, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, Warsaw, 1946; A. Bolewski, *Gospodarcze znaczenie Ziem Odzyskanych dla świata słowiańskiego*, Polski Związek Zachodni, Poznań, 1947; M. Czeakańska, *Z biegiem Odry*, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, Warsaw, 1947; T. Gede, *Co nam dają Ziemie Zachodnie?*, Książka, Warsaw, 1946; L. Gustowski, *Szczecin. Fakty i liczby*, Wydawnictwo Zachodnie, Poznań, 1947 et al.). It seems that in 1951 Regained Territories were thought of much differently than in 1946 of 1947. Books lost their currentness like yesterday's newspapers. And they were treated just like newspapers. One could throw them away the following day since a new one, more current and recommended, came out. List No. 2 of the 1951 *Index* constituted exactly that: the proof that the entire literary output was newspaperised (which also applied to the quality of the paper itself...) That may have been the reason behind the undeniable success of the cultural policy of that time: the functional removal of the book as a cultural relic which offered integral guarantee of identity and durability of its message.

But if an author who wrote just to pay his or her bills really embraced the currentness requirement, she or he could count on an understanding on the part of the People's Republic of Poland. Kazimierz Koźniewski, the censor of *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* [Five from Barska St.], thus wrote about the ability of the post-WWII state to forget: "The People's Republic of Poland will forgive the past of anyone who understood their mistakes, who wish to work honestly, and who wish to add their effort to the act of building socialism"⁴³. For many writers, such a promise proved an offer they could not refuse.

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⁴³ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 386 (31/132).

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Elżbieta Dąbrowicz

Out of Date

Remarks on the 1951 “Index of Books to be Immediately Excluded”

(Summary)

This article seeks to identify some of the uses of „the index of books to be immediately excluded” issued by the Ministry of Culture and Arts in 1951. At that time, decrees of the sort specified inventories of books permitted to be included on the shelves of Polish. In the process,

many books were to be removed for good both from libraries and from native heritage. Additionally, the procedure of “purification”, as it was called by the officials, bore significant similarities to the repressive practices of the German and Russian occupants used during WWII. The author argues that analogies were drawn wittingly or impulsively at least for the effectiveness of German and Russian inventions. The 1951 list of books forbidden for the Polish common reader offers their obsolete character as the reason for exclusion. Up to date did not mean “contemporary” but up to the demands of state authorities. Administrative pressure to reflect the political agenda converted books into somewhat fatter newspapers and in this way seriously damaged book, which had always been the important vehicle of national and cultural memory.

Keywords: “index of books to be immediately excluded”, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature, public libraries in Polish People’s Republic

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Theatre and Drama of Socialist Realism in the Context of Cryptotexts (Based on MKiS and WUKPPiW Material)

The goal of the article is to discuss cryptotexts¹ created in Poland during Socialist realism. The study covers documents developed by the Ministry of Culture and Arts (MKiS) and the Voivodship Control Bureau for Press, Publications and Performances (WUKPPiW) in Poznań in 1949–54 discussing the methods of on-stage fulfilment of plays and dramatic works designed for younger audiences.

Polish literature in the context of cryptotexts²

In the People's Republic, all cultural texts³ which were to be released into official circulation⁴ were evaluated by state officers. In the majority of cases they were secret in nature and had an intentionally limited distribution which is why

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¹ Cryptotexts are defined as secret texts with deliberately limited circulation. I offer a more extensive characterisation of this type of work in an article entitled *Recenzja cenzorska Polski Ludowej*, "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich" 2016, issue 59 (117), vol. 1, pp. 97–103; cf. also footnote 5. The definition of censorship review is given in my article *Segment streszczający recenzji cenzorskiej (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950)*, "Socjolingwistyka" 2016, issue 1 (30), pp. 278–288.

² The title of this chapter refers to the classic text by Ryszard Nycz entitled *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury* [Polish literature in the shadow of censorship], "Teksty Drugie" 1998, issue 3 (51), p. 6–27. Nycz discussed Polish literature, which "almost from the beginning was accompanied by the more or less vigilant eye of the church or state censor" (p. 6), by analysing overt texts indicating, e.g. "various strategies of literary Aesopian language" in books published in official as well as independent circulation. In the article, I propose that version of censorship studies in which the focal point is shifted to cryptotexts. "The shedding of light" on secret texts offers a better understanding of, on the one hand, systemic mechanisms of control of expression and the methods of constructing that kind of "allegorical code in which the layer of figurative meanings is to form a type of tight cover of the message hidden from the censor" (p. 10) on the other.

³ State control applied to the press, radio and television programs as well as film productions and even maps and musical notations.

⁴ The second circulation (independent) was established in Poland in 1976 and its main goal was to weaken (break) the state monopoly of information through publications issued outside of

they can be classified as so-called cryptotexts. In this article, I discuss two types of secret texts: reviews developed at MKiS (without a separate name) and reviews developed at WUKPPiW, the so-called censor reviews. Even though both formats specified were distinguishable from overt reviews published in the press⁵, it would be futile to seek a definition of those in any dictionary of literary terms or other lexicon- or encyclopaedia-type collections⁶. This is most surprising in the case of censor reviews, which constituted a specific document of the epoch which has not been replicated in any form in democratic systems⁷. Indeed, censor evaluations were a result of the activity of the censorship bureau – an institution responsible for regulating freedom of speech, constituting a machine of prevention and repression no longer in force today.

In order to fill that gap I proposed the following definition of a censor review, which I will use herein:

a review by a censor of the People's Republic of Poland was a cryptotext (secret text with intentionally limited distribution), sanctioned by the state machine, discussing and evaluating cultural texts (works of literature, theatre, film, etc.), created by the Main Office for the Control of for Press, Publications and Performances officers (since 1981 the Main Office for the Control of Publications and Performances) and field divisions in 1944–1990, usually on a specific form⁸.

Stage performances were also subject to the above-mentioned process of control. Interventions were made first when approving a theatre's annual repertoire by a special unit of the General Directorate of Theatres, Operas and Philharmon-

censorship (the so-called “**independent publications**”, “**bibuła**” [tissue paper], “**non-permitted publications**”, “publications of the democratic opposition”). Underground periodicals, ephemera and brochures and books issued in 1944–1953 are considered as predecessors of the second circulation. About the second circulation cf. e.g.: W. Chojnacki and W. Chojnacki [pseud. J. Kamińska], *Bibliografia publikacji podziemnych w Polsce 13 XII 1981–VI 1986*, Editions Spotkania, Paris 1988; W. Chojnacki, M. Jastrzębski, *Bibliografia publikacji podziemnych w Polsce 1 I 1986–31 XII 1987*, Editions Spotkania, Warsaw [no editorial details].

⁵ Its main distinguishing features included: the secret nature of reviews and the need to issue the decision about the publication or halting the work (in the case of any doubts, censors could seek the opinion of their colleagues or supervisors, but eventually the form had to include a statement whether a given book was permitted for printing or halted).

⁶ If they were mentioned, it meant they were related to literary or publisher reviews.

⁷ During the interwar period, there existed repression censorship.

⁸ A. Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, *Segment streszczający recenzji cenzorskiej (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950)*, “Socjolingwistyka” 2016, issue 1 (30), pp. 278. I presented the first proposed definition of a censor review in, currently being prepared for publication, my diploma dissertation entitled *Czytelnik ocenizowany. Literatura w paratekstach – recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950)* [Censored *Czytelnik*. Literature in paratexts – censor reviews from the Stalinist period (based on GUKPPiW material from 1950)].

ics (GDTOF). Of course, individual plays were also evaluated, which is confirmed by reviews preserved in archival material of the GUKPPiW and MKiS⁹. The folders could have also included “cards of books submitted for publications” and in some cases correspondence to and from the artists, quite surprising at times:

I am extremely sorry that the Department of Creativity received from me such a terrible typescript of *Biale Siostry*. It was my secretary’s fault, who sent an uncorrected copy, but also partly the fault of the Paper Matters Commission, which holds 2 copies of *Biale Siostry*. Those have been verified by the Polish Writers’ Union (ZLP) and censored by the Voivodship Division of the Control of Press in Katowice and should be free of any glaring mistakes¹⁰.

Theatre and drama in Socialist realism¹¹

The turn of the 1950s was undoubtedly a tumultuous period in Polish culture. In January 1949, during the Szczecin convention, the fate of Polish literature was decided upon and less than six months later in Obory (near Warsaw) the shape of the new Polish theatre was discussed by delegates to a meeting of playwrights and critics and other people associated with theatre¹². Among the large group of initiatives important for domestic drama the most significant included the guest performance of the Moscow Drama Theatre under the direction of Nikolay Okhlopkov and the Festival of Russian and Soviet Plays – with both events clearly stating the cultural source from which Polish culture should draw. Also, the administrative structures were subject to changes. In April 1949, the last convention of the Association of Artists of Polish Stages (ZASP) was held and in September the authorities established the Central Directorate for

⁹ It was sometimes the case that the Censorship Bureau sent texts for evaluation to MKiS, cf. e.g. a review of a novel by Nikodem Kłosowski entitled *Skarb*: section 6 of the review form read: “Sent from G.U.K.P”. (AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination).

¹⁰ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From the correspondence with Roman Juraszek, the author of *Biale Siostry* (31 Oct 1949). The fragment presented consecutive stages of reviewing a work. Usually, those letters were more brief, cf. e.g. “I am submitting the typescript of my work entitled *Sztuka religijna w dawnych wiekach* for evaluation. My possible publisher shall send a corresponding formal application soon” (AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From the correspondence with Karol Korsak, the author of *Sztuka religijna w dawnych wiekach* (14 Jul 1949).

¹¹ Theatre and drama in Socialist realism had a rich subject literature, cf. e.g.: numerous works by Stanisław Marczak-Oborski, a renowned specialists in the area.

¹² The proceedings which resulted in the proclamation of Socialist realism were held between 18 and 19 June 1949.

Theatres, Operas and Philharmonics, the predecessor of GDTOF, and the Central Theatre Management¹³. The intensifying process of nationalisation of Polish theatres was concluded on 21 December 1949¹⁴.

The newly-established theatres¹⁵ as well as those rebuilding after the destruction of WWII¹⁶ started implementing the stipulations of the only valid movement, Socialist realism. It did not take long for the implementation of the new creative method to bear effects. Socialist realism soon dominated repertoires; “production plays” were staged in Łódź, Warsaw, Krakow, Bydgoszcz and in many other theatres throughout Poland. The creators were expected to ensure: certain types of characters, with a clear dichotomous division between good and evil characters with an outstanding and positive protagonist worth emulating and a completely opposite antagonist, along with a communicative quality of language (any formal experiments were prohibited), and an optimistic undertone

GUKPPiW, WUKPPiW and MKiS officers evaluated a given work in terms of its compliance with the Socialist realist program. Within the discussed period only in some rare reviews was the evaluation of artistic value not derived from the evaluation of the ideological value.

“Amateur theatres have a huge significance in building: the present and the future[...]”¹⁷ – handbooks for theatres in the context of cryptotexts

According to the guidelines of the cultural policy of the 1950s, a large emphasis was placed on promoting and propagating culture, including easier access to performing arts, which resulted in the creation of a network of theatres. Particular attention was applied to rural communities and smaller townships establishing not only multi-stage centres but also more modest stationary or travelling insti-

¹³ Vide J. of L. O.G. 1949 No. 77 Item 955, the Order of the Minister of Culture and Arts of 8 September 1949 on the creation of a state company under the name of the Central Directorate for Theatres, Operas and Philharmonics; <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WMP19490770955+1950%2403%2401&min=1> [accessed on: 1.05.2016]; J. of L. O.G. 1950 No. 79 Item 926, the Order of the Minister of Culture and Arts of 15 April 1950 regarding the amendment of the Order of 8 September 1949 on the creation of a state company under the name of the Central Directorate for Theatres, Operas and Philharmonics; <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WMP19500790926> [accessed on: 1.05.2016]

¹⁴ The publishing market was also subjected to nationalisation, cf. the difficult history of private publishing houses in post-WWII Poland.

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. 12 Nov 1949, the Teatr Nowy in Łódź was opened.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. 13 Dec 1949, the rebuilt National Theatre in Warsaw was opened.

¹⁷ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review *Repertuar teatrów ochotniczych* by Zdzisław Kwieciński (5 Apr 1949).

tutions. Theatre life occurred in branch theatres and at enterprise or clubroom centres, which had to be managed in an appropriate way, something GUKPPIW, WUKPPIW and MKiS officers were very aware of:

The notion of clubroom theatre has emerged rapidly in today's life. A handbook for a clubroom theatre could provide valuable services both to its manager and the youth participating in the plays¹⁸.

All types of theatre initiatives began to receive guidebooks and instructions discussing the methods of staging plays, cooperating with actors and the audience and other issues related to the on-stage handling of a dramatic text. These activities were subject to evaluation just as theatre plays.

In November 1949, the authorities released for publication "a practical instruction manual regarding technical issues (partly artistic and teaching as well) for the puppet theatre within the conditions of a voluntary clubroom work"¹⁹ entitled *Teatr Kukielek* by Stanisław Iłowski. The review emphasised a good level of the publication and its educational and instruction value:

It is a handbook developed professionally, comprehensively and with clarity.

It will offer much help for the developing amateur movement in terms of puppet theatres because by offering the most needed practical directions based on professional experience it can save beginners from inevitable mistakes or at least "reinventing the wheel"²⁰.

The Socialist realist promotion of utility literature was understandable in the context of the utilitarian goals set for literature (including belles-lettres). Self-study books, guidebooks and instruction-type items were becoming an invaluable instrument used for shaping the expected state of matters. The same applied to instruction manuals for people working with the theatre. By definition a guidebook²¹, required readers to act in a specific manner but a Socialist realist guidebook related to such a sensitive matter as theatre life including the only legitimate model of operation, left the animator of cultural life a minimum space of freedom.

¹⁸ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of *Poradnik dla teatrów świetlicowych* [Handbook for clubroom theatres] by Tadeusz Kudliński and Franciszek Walczewski (27 Apr 1949).

¹⁹ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of *Teatr Kukielek* by Stanisław Iłowski (10 Nov 1949).

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ E. Ficek, *Poradnik – gatunek interakcyjny?*, in: *Styl konwersacyjny*, B. Witosz (ed.), Wyd. UŚ, Katowice 2006, pp. 243–251.

Using guidebooks-instruction manuals, the central government equipped the cultural worker with the necessary tools for conducting field operations. Thus, at even smaller cultural centres distant from any decision-making centres, theatre life, shaped according to centrally-approved rules, was flourishing. Literature devoted to managing theatres underwent considerable specialisation and there began to appear on the market items developed for a specific type of institution while authors were expected to know the subject and operate with ease in the new theatre reality:

I do think, though, that the contemporary clubroom theatre is a completely special notion and it requires a special point of view. One has to know for whom the theatre is to be organised and who his authors are. Finally, what is the goal the theatre is to serve. We know far too well that in today's Poland there are no free-range problems which are not associated with the entirety of the notions of the cultural life. The clubroom theatre cannot fulfil the role of a lonely autonomous island within its area escaping the standards of contemporary times but it must be an integral part of these times, its manifestation and a reflection²².

Upon delivering such a fiery statement the author of the review proceeded to a detailed (almost 1.5-typescript-page-long) discussion of the guidebook. The accusations included some were considered canonical in 1950s criticism, which constituted a *sine qua non* element of the reviewer and censor's *modus scribendi*: "The authors of the guidebook are so focussed on the religious nature that they associate all folk problems with the problems of Catholic rituals"²³, "The authors of the guidebook psychologise in a completely uncontrolled way when offering methods of working at clubroom theatres"²⁴. Some accusations could had been considered as a justified critical voice, but the structure of the statements and its propagandic undertone revealed the actual intentions of their authors:

When the authors discuss, e.g. on pages 87 and 88 contrast as an element of expression assigning colours some completely extraordinary mystical powers, thus imposing the notions of good, evil, truth, humility, etc., we look in amazement at the colour as anthropomorphised oddities and not as colour blobs indicating the knowledge on painting and using the knowledge of the arts world in the theatre. The same applies to clothing or make-up. Everything that is supposed to be in the theatre a mixture of colour, shapes, light, all merged with the epoch, with the nature of art, what eventually is to become a visible sign of caring about the visual vision of the world – in the

²² AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of *Poradnik dla teatrów świetlicowych* [Handbook for clubroom theatres] by Tadeusz Kudliński and Franciszek Walczewski (27 Apr 1949).

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Ibidem.

case of the authors is a manifestation of higher, irrational forces or at least of human soul hankering for Catholic ideals²⁵.

The reviewer's decision seemed settled: "The guidebook's advantage is its clear structure, a certain number of sound technical advice. Being incorrect in terms of principles and train of thought it is not fit for publications"²⁶.

"The work lacks political instances"²⁷ – dramatic works for the youngest in the context of cryptotexts

The fate of post-WWII art for children was discussed, among other places during "the first conference devoted to the development of literature for the youngest generation in the altered social-political conditions of the People's Republic"²⁸ and during the 1st National Convention on Literature for Children and Young Adults in 1947 organised through the initiative of the Polish Teachers' Union²⁹. The surviving records indicate that the works for the youngest audiences were subject to similar rules of creation as the works for older audiences. The analysis of cryptotexts shows that the principles of evaluating them were also similar.

During the period of systemic control of speech, the main goal of cryptotexts was to evaluate the ideological correctness of the works submitted for review. This also applied to dramatic works for the youngest audiences. It seems that compliance with the system of beliefs in force was the primary test and only after a work passed it, would the censors approach the remaining aspects of a work. In the review form of MKiS in section 17. *Social and political resonance*, the reviewer of the play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Żaczku-Szkolaczku i o Sowizdrzale* wrote: "The work lacks any political instances. The play has a positive educational value. It resounds with the joy of life, a positive approach to science and the love of nature"³⁰. The short fragment offered a concise summary of the program of Socialist realism. Contact with nature, a common motif in children's

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Ibidem. The archive includes two reviews of the guidebook. The first one was developed on 27 Feb 1949 and was positive. However, the decision quoted herein of the second reviewer eventually signed on 9 May 1949 was sustained.

²⁷ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Żaczku-Szkolaczku i o Sowizdrzale* (19 Feb 1949).

²⁸ S. Frycie, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1945–1970. Zarys monograficzny. Materiały. Tom I – Proza*, wyd. 3, WSiP, Warsaw 1987, p. 25.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 35.

³⁰ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Żaczku-Szkolaczku i o Sowizdrzale* (19 Feb 1949).

literature, was highly valued by the designers of the movement. The reviewers favourably considered works which presented the beauty of the natural environment and emphasised life in harmony with nature. Rural-themed plays were highly supported by state officials by matching the policy of social promotion from the rural community. Many reviews emphasised the fact that works developed for children's theatres included "people from the rural environment"³¹, often providing specific information regarding the preferred audience: "For children of lower school grades. For the countryside in particular"³².

The reviewer's remark on the educational value was also a result of the expectations towards the play. The majority of the analysed reviews raised the educational aspect of the work: "evident educational qualities"³³. The paideic imperative seemed an indispensable feature of children's and youth literature from the time and place of its origin, though within the discussed period it was mainly a means of repression³⁴. The Horatian maxim of "teach through entertaining" gained a completely new meaning in the first decade after WWII. An analysis of cryptotexts of plays devised for the youngest audiences confirmed that the educational function was valued over the poetic function. All proposals raising current themes considered as significant could expect to be favoured:

The author of this little play had high ambitions. On the stage of a puppet theatre, he managed to present a current economic issue. In fact, the entire play is designed to show children the harmfulness of the Colorado potato beetle and encourage them to work together to combat it³⁵.

Even if the reviewer questioned the aesthetic value of such a work, it could see the light of day provided that its author complied with the corrections suggested by the reviewer:

One could, of course, hold it against the author of the play that the only problem with the beetle he sees is that there won't be any potatoes for the swine. [...] However,

³¹ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Kasi, co gąski zgubiła* (29 Feb 1949). The story of *O Zuchu i Smoluchu* is also set in a rural community.

³² AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Żaczku-Szcolaczku i o Sowizdrzale* (19 Feb 1949).

³³ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O straszliwym smoku i dzielnym szewczyku, prześlicznej królownie i królu Gwoździku* (22 Apr 1949).

³⁴ Suffice to mention the stipulations to shape the positive image of the People's Army and to present the Home Army as an organisation hostile towards Poland.

³⁵ APP, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 240, l. 181. From a review of a book entitled *O jeżu i lisie szkodniku* (14 Jun 1954).

those reservations are marginal and do not lessen the value and currentness of the little play³⁶.

An important issue for the healthcare policy was raised by a play entitled *O Zuchu i Smoluchu*, summarised in a peculiar reviewer's *dictum*: "Cleanliness means health – filth means sickness"³⁷. The play reflected the social inequality of the 1950s: in the first decade after WWII, there were very many initiatives aimed at decreasing the chasm between the backward countryside and the developing cities³⁸. To promote a hygienic way of life the authorities used information leaflets, posters, bills and, of course, the press and literature. The example of *Zuch i Smoluch* showed that such theatre works raised that essential, though surely not high-quality in literary terms, problem:

Smoluch, the Witch's accomplice, conducts the propaganda of filth. The Witch spreads disease. [...] The book, upon introduction of corrections, is fit for lower grades of primary school of amateur theatre – for official events. It can teach by showing children the ugliness of filth. That was the author's intention. It seems that a more successful method in terms of education would be to show children the nice parts of life, those worth emulating, but Kownacka has done that in her other valuable theatre works for children³⁹.

O Zuchu i Smoluchu attempted to develop in the youngest consumers of culture the proper habits regarding hygiene. The main goal of (dramatic) works of the Stalinist period was the "development" in the recipients of culturally appropriate attitudes towards particularly important issues from the point of view of state policy. The system legislators intended to equip the young consumers of culture with an appropriate system of beliefs regarding crucial issues, such as class struggle or capitalist exploitation. In that context, Szewczyk [Little Cobbler], the protagonist of yet another play proposed by Maria Kownacka, was interesting. The work's evaluation included accusations regarding the motivation and the psychological credibility of the protagonist, which revealed the expectations the authorities had towards literature:

The unexpected ending – the little cobbler does not want a palace nor a crown – would be more amusing if the little cobbler was politer. The moment, though the humorous

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Zuchu i Smoluchu* (11 Mar 1949).

³⁸ That dichotomous state of affairs was also reflected in the period literature which developed two trends in the production novel: the urban trend and the rural trend.

³⁹ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Zuchu i Smoluchu* (11 Mar 1949).

nature of the little cobbler's speech, is a bit vulgarised. And the pace with which the princess gives in to the little cobbler's influence – not very credible⁴⁰.

In Socialist realist productions, the aesthetic-ethical parallelism was supplemented with the class component. The characters, if beautiful and virtuous, usually came from an appropriate social group. Therefore, the reviewers and critics proposed a solution where “the trapped princess is saved not by a brave knight but Stach-hutnik [Stach the steelworker]”⁴¹. In the analysed example, the reviewer noted that the Little Cobbler rejected upper class attributes, though not without damage to the structure of the work.

When evaluating dramatic works reviewers referred to the possibility of staging them, though the analysed collection of texts mainly consisted of laconic remarks in that regard: “**Work written in a light lively mood, with humour, with extensive knowledge of puppet plays and children's psychology**”⁴², “Good dramatic structure. Feel of the stage. Lively action. Good skills in managing the work's trend. Language, presumably because of a rather disgusting topic, deficient”⁴³.

In the reviews, the reviewers noted the immanent features of the texts which could had been advantageous or disadvantageous for adapting them for the stage while the evaluations of the possibility of adaptations were often accompanied by evaluations of the artistic value of the dramas:

The topic is more fitting for a talk on hygiene than for a dramatic work. Personification of combs, soap and brushes. Graphicalisation of insects which cause disgust or fear, such as the Cockroach or fly, songs the lyrics of which deal with the parasitic activities of bedbugs, lice, fleas, spreading of bacteria from rubbish cans, “**from manure**” to the tureen – by flies, where there are centipedes, roaches, etc., where there is a pile of rubbish, and a boy is compared to a “scruffy cloth” – it is all valid, true – but in the theatre placed in a graphic form very disgusting and terrible⁴⁴.

The surviving reviews included a few remarks regarding the contemporary theatre life. Almost all confirmed its poor level: “In the generally low level of

⁴⁰ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O straszliwym smoku i dzielnym szewczyku, prześlicznej królownie i królu Gwoździku* (22 Apr 1949).

⁴¹ *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, Z. Łapiński, W. Tomasiak (eds.), TAIWPN Universitas, Cracow 2004, p. 125; W. Grodzieńska, *Współczesna literatura dla dzieci*, “Kuźnica” 1949, issue 51–52.

⁴² AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Kasi, co gąski zgubiła* (29 Feb 1949).

⁴³ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Zuchu i Smoluchu* (11 Mar 1949).

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

the repertoires of children's theatre, it is a valuable item which has remained for several years one of the basic plays of the puppet theatre"⁴⁵, "The work deserves to be published and the most extensive propagation as one of the best puppet plays for younger children"⁴⁶, "The work should be published as one of the best plays amongst the generally poor repertoire of children's theatre"⁴⁷.

* * *

The subject literature offers the prevalent opinion that the theatres of the Socialist realism era "suffered one of the most vapid periods in their history"⁴⁸. Polish post-WWII drama did not develop any remarkable works within the first decade. The state covered drama, similarly to other arts, with a careful and educational canvas which did not support creative freedom.

In the article, I proposed to view the Socialist realist theatre not through what was published and staged in theatres but through the evaluations of guide-books regarding on-stage processing of drama works and plays developed for the youngest audiences. The analysis of cryptotexts indicated that the evaluators were predominantly loyal to the system legislators and did not exceed the accepted review trend while the surviving sample copies of plays and the reviews themselves confirm the disputable artistic qualities of drama works of the 1950s. designed for (not exclusively) the youngest audiences.

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⁴⁵ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O straszliwym smoku i dzielnym szewczyku, przesłicznej królownie i królu Gwoździku* (22 Apr 1949).

⁴⁶ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Kasi, co gąsiki zgubiła* (29 Feb 1949).

⁴⁷ AAN, MKiS, Dept. of Art. Creativity, Publishing Div., ref. no. 705, no pagination. From a review of a puppet play by Maria Kownacka entitled *O Żaczku-Szkolaczku i o Sowidrzale* (19 Feb 1949).

⁴⁸ S. Marczak-Oborski, *Teatr polski w latach 1918–1965*, Warsaw, 1985, p. 232.

- Grodzińska Wanda, *Współczesna literatura dla dzieci*, "Kuznica" 1949, issue 51–52.
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Anna Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk

Theatre and Drama of Socialist Realism in the Context of Cryptotexts (Based on MKiS and WUKPPiW Material)

(Summary)

The main goal of the article is to offer a description of cryptotexts of theatre staging handbooks and dramatic works created in Poland during the socialist realism period. A cryptotext is a secret text which is the result of a purposeful act of subterfuge. In the article, I present selected cryptotexts – reviews produced in the Ministry of Culture and Art (MKiS) and censorship reviews of the dramatic works submitted for evaluation to the Voivodship Control Bureau for Press, Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (WUKPPiW).

The archives contain evaluation of works which have been published in subsequent years as well as those which remained only in their draft form. Analysis of the evaluations of ministry officials reveal the mechanisms for allowing and withholding submitted dramatic works and a theatre staging handbook which shows the practices of publishing theatrical works.

An analysis of different evaluations of the same text allows for a hypothesis that the main aim of cryptotexts was the evaluation of ideological correctness of submitted works. Despite this main function it is possible to point out specific passages in the statements by the WUKPPiW officials which are similar to statements of Ministry officials. In both cases the evaluation pertains to the content and the planned fulfilment of the work and plays mainly a didactic function.

Keywords: censorship, cryptotext, post-war Polish theatre and drama

Kajetan Mojsak*

Politics, Poetics and “the Tragedy of Existence”. The reception of *Młyny Boże* [the Mills of God] Novel Series by Kazimierz Truchanowski by the Censorship Bureau

The reception of the *Młyny Boże* novel series by Kazimierz Truchanowski, written over twelve years¹ and, it seems, designed to be a masterpiece and strongly rooted in modernistic and Young Poland traditions, was mixed. Some critics saw it as a grand work; others perceived it as being old-fashioned, naive in its supposed philosophical nature, wordy or even talentless, and epigonic². Today the dispute seems to be both settled and unimportant. A few papers and books on the history of literature devoted to Truchanowski that have appeared in recent years, may not be a lot but it is still a considerable number considering that the author of

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¹ *The Mills of God* included five volumes: *Niepokój*, *Tyranie* and *Zdejmowanie masek* (1961, 1963 and 1965), *Piekło nie zna snu* (1967), and *Zatrzaśnięcie bram* (1973).

² In their analysis of Truchanowski's prose, some scholars (Ryszard Chodźko, Jakub Lichański), not only defended it from the accusation of being derivative, but also placed it in such a multitude of literary contexts and cultural references that they, intentionally or not, boosted its artistic significance; they seemed at times to treat him as an equal literary partner to Kafka, Mann, Musil, and Schulz. Vide J.Z. Lichański, *Kazimierz Truchanowski. Człowiek, pisarz, myśliciel*, in: *Przymierzanie masek*, p. 224; R. Chodźko, *Pejzaże świadomości. Powieściopisarstwo Kazimierza Truchanowskiego*, Białystok 1980, p. 40 et al.

Texts by Jan Koprowski, Bogusław Gryszkiewicz and Jerzy Ficowski were completely different in tone. They denied Truchanowski's work artistic value by pointing to its slave-like dependence on Schultz's prose; the lack of internal logic, mannerism, old-fashioned style, cliché imagery, dullness of descriptions and trivial intellectual reflection. cf. the convincing text by Jan Koprowski (*Arcydzieło czy mistyfikacja*, “*Twórczość*” 1962, vol. 21, p. 141, 143). See B. Gryszkiewicz, *Adam i panienki. Treści fantazmatyczne w “Zatrutych studniach” Kazimierza Truchanowskiego*, in: *Przymierzanie masek*, pp. 149, 156. Jerzy Ficowski wrote about the epigonistic character of Truchanowski's prose, particularly early prose, and its debt to Schultz in an article with a telling title *Własnowidz i cudotwórca czyli “Ulica Krokodyli” i “Ulica Wszystkich Świętych”* (“*Kresy*” 1996, vol. 2, pp. 61–73). Ficowski argued that Truchanowski's prose was a kind of a cryptomnesia, or unconscious plagiarism. He supported his claims with multiple comparisons of Truchanowski's and Schultz's works.

Młyny Boże and *Zatrute Studnie* [Poisoned Wells] has been virtually forgotten by readers. It could be said that Truchanowski's prose is interesting not as much on its own, but rather as a subject of study, as a kind of literary peculiarity or a special case of Polish 20th-century literature.

The following text will be devoted to the reception of *Młyny Boże* by the censorship bureau. The documents which have survived from the Chief Control Bureau include the reviews of three subsequent volumes of the series (including three extensive reviews of the first volume). The material does not reveal anything new about Truchanowski's prose – censor interventions were minimal in that case. However, as a proof of censors' perception of his prose, it is paradoxically interesting. Once again: not so much due to its artistic value, but as an intriguing case of the history of literature, allowing us to formulate some conclusions regarding the mechanisms of censorship. Truchanowski's vast, hermetic series, difficult to understand, was read in the Control Bureau with a surprising amount of attention and gravity, at least at the beginning. Subsequent parts of the ambitious work met with less attention by the officers. Censors' reviews of the series, composed in the 1960s, provide an interesting view of the growing tolerance, and indifference, to such difficult, non-epic, and hermetic prose: surely far from official national cultural-ideological concept, and at the same time not in open conflict with it. The fate of *Młyny Boże* could be interpreted as an introduction to the so-called "socparnasizm" [Socialist parnassism] or as a short course on the history of the growing pragmatism of the Control Bureau. Therefore, it is worth looking closely at that meeting of this hermetic, "artistic" prose with censorship.

* * *

Niepokój [Anxiety], the first volume of *Młyny Boże*, received three detailed reviews. Censors approached Truchanowski's prose with utmost gravity and, despite ideological reservations, evaluated it highly for its artistic qualities. In the first review, an officer of the GUKPPiW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) tried to reconstruct the poetics of the work. But, above all, while overcoming a kind of helplessness regarding the elaborate symbolism of the work, she tried to define its political undertone and carefully assess the dangers its publication could have posed.

The hermetic nature of Truchanowski's novels proved to be a critical issue. The high complexity of the imagery, symbolic saturation and the grotesque distortion of reality caused many problems for the censors. The difficulty in perceiving the work and its indecipherability surely were not only or even mainly a result of anti-censorship strategies but rather a result of the employed poetics, rooted in expressionistic and Young Polish patterns, which Truchanowski developed mostly in the 1930s. That hermeticism proved, however, at least up to a certain point,

troublesome for censorship based on the principle that anything that was vague, was potentially dangerous:

Thus, logically speaking, the image of an individual and the society in *Młyny Boże* is an image of our times. I do not want to discuss whether courts, or “Mills of opinions and courts” are a reflection of the Central Committee or the UB [Urząd Bezpieczeństwa – Secret Service] since it leads nowhere. It is impossible to decipher all the symbols and allusions gathered on several hundred pages. One thing is clear to me – it is a **vision of a lost individual, helpless against all-powerful and apocalyptic social institutions.** (...) We can, therefore, read this novel as an image of “the period of errors and deformation” with the positive post-October ending. (...) I feel the author, by providing us with this grim picture of our reality, wanted to express (especially in its ending) that he accepts it as a kind of stage in historical development (and pessimism is pan-human because people are insignificant, etc.) (...) The final pages of the book contain passages showing a clear, in my opinion, approval of our government, despite the fact that it is full of resignation (p. 544, 547)³.

The lack of consistency in recreating the author’s attitude towards the government (approving, but full of resignation and pessimism) was quite clear. It mainly resulted from the semantic vagueness and the general nature of the imagery (allowing for free interpretation) of the novel itself. Eventually, the reviewer decided that the novel was not politically dangerous and she settled her numerous reservations according to the pragmatic rule of hermetic content being harmless:

I believe we should issue the permit for the printing of this novel. The book will be inaccessible to the general audience, A philosophical book and the reactions to it will surely be insignificant. Still, I must confirm its extremely high literary value. Surely, it is not socially positive, but it cannot cause any damage. Possible minute interventions: p. 289 (usurpation of power) and p. 428 (tighten the screws on people)⁴.

The second censor also confirmed the “literary value of the book,” but he noted that the artistic quality “cannot mask possible political damage” the novel could cause. He proposed to re-edit the text in the “instances concerning the issue of government and its outlets”⁵. The spatial and temporal placement of the story, difficult in the case of such a complex novel, detached from historical events, and designed as one big metaphor, seems crucial for deciphering the undertone of the book.

³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 643 (68/57), l. 90; review by Renata Świątycka, bearing a note: “I spoke to comrade Wichowa and we decided that we will get back to the book”. The rest illegible.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 643 (68/57), l. 94. I. Szlajfer, 30.01.1961.

Due to the complicated structure of the book, it causes some difficulties in correct reading of the content. They stem from the fact that the story is set in an unspecified timeframe, somewhat timeless. There is no real physical location, and there are no details that could indicate the social system in which the action takes place. Those are, however, difficulties only at first glance. The themes covered start to take shape while delving into the book. The work is also full of *illusions (sic!)* and digressions, there are many allegoric images and it is full of rhetoric, symbolism, and possible solutions. It seems that this (com)position and that method of expression fits the author best. Still, the main problems are traceable and can be referred to. (...) The above-mentioned views of the author on the most important issues raised in the novel clearly specify its non-Marxist philosophical content. Regardless whether the novel applies to the present or not, the problems it contains are still problems. In my opinion, the work is contemporary. The passages on the discovery of the atom, Sputnik-rockets, and the threats of war support this claim. Many of the themes may be allusions to the relations of the socialist reality. If we consider the fact that we do not live in an abstract, but rather a world of real structure of social powers, and that the novel was published in the Polish People's Republic, we cannot ignore how it might be received. All thinking readers will ask themselves, for example, whether the model of power, as presented in the book, is a kind of satire on our reality or not⁶.

Quite clearly the second censor was stricter in his evaluation: the transfer of complicated poetics to philosophical and political ideas did not reduce the level of his suspiciousness and the need to settle the differences between the philosophy of the novel and the state doctrine.

The third review, by the same author and dated 17 June 1960, was interesting because it was proof of negotiations between the author and the bureau. Unfortunately, the author's letter to the bureau has not survived, at least in the censorship's archives. It might have shed some light on his strategy for dealing with censorship. In reply to that unknown letter, the censor wrote another review, addressing Truchanowski's remarks. Interestingly enough, he retained his "educational" approach, but, based on the author's explanations, he was willing to withdraw his previous decisions and accept his error. Perhaps some kind of a hidden motivation (the decision of a ranking officer or support for Truchanowski) could have been hidden behind that change of perspective. That cannot be excluded. However, the favourable, conciliatory and mildly educational tone of the second review seemed to be characteristic of censorship at the time. A censor was not so much meant to oversee and punish, as gently direct to the correct path:

⁶ Ibidem.

Upon the second reading of the second part of the book, I can see the logic of its structure more clearly than before and I am not surprised that the Author did not accept my previous remarks about the structure. I still believe that some things could be put in a (much) more concise fashion. However, with the used narrative in mind, specific for the Author’s works in general, it could be difficult to introduce those changes. Where the basic structural notions are concerned, however, the Author has had the advantage over me of knowing the plan for his full work, whereas I can only speculate with almost no suggestions.

(...) I understood all that was unclear and confusing previously, i.e., the placement of the novel in time. In fact, I should have guessed it sooner. All it took was to remind myself the Author’s year of birth and the area of his experiences as a young man in order to realise that associating intellectual experiences of a young man with modern times was not possible. I made an error, caused probably by the current obsessions of youth literature rather than by Truchanowski’s text. A careful reading of the text clearly shows that the author moves among categories from a few decades ago. (...) His city is one of the 1920s (or older). It is quiet, with no noisy transportation and communications systems. Even the **organisation and the work system of courts**, despite the red and green lights, resembles something akin to the pre-WWII tax office⁷.

Apparently, the issue of the placement of the content of *Młyny Boże* in time was crucial in the dispute with the author and for the entire publishing history of the novel.

It seems extremely interesting that the critical criterion for solving the problems of temporal and spatial placement of the events was not, surprisingly, the supposed reaction of the reader, reconstructed on the basis of the interpretation of the text, but the intent of the author, used, apparently, somewhat naively: based on the author’s declaration.

“Such discussions may seem amusing,” the censor wrote, “but ultimately they are meant for something crucial: deciphering the Author’s intent, hidden underneath the network of imagery”.

And then he concluded:

It seems that, according to the assumptions used by the author, the work is logically structured and clear and, at the same time, it does not allow any interpretations contrary to his intentions, despite the planned ambiguity⁸.

⁷ Review no. 3, dated 17 VI 1960. Ibidem, c. 96.

⁸ Ibidem.

The author's comments, i.e. the author's autointerpretation during his exchange with censors, but also the prefaces and afterwords to the novel, played a significant role. It was, in fact, a part of a broader phenomenon. Censors paid much attention to the commentary which indicated how a given work should be read, especially in the case of Western literature translated into Polish. The extra-textual interpretation cues could have also been important in the case of metaphoric works using the poetics of grotesque allegory or parable. Ambiguity resulting from the poetics employed in the work made the extra-textual suggestions directing the reading decisive when the fate of individual works was concerned⁹. Then again, Truchanowski's comments were as vague as the novel itself¹⁰.

The reliance on the author's commentary may seem surprising, even more so as the same censor correctly noted in his first review that many problems raised by Truchanowski were quite contemporary (the issues of the atom, etc.), and yet the novel was placed as timeless, which enabled the free interpretation of its critical acuteness. Still, the conciliatory, yielding tone of the censor was meant to be only a customary gesture to cover some very pragmatic effects. Ultimately, author's declarations expressed in his letters to the censorship bureau had to be "backed" with appropriate in-text changes. The review quoted before attested to that:

The Author's corrections to one of the most important chapters (...) clearly suggest that it was not about satire on bureaucracy or contemporary satire at all. The Author meant to raise more general issues. The entire book is a depiction of a young person's intellectual experiences. (...) I have to go to Canossa and absolve the Author of sins he did not commit: the second part does not contain a hidden squib on "the times past". The entire story has to be referred to more general issues, a period historical closed for us¹¹.

⁹ For example, the fictional preface to Lem's *Księga Robotów*, which was a part of the work itself, was considered by the censor as a reason to become less suspicious and as encouragement to take it "with a pinch of salt". *Jak szukaliśmy Lailonii*, an opening story for Kołakowski's fairy tales (1960s) also seemed to have a strong significance for the censors since it suggests universal meaning of those stories.

¹⁰ The author himself remarked in the preface: "A work, when it is complete and leaves the writer's study, should not, in my opinion, bear any trace of author recommendations in the form of the so-called introductions or afterwords. The text should speak for itself. Yet, there are situations when a preface is necessary. That is the case with *Młyny Boże*. (...) I tried to show universal problems in all three volumes – problems that preoccupy human minds. Even though they are mostly constant, current and crucial for each generation, it can be easily seen that the events depicted in Book 1 (*Niepokój*) apply to the period before, during and after the World War I. The 2nd Book (*Tyranie*) depicts events during the World War II. In Book 3 (*Zdejmowanie masek*) make Adam, the main protagonist, face the contemporary problems and conflicts". (K. Truchanowski, *Słowo wstępne*, in: *Niepokój*, Warsaw 1961, pp. 5–6).

¹¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 643 (68/57), l. 96.

The “Author’s absolution” and the polite approval of the novel seemed a denial of any considerable importance. In the conclusion to his review, the censor formulated a peculiar and ambiguous conclusion:

I believe that if Truchanowski ever reaches our times, it will not be earlier than in part three. We have enough time, then¹².

That strange remark (it is unclear whether it should be understood in the context of the author’s age, political changes or the expected influence of state ideology on the society) was the first sign of Truchanowski’s neglect, became fully visible in the reviews of the remaining two novels. The second and third parts of the series received only one review each and were handled much more briefly. It was explained by the censor’s (Renata Światycka) conviction that the artistic value of subsequent volumes was dropping and her increasingly stronger impatience to read the difficult book. The following is a fragment of a review of *Tyranie* from 1963:

[The volume – K.M.] is a huge drop of quality. *Niepokój* was difficult but fascinating. *Tyranie* is a rock one cannot dig through. In fact, the entire book (all 457 pages) is reduced to a commentary of the first volume. The author dwells on the same issues concerning Adam’s stay in the city, Courts, the Theatre, etc. (...) This work has, in my opinion, no value. Still, there are no censorship reservations¹³.

Also in the case of the third volume, *Zdejmowanie masek* (1965), the problem of the plot’s placement in time proved to be a key issue. The reviewer noted that in the preface to volume 1, the author said the third volume of *Młyny Boże* would be devoted to contemporary times while in the afterword to volume 3 he explained that the material had grown so much that the overall concept had to be changed: “I shall attempt to depict life and its changes in our times in a new novel series which will be entitled *Mechanizmy* [Mechanisms],” Truchanowski stated. The author of the review commented:

So, contrary to numerous declarations about the content of the third volume, the author still refers to the past. In terms of the main theme and atmosphere of the work, those are a return to the previously published volumes. Adam, the main protagonist, wanders in jester’s crown and a coat, with incense in his hand around courts from which there is no exit displaying his internal disagreement, conducting endless conversations, and commenting on previous conversations and events¹⁴.

¹² Ibidem, p. 97–98.

¹³ AAN, GUKPPiW ref. no. 772 (132/11), l. 96 (104) (double pagination). Review dated 5 Sep 1963.

¹⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 779 (132/22). Date: 22 Feb 1965.

It is possible that the prefaces and afterwords, with commentary to the changes of the novel's plan, were part of the author's intended strategy aimed at fooling censorship by offering an incorrect temporal placement. If that was the case, the strategy proved ineffective in its very principle. Or rather: it was pointless due to the extreme ideological and "philosophical" generalist nature of Truchanowski's novel, its semantic void, hidden behind an overdeveloped network of symbols. No wonder then that each subsequent volume was treated less serious than the previous one. The conclusion to the review of *Zdejmowanie masek*, cited before, read:

The criticism of the social system in this volume is more coherent and stinging than in the second one. Yet, since is the author in the afterword set the story in the past, to the deciphering of individual paragraphs seems redundant. I propose to publish this book without any changes¹⁵.

The censor did regard the criticism as "stinging", but she declined any detailed analysis. She allowed the author to somewhat fall victim to his own strategy: the author's commentary, placing the story in the past (possibly only in order to toy with the censorship) was the only significant cue with which to direct the "stinging criticism" In any way. In fact, the criticism is so veiled and devoid of content that it is insignificant.

* * *

It is difficult to assess the amount of influence the game with censorship had on the shape of *Młyny Boże*. It was not critical, for sure. Therefore, if we can talk about Aesopian language at all, we can do so in a very specific way. Truchanowski's novel is close to a symbolistic variation of "Aesopiness," characteristic of the Young Poland period. It is related to the poetics of Truchanowski's prose, strongly rooted in the aesthetic patterns of Young Poland. The prose seems to be a late child of that early-20th century literature. It was a particular stylistic hybrid in which the grotesque coexisted, not very harmoniously, with the epic concept of the work. The influence of Kafka and Schulz mix with Young Poland mannerism, emotionality, with the type of phraseology and imagery characteristic of the period.

Also, the relationship between that prose and censorship proved to include Young Poland patterns. It represented a particular symbolistic variant of "Aesopiness", which consisted, according to Ryszard Nycz, of a shaping of the "semantic structure of the text such that the Aesopian message became one of the many possible (yet equally weak) complex, yet undefined, interpretations and at the same time fundamentally an unclear or undefined conceptual symbolism of the

¹⁵ Ibidem.

work”¹⁶. The censors’ reviews of Truchanowski’s works quoted without omissions are a testimony to the struggle with such indeterminacy. Initially, it seems to carry serious dangers, as far as state ideology is concerned. However, extended exposure to the prose made the officers disregard the coded, potentially rebellious, ideas considering their hermetic nature, vagueness, lack of strong foundations for any political ideas, or any other, for that matter. In his preface to the first volume, the author himself defined the main issues in the following way: “The most important issue in *Młyny Boże* is the tragedy of existence”¹⁷. The commentary, formulated with utmost seriousness, leads us to the fundamental problem with Truchanowski’s works, suggested in the introduction: the problem of its particular naivety¹⁸.

In his analysis of the negative influence of censorship on the literature of the Young Poland period, Antoni Potocki pointed to the emergence of a special kind of printable literature, marked by trivial ideas, superficiality, vagueness and conventionality of expression¹⁹. It was the same case with Truchanowski’s works: prose so strictly shaped by literary conventions, burdened with vapid symbolism and marked by intellectual indeterminacy that it was devoid of any political blade. It seems that the initial distrust and curiosity of the censors were more associated with the author himself who, a declared opponent of the system, was under strict control up to a certain point. Gradually, though, Truchanowski underwent subsequent phases of acceptance: from a suspicious author carefully read by censors, he became harmless and accepted, even though with no enthusiasm, to eventually, in the early-1980s, fall under the protection of the authorities.

The “Truchanowski’s case” could also be considered as a special kind of “soparnasizm” discussed by Michał Głowiński. It was special because it lacked both the social-political meaning, and pure literary qualities. From today’s point of view, the case is unimportant due to its legible artistic value. However, it offers an interesting preliminary study of censorship, depicting some broader processes and phenomena, i.e. the growing pragmatism of the Control Bureau and, in turn, the growing tolerance for poetics and views contrary to official state ideology, and the slowly intensifying ideological indifference of censorship. “The tragedy of existence” that Truchanowski wrote about in the preface to his novel, categorised as “pessimism” by the censors, could not had expected to be approved by the official state policy, but it was acceptable after 1956, provided its roots were sufficiently “universal” and not current.

¹⁶ R. Nycz., *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury (wykład)*, “Teksty Drugie” 1998, vol. 3, p. 14.

¹⁷ K. Truchanowski, *Słowo wstępne*, in: *Niepokój*, Warsaw 1961, p. 6.

¹⁸ Cf. my paper *Groteska i antropologia w twórczości Kazimierza Truchanowskiego*, “Ruch Literacki” 2010, vol 3.

¹⁹ Cf. R. Nycz, *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury... op. cit.*, p. 13.

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Kajetan Mojsak

Politics, Poetics and "the Tragedy of Existence". The Reception of *Młyny Boże* [the Mills of God] Novel Series by Kazimierz Truchanowski by the Censorship Bureau

(Summary)

The article analyzes the censorship board's reception of Kazimierz Truchanowski's novel cycle *The Mills of the God*, published between 1961 and 1967. The analysis gives an insight into the interesting process of the growing tolerance – and indifference – of censorship board towards this kind of hermetic, non-epic prose: far from the official cultural course, but at the same time not coming into open conflict with it. Review of censors' reception of the subsequent parts of Truchanowski's novel can be seen as a contribution to the history of the so-called "socparnazizm" as well as to the history of the growing pragmatism of the censorship board (and its de-ideologization).

Keywords: Truchanowski Kazimierz, *The Mills of the God*, censorship, censorship towards literature

Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec*

Censorship Towards Czesław Miłosz in Poland in the Fifties after Having Chosen the Emigration

The significant position of Czesław Miłosz in the Polish literary environment shaped after the war caused determined that his voice would be acknowledged as one of the most important in discussions about the condition of poetry and its function towards experiences of occupation¹. It did not change after he chose emigration. Although officially Miłosz's decision was condemned by many critics and poets, the author of *Rescue* and *A Moral Treatise* was still treated as an authority.

To the question, did the breakdown of the communist government happen at the right time, Miłosz responded:

Nie wiem. Ta sprawa była szalenie bolesna, trudna. Myśląc z perspektywy nie wydaje mi się, że wtedy była decyzja jakaś jednoznaczna do powzięcia. Teraz, jak myślę wstecz, jak myślę z perspektywy, to widzę, jak trudno było powiedzieć, co trzeba było zrobić. Ale równocześnie przez cały czas, kiedy byłem w służbie Polski Ludowej, dręczyły mnie wyrzuty sumienia, ponieważ świadomość [...] tego, co się działo, miałem bardzo ostrą, być może ostrzejszą niż większość moich kolegów literatów ze względu na znajomość rosyjskiego i [...] spraw Europy Wschodniej. [...] Po prostu moje zerwanie nastąpiło, kiedy nie mogłem już emocjonalnie wytrzymać po zobaczeniu tego, co się działo w 50. roku w Polsce².

I don't know. This matter was extremely painful, difficult. Thinking from a perspective it doesn't seem to me that then this decision unambiguous to make. Now, as I think back, as I think from a perspective, I can see that it was difficult to say what was necessary to do. But at the same time throughout the time when I was at the

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¹ Cf. among others. A. Fiut, *W stronę Miłosza*, Cracow 2003; J. Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, Cracow 1998; J. Kwiatkowski, *Miejsce Miłosza w poezji polskiej*, in: *Poznawanie Miłosza*, idem (ed.), Cracow 1985.

² Conversation of Robert Miller with Czesław Miłosz ("Głos Ameryki", issue 23–24.04.1982), Instytut Pamięci Narodowej BU1242/81, 1.8.

service of the Polish People's Republic, I was tormented by remorse, because the awareness of [...] what was happening, it was very keen, perhaps even keener than that of a majority of my fellow writers because of my knowledge of Russian and [...] the matters of Eastern Europe. [...] Simply, my breakup happened, when I couldn't emotionally stand it having seen what was happening in Poland in 1950.

The aim of this article will be the presentation of different ways of writing about Miłosz and referring to his works of the fifties, when the censorship did not allow his works and texts dedicated to him to be published. The research material consists documents of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows³, gathered in the Archives of New Acts⁴ – files from the fifties, concerning leading literary and culture journals, as well as social-cultural journals of a regional reach, created on a wave of the October breakthrough, regarding the bibliography of Czesław Miłosz in the fifties. Files of journals include mainly reports from prevention control, reviews of interventions and reviews of oversights and redundant interventions and the so-called signals (the most interesting interventions each year were collected and presented to the censors for training purposes). Furthermore, files including documents of publishing houses have been examined, among others, *Czytelnik*, *Ossolineum*, *Wydawnictwo Literackie*, *Znak*, *Wiedza Powszechna* and religious publishing houses. Apart from the archives of censorship, another important source of knowledge are the files from the archives of the Polish Workers' Party, in which there is interesting information, first of all on the topic of the censorship of non-periodic prints (publishing houses records).

In the records of the GUKPPiW concerning journals from the fifties (including approximately 200 files, containing a few thousand documents) I found several dozen different interventions into texts connected with Miłosz. The critics most who suffered most interventions by the censors in the fifties, which involved removing the name of Miłosz, were Stefan Kisielewski, Jan Błoński, Kazimierz Wyka, Ludwik Flaszen, and Andrzej Kijowski. The least interventions come from 1952–55 because of the then rare attempts at recalling papers in journals. We can find the most in 1956–59, but record number of interventions were recorded in 1958 – a moment of confining censorship after a relatively liberal 1957, when there appeared many texts dedicated to the poet appeared along with many texts (or fragments) by him.

The fundamental meaning for determining the procedural principles with references to Miłosz have the so-called inscriptions concerning his person. Unfortunately, they were not found. They are only preserved in the files of the Polish United Workers' Party lists of positions to be removed from libraries (from 1951

³ Hereinafter I use the GUKPPiW abbreviation.

⁴ Hereinafter I use the AAN abbreviation.

and 1952). Therefore, it is necessary to make an attempt at reconstructing the records through examining specific censor interventions and their justifications and following changes in those processes within the year. We have at our disposal a record taken in the mid-seventies by Tomasz Strzyżewski from the Krakow branch of censorship the copy of *Book of records and recommendations*, but one cannot credibly point out from which period the first records in the book come from and when they were modified as they related to Miłosz. Apart from that it is worth recalling this one known record:

2. In academic and specialist work, diaries, monographs, one can without consultations leave surnames, quotations, report on the output and activity (...) of people” [among those the instruction listed Miłosz – footnote by M.W.Ł.] (...)

a) one should not allow an overestimation of the work by the above-mentioned persons or show them in a too favorable a light.

In publications directly discussing the life and work of one of the above-mentioned people, if it has not been made in the same text – one should abide by the rule that in the preface, afterword or footnote they should give a short profile of the person specifying their position in the past or at present regarding our political system.

In specialist, cultural, literary, social-political press one can leave articles, essays, studies on the mentioned people adhering to the above-mentioned rules.

One should, however, eliminate their names and works’ titles from daily papers, radio and TV, with the exception of critical information⁵.

We know for sure that such a guideline was in force at the time of copying the book by Strzyżewski. Taking into consideration observations made until now in the field of interventions towards Miłosz, I conclude that the remainder of the guideline from the fifties suggests to not allow his work be overestimated and not allow the poet be shown in a favourable way, as well as agreement on critical publications about the poet. Obviously one should be aware of the fact that the guidelines changed, they were modified daily, sometimes overnight, depending on the social-political situation. The paragraph suggesting assigning a negative attitude towards the poet by the government in biographies probably came from 1959 (possibly appearing for the first time in the *Small General Encyclopaedia* PWN). Earlier though, in the period which I am interested in, the different criteria used that depended on the character of the publications did not prove effective – the poet disappeared and re-appeared independently of whether the publications concerned were literary journals or cultural and popular newspapers. Academic works on him could not be written then. It seems helpful to assume an analogy of censorship

⁵ *Książka zapisów i zaleceń Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Warszawie*, in: *Czarna księga cenzury PRL*, Warsaw 1981, pp. 53–54.

actions in similar cases and times. On this premise one can assume that the first guideline for Miłosz could have been similar as the guideline on Andrzej Panufnik, which could be found in the documents of the Poznań department of censorship. It was a short guideline and forbade “publishing his name and works as well as spreading it (performing by artistic, amateur and professional groups)”⁶.

This matter becomes complicated when we realize how instantly the authorities of the Central Committee reacted to the composer’s decision: he stayed in the West on the 31st of July, and already on the 9th of August the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows sent to 16 departments information about this guideline. On the 11th of August the document was registered by the Provincial Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in Poznań with the order to enclose the guideline to the “instructions’ book”. In the case of Miłosz this matter did not go so fast. Three years earlier the Office of Control did not work so quickly; wrestling with internal organisation problems, it had difficulty solving growing political problems with authorities and society resulting from abuses of power during compulsory purchases of cereals, problems connected with the tight international situation, preparations for next year’s elections. Such matters as the escape of a state official, even of a high rank, could in that situation wait. In the preserved documents of the censorship, shorthand records from state briefings (February and June 1951) show that there was chaos and disinformation in the Office of Control. In February 1951, after Miłosz escaped, there was a briefing concerning the protection of state, economic and military secrets⁷. In June, a briefing was organised again, because of a worrying “wave of oversights”. Mikołajczyk, the Director of GUKPPiW, criticised the heads of departments and their officers for oversights, sloppiness and incompetence as well as for redundant interventions. Censors complained about the lack of instructions and their vagueness⁸. There is no reference to the “matter of Miłosz” during either the February or the June conference of censors.

In the situation when the works of Miłosz could not be published, an auxiliary research method is in investigating the reception of works, which – more or less outrightly – referred to his person or work. This method was helpful in the attempt at specifying the time of the creation of the guideline on Miłosz. It proved to be vital in the reception of the collection of poems by Witold Wirpsza entitled *Polemics*

⁶ National Archives in Poznań, Provincial Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows, ref. no. 5, 1.454.

⁷ *Sekretariat Prezesa. Odprawy krajowe 1951; Protokół z krajowej narady z czerwca 1951 roku* [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 421 (vol. V)]

⁸ Mazurek, Head from Katowice, complained: “The thing is that we should be given an instruction prepared in time, meanwhile the Provincial Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows does not receive such help. (...) Present instructions are not adapted to the present situation. We are still having doubts and a number of difficulties in deciding whether we should comment the instruction in this or another way. [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 421 (vol. V); 1.61]

and *Songs*, which opens with *Polemic Treatise* dedicated to Miłosz. A collection of poems is published and reviewed almost at the same time with Miłosz's decision to stay, so we can conclude that the guideline on Miłosz appeared in the **last ten days of May 1951**. Even on the 20th of May, although it happened after the press conference and publication of the well-known article *No* in Parisian "Kultura", the surname of Miłosz appeared in a review neutral towards the poet written by Stanisław Czernik, but two weeks later, on the 3rd of June, a very favourable review for the author of *Rescue* by Kwiryn Poraj was meticulously deleted by the censor⁹. Probably between those dates the guideline was issued. Censor practices are not unambiguous because in the second half of the year the name of Miłosz either appeared or became deleted. Thus, it would be difficult to find a regularity shaping that practice – it cannot be explained by either the place of publication, or sort of journal, in which a text being the subject of an intervention was published, nor the character of the reference towards the poet. The fact that Miłosz's name appeared in journals as late as in autumn can be explained with the problems of control offices – a wave of oversights was happening then. A verdict for the author of *Rescue* sentencing him to be forgotten actually started to be enforced one year after the poet's decision to emigrate, when his books were carefully deleted from the libraries¹⁰. However, it was not the rule because in 1952 references to the poet appeared, although in principle his name was crossed out. In a February article by Bronisław Nowicki *On the poetry of Jan Huszcza*, published in the "Dziś i Jutro" weekly it was deleted twice, when the poet was mentioned as one of the poets belonging to the Vilnius pre-WWII group "Żagary". The omission of the forbidden name of Miłosz in a sense extorted silence in the case of other poets from Żagary, independently of their actual attitude or ideological involvement (Jerzy Zagórski, Jerzy Putrament), also despite the fact that "Żagary" was a leftist journal. Their keeping with the simultaneous removal of the author of *Three Winters* would itself be too significant. Żagary's names remained, though, in different contexts, when they are not compared with the name of the emigre.

In 1953, Miłosz appeared sporadically, which probably resulted from oversights, as to publishing *The Captive Mind*. It was a special moment when the vigilance of censors increased because that position not only surprised national authorities but there also arose a wave of indignation. As a result of further journalists' publications in 1953, authorities deliberately blocked a national public

⁹ It was a pseudonym of Andrzej Biernacki.

¹⁰ *Note on harmful and expired books*, a formal letter of 9.01.52. In enclosure: "List of harmful books", pos. 226. Miłosz Czesław, in a blank "title": all [AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XIX-53, l. 9 and following.]. The list includes 472 positions. Apart from the letter it included a "List of expired books" and "List of books which should be destined to sell in second-hand bookshops" at high prices. Eventually all the books to be cleared in 1952 included 2474 items (some of them, as Miłosz, included all titles).

debate about Miłosz's book, perhaps in order not to hype this topic in the stormy time after Stalin's death at the threshold of the Polish October. The response to Miłosz was postponed for two years. The first attempt was a statement of Tadeusz Drewnowski during the Plenum of the Board of the Main Polish Writers' Union, held on 10-11 June 1955, where there occurred a very distinct – although fairly discreet – idea of the necessity to repair the mistakes of the Stalinist period written about in *The Captive Mind's* concept of an “immanent evil” “in the system”. That contradiction was one of the main disputes between the national critics during the time of the Polish October. The return of the “Miłosz case” in official discussions in journals contributed to a fundamental change of the authorities' policies towards the Polish emigration in the West along with its censorship recommendations. What is more, the person of Miłosz was about to be used deliberately in the repatriation campaign, planned by Polish authorities as a result of Moscow's directives. In August 1955, the “Kraj” Broadcasting Station was founded along with its printed equivalent (Broadcasting Station Newsletter), two institutions that had an impact on the decision about the Polish diaspora. As a fugitive from the country, Miłosz was the subject of an attack campaign exhorting him to come back. In the “Kraj” Newsletter a number of critics made references to interviews and articles. Since the letter was lodged to a foreign addressee, who realized the meaning and the creative activity of the writer in Paris, removing his name and pretending that Miłosz did not exist was pointless. That matter had an impact on national censorship. The guideline was probably then changed to the name of Miłosz: it could be published but first of all in a critical context. It was not by coincidence that Brandys's short story *Before he will be forgotten* opening after years official discussions about Miłosz, was published in September 1955¹¹ – just after the “Kraj” Broadcasting Station started broadcasting. What is interesting, as we find in the archive's files, is that although the Newsletter of the Broadcasting Station did not come out in the Polish market and was subordinated directly to the Ministry of Interior, it was censored by the Audit Office, just as national papers, so it probably fell under the same regulations. The re-emigration campaign then contributed to unlock the guidelines concerning Miłosz.

The first wave of opinions about Miłosz was two-sided: there were – on the one hand – articles coming out in national journals (“Przegląd Kulturalny”, “Po Prostu”, “Nowa Kultura”, “Życie Literackie”, “Dziś i Jutro”), on the other hand – libels and assaults published in the Newsletter of the “Kraj” Broadcasting Station, thus destined for the Polish diaspora. What is more, we can distinguish two main problems trending in those publications: those were first of all critical voices towards *The Captive Mind*, as well as articles condemning Miłosz's attitude and his moral decisions: from the time of war, through the escape and the Parisian period.

¹¹ K. Brandys, *Nim będzie zapomniany*, “Nowa Kultura” IX 1955, issue 38 (September).

Although those views decidedly dominated critical voices, as a result – restriction of the guideline on his name enabled the beginning of a discussion about a writer forbidden so far and allowed voices to come out in his defence, demonstrated by a well-known article by Flaszen *On the difficult artistry of vomiting*¹², in which the author demanded a thorough discussion on the work of *The Captive Mind*'s author. In response to Flaszen's demand the debaters made charges against Miłosz which could be summarized in the question: how one can discuss merits with somebody who is unworthy, immoral man? Because of that came a series of attacks on the poet from the autumn of 1955, intensified from January 1956 (Roman Zimand, Jerzy Putrament, Roman Bratny, Zygmunt Kałużyński), published in national papers, and especially close in significance to the libels of the "Kraj" Newsletter, which allows us to assume that many of the above-mentioned texts were written not because of the internal polemic need of their authors, but rather by order of the authorities, according to the current policy towards the emigration community. A wave of attacks in the Newsletter started with the appearance of the journal and finished at the end of 1956 with a very light article by Andrzej Kuśniewicz.

In statements about Miłosz the tendency to praise his artistic talent dominated, criticising only his ideological attitude. The name of Miłosz had so far rarely been used, although it appeared mainly in the critical context (the poet was still called a traitor). A typical example of that is an intervention into an article dedicated to Miłosz written by Bratny entitled *Second branch of clerks*¹³ – a libel on the poet dressed up in a memoir form, reminding the reader of the matter of Miłosz's Lithuanian passport.

Similarly, in the middle of 1956 censorship cut out favourable references to Miłosz, and removed any inspirations based on his texts. The first positive opinions about the poet appeared, sporadically at first, from the middle of 1956. First it happened by the way of rare attempts to demand national editions of Polish emigration literature. Censorship removed those demands. One should admit that that was consistent during the whole period of the Polish October. Exceptions included a text by Andrzej Barkowicz *Index librorum prohibitorum*¹⁴, which was rejected twice, eventually published in the June issue of "Po Prostu" – admittedly in a very cut version but with a clear demand of "releasing" prohibited material, including the works of Czesław Miłosz.

From the first half of the year references of Miłosz as a poet also appeared, in a manner more easily acceptable by the authorities and the censors they controlled. In the beginning, those were direct references, by the way of discussing other writers. Simultaneously, there was a dispute with *The Captive Mind*, but

¹² L. Flaszen *O trudnym kunszcie womitowania*, "Życie Literackie" 30 X 1955, issue 44.

¹³ R. Bratny, *Drugi oddział klerków*, "Po Prostu" 1956, issue 4.

¹⁴ A. Berkowicz, *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, "Po Prostu" 1956, issue 24.

also with Brandys' short story *Before he will be forgotten*. **In the last quarter of 1956 there occurred a fundamental commutation of censorship, also towards Miłosz.** In autumn one could notice an exceptional debate: the last attack on *The Captive Mind* written by Zygmunt Kałużyński¹⁵ and the first nationwide firm defence of the work by Andrzej Mularczyk and Kazimierz Dziewanowski¹⁶, in addition to an exceptionally neutral article in the "Kraj" Newsletter written by Andrzej Kuśniewicz¹⁷ summarizing the discussion.

In a burst of increasing Polish October the readers in Poland were given a Christmas gift in 1956 of several important texts, which until then could not have been published. The first literary text was a summary written by Włodzimierz Maciąg of a lengthy article (published in a local journal) by Tadeusz Byrski on Miłosz's poetry (a fragment of *The Seizure of Power*)¹⁸ and an article by Zygmunt Lichniak about *The Issa Valley*¹⁹. Then, an important voice was the opinion of Julian Przyboś, the well-respected author, – who appreciated Miłosz's poetry, setting it against the lyrical-doleful emigration creative output of Skamanders.

The year 1957 was from the very beginning a time of unusual presence of Miłosz in national journals, although the majority of his texts were printed in local journals, coming out as a result of the Polish October, as in the Catholic "Tygodnik Powszechny" – not in *strictly* literary weeklies. Papers and anthologies published excerpts of *A Poetical Treatise* and earlier poems, though still on the 22th of January a censor, taking the note off from the "Ziemia i Morze" journal announcing the publication of the *Treatise* excerpts, justified that decision with "a possibility of generating (deletions – note by M.W.Ł.) of this position (according to the official letter of GUKP)". One could notice the uncertainty of control officers and the changing guidelines. In principle, it was forbidden to praise Miłosz for his attitude and socio-political views and advertise too much of his output, but within the space of a few months several lengthy and valuable discussions of his poems came out (Ryszard Matuszewski, Irena Sławińska, Zdzisław Łapiński, Jerzy Kwiatkowski, Jan Błoński, Marian Piechal, Henryk Vogler). Excerpts of both *Treatises* worked then as "winged words" (in the form of quotations or cryp-toquotes) as commentaries on the disputes and public debates of the time. *A Poetical Treatise* was recalled in references to the poetry of the twenties, *A Moral Treatise* – with the skirmishes with Witkacy and existentialism. It was allowed then to argue with Miłosz, criticize him, which did not prevent the authorities from using the poet for propaganda purposes (support for Gomułka), demonstrated when the

¹⁵ Z. Kałużyński, *Makulatura wielkiego konfliktu*, "Nowa Kultura" 1956, issue 41.

¹⁶ A. Mularczyk, K. Dziewanowski, *Wielki konflikt i... makulatura*, "Świat" 1956, issue 47.

¹⁷ A. Kuśniewicz, *Makulatura, historia czy ostrzeżenie*, Biuletyn "Kraj" 1956, issue 49.

¹⁸ T. Byrski, *O Czesławie Miłoszu*, "Słowo Ludu" (Kielce), issue 306 of 24–26 XII 1956.

¹⁹ Z. Lichniak, *Piękno i polityka*, "Kierunki" 1956, issue 32/33 (Boże Narodzenie), p. 11.

January reprint— after censoring — was delivered in the BBC *Letter on elections*²⁰. Miłosz appeared very often as one of the important authors of Parisian “Kultura”, on the wave of relieving censorship towards information dealing with the life of emigrants, even in texts written by Jerzy Kisielewski – a great advocate of contacts with the journal of Jerzy Giedroyc. A moderate presentation of Maisons Laffite and the authors of “Kultura” was acceptable. Censors guarded that the information was not an obvious advertisement for the journal, which still had not debuted in Poland. Miłosz either appeared or was often taken off not because of him but as a representative of the non-divulged literary monthly²¹. Censorship cared also about not suggesting a qualitative advantage of emigrant poems over the national ones.

Important conclusions come from two articles by Leszek Goliński, presenting in the March issue of “Nowiny Literackie i Wydawnicze” Parisian and London emigration communities. In first of them entitled *Hemar, Wiech and holy water*²² censorship cut out the demand of the fast re-publication in Poland of the “outstanding positions” of emigration writers – Witold Gombrowicz and Czesław Miłosz, as the suggestion of abolishing the ban on publishing works by Jerzy Giedroyc and Mieczysław Grydzewski. In the following April issue, an article entitled *Literature of the absent*²³ by Leszek Goliński gave many favourable opinions about Miłosz, including the statement that he “is a star of the first magnitude on the emigration sky”, which the censorship allowed to be published. However, it was forbidden to demand the publication of his works – censorship crossed out *Selected poems* by Miłosz from the previews of books from Wydawnictwo Literackie, expected for the last quarter of 1957 and *Issa Valley*, announced to be published in the first quarter of the following year. In the June review of *Issa Valley* (by Jan Błoński) a censor removed information in the footnote that the Polish edition was expected and excerpts distancing Miłosz’s protagonist from the communist system. One should admit that the censorship was in that topic very consistent during the entire Polish October period.

²⁰ [Cz. Miłosz], *BBC o wyborach w Polsce. Znamienny głos*, “Życie Warszawy” 1957, issue 13; “Dziennik Polski” 1957, issue 14; “Trybuna Robotnicza” 1957, issue 14; “Ilustrowany Kurier Polski” 1957, issue 14; “Sztandar Ludu” 1957, issue 15; “Dziennik Bałtycki” 1957, issue 14; “Express Ilustrowany” 1957, issue 13.

²¹ Censorship removed not only information about Parisian “Kultura” but also about journals subsidized by national government and coming out in the West. One example of a censor’s intervention is a reference of A. Rudnicki (*Pisane w hotelu*, “Nowa Kultura” from 14 XII 1958) that during a visit in Paris he visited the editor’s office of the weekly “published for our money”. The censor justified it as follows: Writing about subsidizing by us a Polish journal, coming out in Paris (...) can bring about its closure as a journal published for the money of foreign country.” [Review of interventions, reviews of oversights 1958–1959 [AAN, GUKPPiW; ref. no. 656 (159/1), 1.169];

²² L. Goliński, *Hemar, Wiech i woda święcona*, “Nowiny Literackie i Wydawnicze” 1957, issue 4.

²³ L. Goliński, *Literatura nieobecnych*, “Nowiny Literackie i Wydawnicze” 1957, issue 7.

From the September issue of “*Twórczość*” an important text by Artur Sandauer was removed. In *Artistic opposition in years 1944–1955*, Sandauer wrote about the negative influence of censorship and the ban on importing journals from the West. The author tried to explain Miłosz’s way of thinking, expressed in *The Captive Mind*, which also could be accepted by censors. Interventions marked on the printing brush pointed out that originally they planned to remove only fragments condemning censorship, but eventually the whole article was removed. In another October issue of “*Twórczość*” fragment of an article by Andrzej Kijowski disappeared, which was a broad reference to the most controversial book of Miłosz. That was a short time when one could write about Miłosz in a favourable way as a writer and artist, but all the attempts at showing the problems of *The Captive Mind*, especially attempts at understanding it were unwelcomed. In the Łódź “*Kronika*” journal (1957 issue 2) published during the Polish October came out a Miłosz’s poem – *You who wronged*, that was unfavourable to the authorities (it was not removed by control Office). That poem was published at the end of a favourable article by Marian Piechal about the poetry of the author of *Rescue*. “*Kronika*” editorial board was probably the only one in the country that tried to publish excerpts from Miłosz’s *The Captive Mind*. Such an attempt was taken in January 1957 and – as a result of the journal’s evaluation by the Central Committee of The Polish United Workers’ Party – could had been one of the reasons for the journal’s liquidation. An interesting archive find is a lengthy and favourable review of *Issa Valley* submitted to “*Chronicle*” by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz – then a young assistant of Łódź Polish Studies. It was an article entitled *Materials to the picture of Europe child* – the broadest among texts so far found dedicated to Miłosz and entirely removed by censorship.

In articles dedicated to the poet in 1957 voices condemning his attitude collided with voices praising his outstanding talent and greatness. **Nevertheless, that year was first of all the year of Miłosz – the poet**, but any voices which tried to explain or specify the meaning of *The Captive Mind* were eliminated by censorship. In autumn the first critical literary text by Miłosz came out after many years – in an article dedicated to Witkacy.

The beginning of 1958 was for the poet still relatively favourable. His name appeared in critical attempts to summarise the poetry written after the October Breakthrough (in discussions about visionary poetry and classical poetry, where the poet is situated on the side of “vision” and on the other time classicism). Nevertheless, the conviction that – irrespective of the divisions ordering his poetry – he was a patron saint of reasonable, intellectual poetry - finally won. Consistently, references to *The Captive Mind* were removed. To sum up the fundamental courses of then censor politics towards Miłosz on the base of interference one can conclude that censorship did not allow any attempts at emphasizing the importance and position of Miłosz as a

poet, writer and thinker. However frequently his name appeared, it did not change the context of its presentation: it was **pushed back from the limelight, and the significant influence of Miłosz on the Polish national literature and marginalising his voice in the most important discussions of the present times were questioned.**

The attitude of censorship to Miłosz was connected with a bigger problem: with the attitude to emigration – in the spring of 1958 restrictions in presentation of the emigrant community tightened. Censorship removed not only, as in 1957, demands on the debut in “Kultura” or “Wiadomości” as publishing post-WWII prohibitions or very favourable evaluations of emigration but all important information about activity of those communities. In the March issue of “Tygodnik Powszechny” information about the critics of the young generation awarded by “Merkuriusz Polski” disappeared (national prize winners were Jan Błoński and Andrzej Kijowski – which is typical, those critics who tried to bring Miłosz back into the Polish books circulation). Removed notes included the jury’s make-up, in which Czesław Miłosz had a seat. The censor justified his removal with a “GUKP order”, which shows that at that time we were dealing with a transitional period: there were new directives from the headquarters, censors consulted many interventions either with chiefs of departments or over the telephone with Central Office. **Miłosz’s name started to be consistently removed from the majority of publications, irrespective of whether it occurred in a negative or positive context.** Examples were two interventions made to texts in the “Twórczość” literary monthly: in the February issue reviews of the book *Mickiewicz In World Literature*. A Symposium Edited by Waclaw Lednicki. (University of California Press) the suggestion about Miłosz as a poet who creatively derived from the tradition was removed, from the April issue, an allusion to *Usurpers* in *Tale on Staff* written by Kazimierz Wyka was removed. The distinct hint of the change of politics of Control Office was another example of an intervention in “Tygodnik Powszechny”. Bronisław Mamoń in a review²⁴ from the visitors’ book *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. Man and artist* (where the Miłosz article was published as well) contained a motto derived from an excerpt from *Moral Treatise*. The motto was removed, which the censor justified with “the last recommendations of GUKP concerning several emigre writers”. That article was written 30 April, therefore **those recommendations must have appeared at the turn of the second quarter of 1958.** The article by Mamoń was either an example of the inconsistency of the Office or the lack of clear directives: the censor removed the motto from Miłosz, but he neither removed Miłosz’s name nor quotations from the poet’s article in the fundamental review text. It is surprising as the removed *Moral Treatise* was a work known from the official publication before Miłosz’s emigration, everybody

²⁴ B. Mamoń, *Człowiek i twórca*, „Tygodnik Powszechny” 1958, issue 18, p. 6.

could recall it without any effort, referring to the previous issue of “*Twórczość*” (what is more, the removed excerpt had been published a month earlier on the first page of “*Wiadomości Literackie i Wydawnicze*” dedicated to Witkacy), though left in the article was a Mamoń poem that came from the emigration collection. Cuts were inconsistent, rarely justified in any reasonable way. It is worth recalling two examples of different censors’ decisions in a very similar situation. Both cases concerned “*Życie Literackie*”: in the June issue the censor removed information about Miłosz as the translator of Eliot’s works, justifying the decision with “known recommendations of the GUKP”, though in the August issue there was a reference that the poet has translated Miron Białoszewski into English. Therefore, it is vital that in the second case, the censor at the very beginning crossed out that information, but it was restored after the intervention of another censor, which was a sign that **under certain circumstances references were allowed**. Those situations must have been not specific enough, as the majority of censors far-sightedly removed everything which appeared regarding Miłosz. Still, it was out of the question to publish any of the Miłosz’s works. Many interesting examples of censor interventions show the exceptional interest of the Control Office in Miłosz, for example, the Catholic “*Tygodnik Powszechny*”, which tried to refer to Czesław Miłosz in many articles by Stefan Kisielewski (Kisiel) and Marek Skwarnicki (Spodek). In 1958, a censor removed from Kisiel’s column a memory sentence about Miłosz (*Jubilee article about „Przekrój”*), justifying, with his own intuitions and “a stand taken finally in this matter by the GUKP”, which confirmed the uncertainty of censors in connection with changes in guidelines²⁵. The censor took also the column by Skwarnicki off, which was initiated with the motto from Miłosz’s poem *Song about porcelain*.

In the last quarter of 1958 censorship seemed to be very careful. In an anthology of patriotic poems prepared by Jan Szczawiej entitled *Our name’s Poland* censors proposed removing Miłosz’s poem *Plain*, and the biographic note on him. The way the biography was constructed shows the attempt at adjusting to the censorship requirements. Szczawiej limited himself to the facts from the poet’s life up to the time of war, thereupon informing that “currently he has emigrated”, which the censor underlined with a red pencil. It was significant also that the order of mentioned poets from group Żagary – Putrament, who because of his stature

²⁵ A characteristic and clearer example of such uncertainty is a suspension in “*Życie Literackie*” in 1958 of an interview with Władysław Broniewski because of distancing of the poet from his poem *Word about Stalin*. The censor justified: “We are sending the interview of B. Drozdowski with Broniewski withdrawn yesterday on GUKP instructions (telephone conversation with comrade Strasser). Reservations to the fragment of the interview concerning *Words about Stalin* underlined.” Having received the response from Headquarters on the intervention card appeared a hand written note: “Allowed to be publish entirely. Krakow has been notified.” Date written with pencil: 15 Jun [AAN, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 521(40/14), 1.103].

should have been listed rather at the end – on account of political reasons were promoted to the beginning. A similar example of an intervention was a poem of Anna Kamińska *Reading Miłosz*, removed by censorship in December 1958, which the poet was going to reprint in the publishing house “Czytelnik” collection of *Selected poems*. The censor’s reason for that was that it was “a poem in the honour of Miłosz”²⁶. It was a crucial comment. It showed that literary sophistication of censors controlling literature was not the rule in those years. The poem by Kamińska was not only a laudatory poem but also a polemic against Miłosz. The censor, explaining the intervention, focussed on the name of the emigre poet.

A particular phenomenon involved the publication of books, which set in the period of bigger liberalization, come out after tightening censorship. The period between permission printing and the book coming out was sometimes six months. In such situations, if the text did not concern a thorny political question, it was not confiscated. Examples included the first volume of *Works* by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (*Poems*), which included *Private letter* with a favourable fragment about Miłosz and *Poetic thing*, where Miłosz appeared in a positive context in the article by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz.

Interventions in 1958 showed more than once the decisive problems in the Control Office. Cuts were inconsistent, rarely sensibly explained. After a relatively liberal 1957 came a time of increasing limitations and chaos. Meaningful testimony on censorship problems but also difficulties with censorship was given at the 9th General Convention of the Polish Writers’ Union in December 1958 in Wrocław, (dedicated in large part to a discussion about censorship). Kisielewski demanded openness and “clear specification of criteria of censorship acting”, paid attention to the lawless policies of censors towards publishing houses using the preventive censorship “for a rainy day” – one removes more than it is necessary and there are no clear rules and limits of these interventions. He also complained about the too assiduous acceptance of censorship by the publishing houses. Among the discontinued books Kisielewski mentioned, among other, *Matter of imagination* by Kazimierz Wyka – essays about poetry withdrawn by the author, after he was told to cross out everything which concerned Miłosz’s works. It recalled also the removal from the publishing plans emigration books of Miłosz: *Selection of poems* and *Issa Valley*. Demanding publishing at least Miłosz’s occupation poems, he testified

I would like to notice the matter of emigration. These criteria are still changing. Once it is allowed to mention Gombrowicz or Miłosz, another time it does not. If there are 8 millions of Poles in exile, dissociating completely from their output and

²⁶ Comparison of interventions made by the GUKP in non-periodical publications 1 X–10 XII 1958 [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 591 (60/2), 1.6].

books would be a suicide politics, it is against the reason of state of Polish People's Republic and everything²⁷.

Despite numerous demands at the December convention of the Union, in the end not much was achieved. After negotiations with the Office Wyka published in 1959 a collection of essays about literature entitled *Thing about imagination* without a sketch about Miłosz (it did not come out until the second edition of the book, in 1977). A typical example – on the one hand – of writers' helplessness towards censorship, on the other hand, the schizophrenia and helplessness of the officials working in that office was an example of the intervention in the article by Jan Błoński *Theatrical Criticism of Peiper*, set to be published in the "Dialog" theatre journal in 1959. In that article the censor removed the first sentence – a quotation from *Poetical Treatise* by Miłosz. It is interesting that in the final version the quotation remained with the author's name, but the title of the work which it came from... was removed. The question is, with which a censor's note one could justify such practice – becomes opened.

Despite the insistent attempts of authorities and censors, the absent poet was present to a bigger extent than could be seen from the statistics of his publications in the fifties (three short fragments of *The Seizure of Power* – 1956; *Ode* from *Poetical Treatise*, several poems and translations in press and anthologies, a sketch about Witkacy – 1957). His image was created by various forms, using strategies of silence and identification in the comments of literary critics and journalists: summaries, reviews, columns, literary diary, satirical texts, even parodies of poems²⁸, however first of all works of the next generation young writers studying with difficulty the early and emigration works of the *The Captive Mind's* author.

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²⁷ Shorthand record from the session of the 9th General Convention of the Polish Writers' Union held on the 15th and 16th December 1958 in Wrocław (AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XVIII-180, l. 33–34).

²⁸ Cf. K. Wyka, [Czesław Miłosz, *W pogardzie*], in: idem, *Duchy poetów podsłuchane*, Cracow 1959, pp. 100–101; M. Piechal, [Czesław Miłosz, *Pomnik Trytona*], in: idem, *Diabeł za skórą*, Warsaw 1959, p. 63.

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Marzena Woźniak-Labieniec

Censorship Towards Czesław Miłosz in Poland in the Fifties after Having Chosen the Emigration

(Summary)

This article shows the outline of problems connected with censoring Czesław Miłosz’s literary output in Poland in the 1950s, when the poet breaks off with the national government and chooses political asylum in France, becoming an émigré. The article looks into (in the space of decade) the periods of particularly tightened control towards Miłosz, shows how the censorship was tightening and relaxing when it came to his name. In the Polish October several poems and an excerpt from the novel *The Seizure of Power* was published, though – despite publishing advertisements – none of the poet’s books came out.

Keywords: Czesław Miłosz, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature, literary life after 1945, literary criticism

Censorship as a Taboo during Political “Thaw”

Already in January 1946, during a briefing of the chiefs of Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (GUKPPiW), it was stressed that it was necessary to uphold the prestige of the censor and the entire Bureau¹. One of the methods for fulfilling this proposition was to remove from any publication all references not only to the activities of GUKPPiW but also to its existence. However, concealing censorship's existence was mainly a result of the policy of the state which strived to maintain the illusion of democracy. This situation remained unchanged throughout the first post-WWII decade, as confirmed by hundreds of examples found in censorship documents.

The situation started to change slightly during the thaw. In the late-1955, there appeared the first signs of cracks in the wall of silence surrounding the Bureau's servient attitude to the Party. For a limited time, censors became more liberal, and one might draw from their mode of marking the interventions that many of them began to second guess their decisions. An example was an extensive review by Flaszen, published in *Życie Literackie*, of Lem's trilogy entitled *Czas nieutracony* [Time Not Lost] published therein. *Hospital of the Transfiguration*, the first part of the series, was supposed to be published in 1949 by the Gebethner & Wolf Publishing House but it was halted by the censorship². Already in the first paragraph Flaszen asked why so much time had to pass between the completion of the book and its publication:

The typescript was tossed between the desks of publishing houses for five years (...) begging editors for mercy and understanding, occupying the heads and minds of internal reviewers. (...) What held the hand of publishers for so long from signing the book's release for print? What terrible venom would Lem pour into the law-abiding nature of the civil frame of mind?

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¹ AAN (the Archive of New Records), GUKPPiW, ref. no. 421/vol. 2, l. 103.

² Lem's struggles with censorship at the beginning of his creative life were discussed in detail by Kamila Budrowska, cf. idem, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009, pp. 148–178.

He did not refer to the activities of censorship directly but rather constructed his text in such a way for the typical reader of a literary journal to understand that it was censorship to which he was referring. Further, there was an ironic fragment removed by the first censor:

Mental asylum? There are no such places. Decadent love for psychopathology, bourgeois peculiarities, atypical. Violation of law and order by national security institutions? There were none. Meditation over life and death? Indecisiveness of the intelligentsia, there is no God, there is no soul, there is only the class struggle, there is no death. World-view anxiety? We know everything, the world is mere matter, thought – **highly-organised matter. Unhappy love? There is no such thing. Socialism solves all human personal problems. Moral question marks? There are none and there cannot be any, morality can only have objective criteria. And on top of that decadence, psychologism, naturalism, formalism, aestheticism, behaviourism, free indirect speech, metaphysical murkiness, bourgeois putridity. Secretly: oh, how great and deep this is, and how bold, and what excellent psychological analyses! An in an undertone: dangerous, spreading confusion in the minds of simple readers. Decision: do not publish³.**

Even though the author again refrained from stating any specific institution responsible for rejecting the book (he only reconstructed a certain mode of thinking), the censor considered that fragment as offensive, thus justifying the intervention:

The reason why the above paragraph was removed was its ironic attitude towards the previous period, in which Flaszen perceived only some wrong aspects, which included the falseness of certain operating criteria and the forms of thinking not only within literature and arts, but also in political life. The destructive nature of this also lies in the fact that all the indicated flaws Flaszen utters in one gulp⁴.

That censor defined the intervention as favourable (mind you: not “**necessary**” anymore but only “favourable”), while the second control officer defined it as “**redundant–nosy**”. **Eventually, the removed fragment was replaced with a tempered one, though carrying a high emotional load:**

No, I absolutely cannot fathom how it could have happened that *Czas nieutracony* became a publishing problem. I somewhat know why, but I cannot understand that. I do not. The nuances of hardened doctrine-defined justifications vanished; what is

³ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 412 (37/7), l. 97.

⁴ Ibidem.

left is pure nonsense, a blend of ridiculous theoretical tricks. We should not try to understand nonsense because all we will get is dread. If we do not understand it, that's good as it is a certain sign that we ourselves are already outside of it⁵.

Flaszen highlighted how the delay in the publication negatively affected the novel's reception. He stressed that if it been published right after it was written, it would have had been a hit; perfectly matching the contemporary debate on the schematic manner in the behaviour of his opponents. Today it seems an outdated “fossil from a past era”⁶.

Six months later, the June issue of *Nowa Kultura* included a very similarly constructed review (of *Rojsty* by Konwicki this time) by Roman Zimand. The article's title itself was significant: *Dlaczego nie osiem lat temu?* [Why not eight years ago?]. Zimand wrote about the so-called drawer novels (e.g. he revisits Lem's *Time Not Lost*). His argumentation moves to show how much the novel *Rojsty* had lost while lying in the drawer, how much more interesting and current it would had been if it had been published in the late 1940s. He also wrote directly about censorship:

“(…) using this book as an example I wish to trace, to catch red handed that system of thinking which delayed the publication of the novel début by eight years.

(…) the main reason lied in the actual phrase “Vilnius Home Army”. **The practical assumptions** of contemporary propaganda were as follows: do not speak about difficult issues. Pretend they do not exist. And the issue of Lithuania-Belarus land must have been a rather difficult one⁷.

Zimand referred to such an approach as the “Great Ostrich” approach (to bury one's head in the sand), behind which was the intention: let us avoid painful issues, let us wait, maybe in 10 years' time people will no longer be interested in the problem (when the readers “will have the same attitude to the Home Army guerrilla squads in the Vilnius region as to the Wallonia separatists”), then we will consent to *Rojsty*'s publication.

Consider how Zimand referred to the problems: he did not write about the Polish United Workers' Party or the Control Bureau, instead he used generalisations (the contemporary “**system of thinking**”) or **metaphors** (“**the Great Ostrich**”). Nonetheless, both critics drew readers' attention to an important problem: how, by considerably delaying the publication of controversial texts, the censor's control and interventions caused the books to miss their time. Many of the works halted in such a way never again saw the light of day as either the only copies of

⁵ L. Flaszen, *Czas rzeczywiście nieutracony*, “*Życie Literackie*” 1955, issue 50 (11 XII), p. 7.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ R. Zimand, *Dlaczego nie osiem lat temu?*, “*Nowa Kultura*” 1956, issue 25 (17 VI), p. 6.

typescript were returned by the Bureau or, after many years had passed, when they could finally be published, their authors themselves decided not to do that as they understood their works had ceased to be current.

Less than two weeks after the publication of Zimand's article the Warsaw censorship Bureau received an article by Andrzej Braun submitted with *Nowa Kultura* bearing the blustering title: *Na jakim świecie żyjemy?* [What kind of a world do we live in?] Braun drew readers' attention to yet another problem associated with the operations of censorship which distorted any debate by hindering free exchange of views. He also refrained from identifying the institutions responsible for the situation and this time used spiritualist vocabulary:

Who is guilty? Some elusive spirits co-editing our articles. Yet another example of the mysterious witchcraft, secret forms of discussion and clashes of different views which when printed take the form of utter mess, imposing somebody else's opinions, an anonymous backstage confusion of the readers.

Dear comrade editor. I wish to protest against the influence of anonymous forces, which make writers liable, which hide underneath the shade of their names, against the supernatural practices of faceless decision-making. I wish to protest against forcing me to feel solidarity with a sentence which is not mine, to putting me in a difficult and de-mysticised situation of discussions in someone else's name. I wish to protest against the unfair charges which incriminate me which are a result of a misunderstanding. In the name of lawfulness, clarity of debate and common sense⁸.

Initially, in the report card, the censor did not delete this rather strong fragment but only marked it on the side with a vertical red line as if he was considering whether to delete it. Eventually, the article was edited and the title was toned down (from a title suggesting that the world we live in is not the best one there is to a title criticising not the reality but politics: *Politics – a dirty matter*). Interestingly enough, after being edited the article does not refer directly to harming the debate, yet the censor does, surprisingly (probably as a result of an oversight), allow the name of the Bureau to be stated, though it appears between an accumulation of spiritualist metaphors while the censor's desk seems as a rotating table during a ghost summoning session:

“The sleep of reason produces monsters”. So many monsters have been born that they have blacked out the sun over our motherland (...) We wish to break away from the danger of the Middle Ages repeating themselves, from mythology and magic, from inquisition, exorcisms, degrees of initiation and witch trials. (...) We are still under the influence of those magical articles. One of those is a principle that anything that

⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 485 (38/14), l. 56.

has not been said, does not exist. And that said in the public sense, p r i n t e d. Hilari-ous, isn't it? – and yet... The fact that it applies to facts, that people know about it, they think, they talk among themselves, that we can all see that means nothing. In these policies human thought is not something to be considered. We make our agree-ments in silence. We make fools of each other. (...)

For example, following the view of the world presented in printed publications (ex-cluding the phone book) one could assume that the Press Control Bureau, i.e. the so-called censorship, does not exist in our country. The spirit has not yet materialised and only through the fragmented progress of sentences in some articles does it indi-rectly reveal its existence and activity. If the reader finds at this point of the column proof that something is missing, she or he should understand: thus spoke the float-ing table so that the hit dog hollered. Jokes? – yes, jokes. But wouldn't it be better to instead of hiding the existence of some of our institutions which are supposed to support the revolution openly admit they exist and overtly analyse how they serve it⁹.

To support his position and appease censors Braun referred to. Lenin, who made a juxtaposition of free revolutionary literature against bourgeois literature, which concealed its servient role towards the class of owners. Braun indicated the danger of expanding the themes banned under the pretence of maintaining state or military secrets. Thus, the silence surrounding abuse, theft, wastefulness and violence is justified.

The act of referring to the ideologists of the new faith was a common jour-nalistic trick which was utilised to put control bureau officers off guard. A similar trick was used two months later by Julian Przyboś, who directed the sting of Marx-ism towards Socialist realism and the ridiculed slogans still lingering, regardless of the thaw, in literary journals. Przyboś stated that when the times demand grand journalism the voices of **“minimalistic fixer-bureaucrats” are not enough. Marx-ism was “the most critical research focus that does not accept any fixed truth un-less it is the truth of continuous variation of that which incessantly changes while it exists”**¹⁰. Marx's ideals did not, however, seem a sufficient justification as the censor “shreds” the text removing fragments that reveal not only the power of the censors but also their incompetence (removed fragments are struck out):

~~Dictated, passed, binding, sole! Socialist realism was not a trend or, as it was propa-gated, a creative method, socialist realism was a political and censorship supervision over literature, it was pressure (...), a “stage” tactics, and the tactics were defined by Party officers. They could just as well have the same idea about literature and art as a chicken about pepper, but if only they were positioned high enough, there was~~

⁹ “Nowa Kultura” 1956, issue 27 (1 VII), p. 2.

¹⁰ J. Przyboś, *Dyskusja...*, “Nowa Kultura” 1956, issue 36 (2 IX), p. 3.

no appealing their sentence (Was the banned Lament papierowej głowy by Andrzejewski even released in print?)¹¹

The direction of the intervention is something worth noticing. The censor removed the expression “Party officer” and did not allow him to be accused of incompetence. He replaced the ad personam reference with a much broader and non-personal reference writing of “bureaucratic pressure” exerted on writers “in order for them not to even dare think differently than as it was required by the tactics of the ‘stage’¹². The censor was able to leave many strong accusations (thus creating a type of a safety valve) as long as they were directed towards anonymous non-personal forces or when the GUKPPiW was blamed for the interventions, not other decision-making entities, which is visible in the following fragment left by the censor:

Any debate in sections was not possible, there applied the specific “baitism”, i.e. waiting for someone to carelessly reveal themselves with some idea and a collective abetting against the victim. (...)

Therefore, sections were to function as the first filter of the multilayer system of censorship; union journals were the second, book publishing houses the third (sometimes the order was reverse: what was allowed in a book was later halted by the editorial censorship filter), and Press Control was the fourth. The most important function of an editor-in-chief was to fulfil the recommendations of the propaganda bureau. Bureaucratisation of literature was becoming a fact; the more zealous writers transformed into propaganda bureau officers, becoming even more official, and by having in their hands the Union board and managing journals they became untouchable¹³.

Interestingly enough, when the censor read about the consecutive levels of control: ZLP (Polish Writers’ Union) divisions, the publishing house, and editorial censorship, he was not alarmed. However, when there was a mention of the fourth level: control of press, seeing that it referred to an institution he himself represented, he carefully marked the fragment underlying it in red. He eventually decided not to intervene, though, maybe because the allusion was not developed further and Przyboś returned to accusing the level of magazine editorial boards and the management of ZLP.

In the autumn of 1956, under the influence of political events, there was an increase in the number of demands for freedom of speech, usually removed, par-

¹¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 485 (38/14), l. 36–37.

¹² J. Przyboś, *Dyskusja o związku literatów*, p. 7.

¹³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 485 (38/14), l. 37.

ticularly from magazines – of Party institutions or literary journals – of ZLP institutions, such as a fragment of an article by Ważyk in *Nowa Kultura*, a in which the names of the Bureau and a demand for lifting censorship was removed¹⁴:

Freedom of speech and freedom of literary creation will never be guaranteed unless the Sejm issues a clear press act in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and UKPPIW is abolished¹⁵.

The demands echoed and were some of the main points during the ZLP Convention between November and December 1956. Many of the participants expressed their strong opposition towards censorship. The press comments and reports from the Convention published at that time show that the censors left the information that writers defended “freedom of speech” but usually removed any evidence of the fact that they also demanded censorship be lifted and the Control Bureau be closed. Thus, the more general expressions not directed towards any specific institutions or persons stood a better chance of being published. An example of this was a series of four articles published in “*Express Poznański*” in December 1956 devoted to remarks on the Convention (“*Pozjazdowe wrażenia i refleksje*” I–IV)¹⁶. In the above-mentioned articles as well as many other published in the second half of 1956, also after the Convention, censorship often allowed suggestions to expand the contacts with emigrants, Paris-based in particular, and demands for the removal of prohibited items. Demands for the national permit for the distribution of Paris-based *Kultura* was deleted consistently. An article by Zbigniew Florczak from late-October 1956 in which the censor proposed to replace the demand to offer *Kultura* a national distribution permit with the proposal for a “wider reach in the country” was symptomatic. Once again: it seemed to mean the same thing but the expression was so general that it did not require any specific changes on the part of the authorities. Florczak expressly wrote about emigration and the London and Paris communities. He mentioned the names of emigre writers while referring to the Paris-based *Kultura*, he wrote about a visible change in the relationship between the country and the emigrants, and about a less restricted exchange of thoughts, and even disputes. He did not fail to criticise the community stating that it was not able to follow the changes in the country (he considered contemporary national journalism as something

¹⁴ A. Ważyk, *Dyskusja o związku literatów*, “*Nowa Kultura*” 1956, issue 42 (14 X).

¹⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 485 (38/14), l. 18.

¹⁶ E. Pauksza, *Mądrość i bezkompromisowość [Pozjazdowe wrażenia i refleksje (I)]*, “*Express Poznański*” 1956, issue 287 (5 XII), p. 2; *Największym wrogiem – tandeta*, [Pozjazdowe wrażenia i refleksje (II)], “*Express Poznański*” 1956, issue 288 (6 XII), p. 2; *Sprawy zawodowe*, [Pozjazdowe wrażenia i refleksje (III)], “*Express Poznański*”, issue 289 (7 XII 1956), p. 2; *Zginęły uprzywilejowania*, [Pozjazdowe wrażenia i refleksje (IV)], “*Express Poznański*” 1956, issue 290 (8 XII), p. 2.

of a much higher level than emigre journalism), yet he demanded a distribution permit for *Kultura*:

To begin with, I propose that a truly good Polish emigre magazine, the Paris-based *Kultura*, should be allowed in the country ~~with an official entry~~. (...) ~~If our censorship thinks that there still are any issues concerning Polish affairs that should be kept secret, it is a huge mistake on the part of censorship~~¹⁷. (...)

Secondly, the *Kultura* team, as one might realise, takes its didactic mission seriously and in the event of ~~receiving a nationwide publication permit~~ [instead the censor proposed: “a broader access to the country”] will not risk the embarrassment of any propaganda excesses.

The post-censorship “touch-up” was far less “demanding”:

To begin with, I propose that a truly good Polish emigre magazine, the Paris-based *Kultura*, should be allowed in the country. (...).

The *Kultura* team, as one might realise, takes its didactic mission seriously and in the event of receiving a broader access to the country shall not risk the embarrassment of any propaganda excesses¹⁸.

The time of political thaw was a time when journals began to include many topics consistently removed by censorship in previous years. Including those “dangerous” ones which were associated with the functioning of GUKPPiW: the problem of a continued hold on book issues, the so-called “drawer novels”, the need to release prohibited items and the issue of the relationships between the country and emigrants, Paris-based in particular. Thanks to the many changes, in censorship instructions, which was a result of relaxing the political hold, many valuable voices were able to appear, particularly in the second half of 1956. Such a censorship policy was possible in the following year of the thaw as well, though it was not always fulfilled consistently, all the way until 1958 when censorship increased considerably and censors removed all demands allowed during the thaw.

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Marzena Woźniak-Labieniec

Censorship as a Taboo during Political “Thaw”

(Summary)

During political “thaw”, in years 1955–1956 in the People’s Republic of Poland, it write in newspapers about themes banned earlier. One of such many theme formerly banned was censorship (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows). Journalists wrote about books banned by censorship, prohibited publications and black-listed writers, whose books had removed from libraries and destroyed. Situation is changed in 1958 – it is not allowed to write again about existence and activity of censorship

Keywords: political “thaw” in years 1955–1956, People’s Republic of Poland, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature

Agnieszka Kloc*

“There Aren’t any Dwarfs; They Got out in Time”. Censored Image of the Home Army in Polish Poetry in 1956–1958

Beginning in the late-1940s, Stalinist propaganda in the People’s Republic of Poland tried to eliminate any positive memories of the Home Army. A breakthrough occurred in 1956, marked by the censorship’s approval on 11 March 1956 to publish in *Po Prostu* an article entitled “Na spotkanie ludziom z AK” [Meeting the people from the Home Army] by Jerzy Ambroziewicz, Walery Namiotkiewicz and Jan Olszewski, which indicated the problem of former Home Army soldiers who, after being persecuted for many years because of their pasts, found themselves in a society being re-shaped by a new political situation that had altered the existing situation¹. The initial short comments by state officials indicated some interest in the mentioned issue by noticing the “Home Army tragedy”² and already in May increased interest in the Home Army was also visible in literary journals. A series of extensive articles were published in *Życie Literackie*³ by Władysław Machejek, a former poviát secretary of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR), and discussion sessions even led to former Home Army soldiers being given a chance to speak out⁴, of course under the supervision of the censorship bureau⁵.

Printing any articles which suggested the history of the Home Army had been falsified and that literary texts discussing the organisation were seized was prohibited unconditionally (as justified by a censor: “considering their spiteful

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¹ J. Ambroziewicz, W. Namiotkiewicz, J. Olszewski, *Na spotkanie ludziom z AK*, “Po prostu” 1956, issue 11 (11 Mar), p. 7.

² *O czym mówiono na XIX Sesji Rady Kultury i Sztuki*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 15 (8 Apr), p. 1.

³ Some engaged in polemics with Machejek by referring to, i.a. the false accusations he made against the Home Army leadership and faking historical sources. Censorship was most diligent in prohibiting the latter accusation from reaching the general population. W. Machejek, *Podziemne Państwo AK*, “Życie Literackie”, 1956, issue 21 (20 May), pp. 6–7; W. Machejek, *Wróg Nr 1*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 22 (27 May), p. 2; W. Machejek, *Wróg Nr 2*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 22 (27 May), p. 3; AAN, GUKPP, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 93.

⁴ *Dyskusja o AK i partyzantce*, “Życie Literackie” 3 Jun 1956, issue 23 (228) p. 2.

⁵ AAN, GUKPiW, ref. no. 470 (37/22), l. 20 [43].

tone and destructive focus”⁶). During the political thaw changes of 1956, there began to appear poetic texts which discussed the Home Army theme more extensively, even presenting it from previously prohibited perspectives. At this point it is worth mentioning that a general result of the changes occurring in the Polish poetry was higher exposure of demands for the truth and moral consideration, which had often been curbed by the fear produced when facing the new social reality⁷. Therefore, the initial “thaw” texts related to the previously banned theme had to be presented in terms of the poet’s cognitive dissonance, thus taking the form of a compromise between the internal need to express oneself and the existing political situation, which translated to a large extent as self-censorship. That is why it is important to consider not only the methods of influence and defining the scope of content approved by the censorship institution when analysing the **“game” waged between the poet and the censor, but also the attitudes of the authors**, who often were former Home Army soldiers.

Central guidelines developed for state institutions, which were discussed, for example, during the 3rd Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR), were supposed to, on the one hand, condemn the earlier doctrine-based policies and authoritarian methods of influencing creators, and on the other to shape the “progress” in relations with artists by inspiring their vision through free debate⁸. Therefore, even though censorship decreased the intensity of their influence in the period discussed, the so-called **“Home Army problem”** remained a theme subject to particular control, but the interventions varied in terms of their depth⁹. From that point of view, texts were divided into three groups:

1. Texts which were approved without requiring any changes or with alterations that did not influence their interpretation and which were not associated with the theme of the Home Army;

2. Texts which were changed through deletions (negative censorship) or inclusion (positive censorship) of fragments which influenced the general meaning of the composition or the reception of specific elements or facts;

3. Texts which were halted without an approval for publication.

The archive records of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (GUKPPiW) constitute the source material for this study, i.e.: censor reviews,

⁶ That was the justification behind the halting of an article by T. Hołuj entitled *Drażliwy temat literatury* [Literature’s sensitive subject] which was supposed to be published in “*Życie Literackie*” 26 Jun 1956 (AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 470 (37/22), l. 25 [38]).

⁷ J. Galant, *Odmiany wolności. Publicystyka, krytyka i literatura polskiego Października*, Poznań 2010, p. 244.

⁸ B. Fijałkowska, *Polityka i twórcy 1948–1959*, Warsaw 1985, p. 288.

⁹ The depth of censorship interventions was associated with the degree of modifications and the resulting differences between the versions reported to the censorship bureau and the final form of the published item.

preventive control reports, print permit applications and summaries of interventions in a specific year collected in the Archives of New Records (AAN). Furthermore, the verification of the contents of the archives based on published books and literary journals proved important for formulating the study’s conclusions.

* * *

First, it should be stressed that the first group of texts consisted of poems which had not been found to directly relate to the Home Army, i.e. they did not include neither the name or the abbreviation (AK). Considering the popularity at this time of Aesopian language, a thesis has been formulated stating that the poems quoted herein, apart from their commonly known universalistic reading, may include concealed, “at a depth” meanings accessible to only the initiated, including some allusions to the theme of the Home Army.

Those poems can be found in collections which reached the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows: Zbigniew Herbert’s *Chord of Light* (Apr 1956), A. Ziemny’s *Teraz i zawsze* [Now and Forever] (Apr 1956), Zbigniew Herbert’s *Hermes, Dog and Star* (Apr 1957), J. Przyboś’ *Tools of Light* (Mar 1958), J. Popowska’s *Wiersze* [Poems] (Apr 1958).

Chord of Light, Herbert’s début collection, which received a positive though laconic and generalistic censor review in April 1956, did not raise any censorship doubts. However, a year later, in a collection entitled *Hermes, God and Star* (3185 copies), censors intervened, deleting three lines which did not refer to the Home Army¹⁰. Nonetheless, it is worth examining closely the output of a poet who was associated with the underground activities of the Home Army¹¹, from the perspective of an author who used the so-called Aesopian language¹², which flourished in the literature of the “thaw” period.

In Herbert’s early works in particular, one might find, as Mariusz Zawodniak stressed, not only numerous recollections of the past but also many references to

¹⁰ K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009, p. 57.

¹¹ The degree of Herbert’s affiliation and his position in the Home Army remain unclear. According to his wife, he did not participate in armed efforts considering his young age (at the outbreak of WWII he was 15), but he did, to some extent, identify himself with the underground army. Moreover, certain facts in his biography do suggest his strong anti-communist attitude. It is worth mentioning that after graduating from high school he studied Polish at the secret John Casimir University in Lviv for a short period of time and he knew his colleagues’ underground pseudonyms. J. Łukasiewicz, *Herbert*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 19–23; A. Hejman, *Herbert Zbigniew*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), vol. 3, Warsaw 1994, pp. 230–231; *Pan Cogito zawsze wolny* (an interview by A. Franaszka with Katarzyna Herbert, the poet’s wife) “Gazeta Wyborcza”, issue 222, 22–23 Sep 2012; www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl/Archiwum/1,0,7649968,20120922RP-DGW,Pan_Cogito_zawsze_wolny.html [accessed on: 22.11.2012].

¹² K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

images of forests, trees, etc., which might indicate not only the presence of recurring motifs and metaphors, but also the previously mentioned Aesopian symbols or keywords. During the WWII occupation, the forest often served as a place for secret meetings of the members of the Home Army, while after WWII it was the last haven for anti-communist partisan forces. At the same time, the everyday language used by the Party and its supporters included expressions reflecting the propaganda offensive, such as “the forest gangs” or “those from the forest” while during the amnesty period they would talk about “returns from the forest”¹³. Additionally, according to Jerzy Świąch, even during the WWII occupation poets used a special coded “occupation language” formed on the basis of spoken Polish, which, using certain cultural codes¹⁴, was understandable only to a selected group of people¹⁵. The more obvious paths connecting the code with a given group, included common experiences, mutual relations, a feeling of solidarity and self-definition, which in the case of people affiliated with the Home Army must have been especially important considering its underground nature, and usage of its own “coded” system of meanings (created purposefully to protect). Those codes were virtually inaccessible for people outside the group or the next generation who did not experience the same events and did not possess the semantic or factual “memory apparatus” necessary for interpreting certain content. It should be stressed, though, that the time when Herbert’s first collections reached GUKPPiW was a time of the general loosening of censorship, which meant lower attention among censors to possible message coding and, in turn, the scope of use of Aesopian language.

Many poems in the *Hermes, Dog and Star* collection quite clearly refer to Herbert’s Home Army past, e.g. the keyword: *forest*, which as early as in the WWII occupation poetry was associated with a space specific for the experience of partisan fighters¹⁶. A poem entitled *A Life*, where the existence of the protagonist depends on the recollections about the dead, reads:

(...)
 na podwórzu
 gdzie bawili się chłopcy
 wbiegli uzbrojeni mężczyźni
 i rozpoczęła się łapanka
 ci którym udało się

(...)
 into the schoolyard
 where boys were playing
 armed men came running
 and a game of catch began
 those who were able

¹³ M. Zawodniak, *Herbert parokrotnie*, Toruń 2011, pp. 116–127.

¹⁴ In sociology, the notion of a culture code is associated with symbolism and the existence of signs (including words) which can be interpreted only by the “initiated”. Moreover, the decoding knowledge forms in the society in an anonymous and spontaneous yet not always coherent way, are often associated with a specific group. M. Golka. *Socjologia kultury*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 45–46.

¹⁵ J. Świąch. *Poeci i wojna. Rozprawy i szkice*, Warsaw 2000, pp. 42–43.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

zbiec do lasu	to run into the wood
bawili się dalej	went on playing
w żandarma i zbójów	cops and robbers ¹⁷

The general and pejorative expression regarding the *robbers*, i.e. partisan fighters, did not cause the censor to react, but considering the poet’s experiences the reference to the so-called “forest troops” of the Home Army¹⁸ seems quite probable.

Compositions regarded then as prose poetry, some of which appear to be created for children, are an interesting phenomenon in the *Hermes, Dog and Star* collection. The stylistic device, one of the strategies of Aesopian language, of using children’s poetry as a tool for delivering an allegoric message for adults was used by poets such as Herbert who even introduced Aesop into one of his compositions (*The Wolf and the Lamb*¹⁹). Allegory was derived from a dichotomy of worlds. One world empirically available to all and another world with a “depth” accessible to just the initiated. Thus, the detailed story presented by the poet or writer exemplified general phenomena. The additional allegoric nature was related to the method of presenting certain ideals by using motifs and items as figures evoking notions not directly related to the text²⁰. Two compositions in the collection deserve particular attention. In the prose piece entitled *Dwarfs*:

Krasnoludki rosną w lesie. Mają specyficzny zapach i białe brody. Występują pojedynczo. Gdyby się dało zebrać ich garść, ususzyć i powiesić nad drzwiami – może mielibyśmy spokój.	Dwarfs grow in the forest. They have a peculiar smell and white beards. They appear alone. If a cluster of them could be gathered, dried, and hung over the door – we might have some peace ²¹ .
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In *Forest*:

Ścieżka biegnie boso do lasu. W lesie jest dużo drzew, kukułka, Jaś i Małgosia i inne małe zwierzątka. Tylko	A path runs barefoot through the forest. In the forest there are a lot of trees, a cuckoo, Hansel and Gretel, and other
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¹⁷ Z. Herbert, *Hermes, Dog and Star*, Warsaw 1957, p. 80.

¹⁸ Not only Home Army troops operated in the areas surrounding Lviv but also Soviet guerrilla forces. However, if one used Herbert’s biography, it would seem quite improbable that he would address his poem on wartime experience to anyone other than the Home Army, with which he was affiliated and which became a metaphor of the nation’s wartime resistance. Even if one attempts to interpret *partisan forces* in this fragment as a general phenomenon, it seems to miss the message of the entire poem which emphasises brotherhood, the tragic nature of events, and the need to reject any recollections about the dead when confronting the contemporary world.

¹⁹ Z. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

²⁰ W. Tomasik, *Alegoryczność*, in: *Słownik realizmu...*, pp. 5–9.

²¹ Z. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

krasnołudków nie ma, bo wyszły. Jak się ściemni, sowa zamyka las dużym kluczem, bo jakby się tam zakradł kot, toby dopiero narobił szkody.

small animals. There aren't any dwarfs; they got out in time. When it gets dark the owl locks the forest with a big key, because if a cat got in there, then there would be some damage done²².

Both texts include the keyword *forest*, which could imply a theme of the Home Army. Additionally, the image of a *dwarf* could have had at that time reminded the readers the communist poster slogan known since 1945: *Olbrzym i zapluty karzeł reakcji* [The giant and the disgusting reactionary dwarf], also known as: *AK – zapluty karzeł reakcji* [Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf], which rarely appears in compositions from 1956–1958, quoted to reveal the aggressive political propaganda after Second World War. Moreover, the expression to *get out of the forest* was used in relation to amnesty initiatives announced by the authorities while the expression *hung over the door* could indicate a kind of hunting trophy. The latter brings to mind the Security Service's (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa) so-called *hunts* for partisans hiding in the woods, who, if caught, were quite an achievement for UB and the authorities, a fact that is confirmed, for example, in Machejek's novel entitled *In the Morning There Came a Hurricane*, published in 1955, where he described the activities undertaken to seize Józef Kuraś a.k.a. Ogień²³. The conclusion of *Forest* relates in its symbolism to antiquity, a common usage in Herbert's works. An owl, as a symbol of death and a cat, in this case, as a symbol of a Home Army soldier returning from the forest²⁴. The above texts, seemingly created for children, yet included in a collection together with drastic and tragic wartime accounts, did not raise any suspicions among the censors who conducted preventive control²⁵. However, literary critics identified in the published collection certain characteristics discussed in the quoted texts by Herbert. Jerzy Kwiatkowski identified in *Dwarfs* a metaphor that mixed of abstract and concrete elements as one typical of Herbert and rather enigmatically concluded that it was associated with the "processes of self-therapy – made more complex by the stylistics of irony, paradox and pun associated with the processes of disillusionment, criticism and scepticism"²⁶.

Partisan themes in relation to the Home Army can also be found in the poems by Jadwiga Popowska which, like Herberts, went through censorship screening

²² Ibidem, p. 152.

²³ Cf. M. Mazur, *Ogień w świecie propagandy komunistycznej 1945–1955*, in: *Wokół legendy Ognia. Opór przeciw zniewoleniu: Polska–Małopolska–Podhale 1945–1956*, R. Kowalski (ed.), Nowy Targ 2008, pp. 341–368.

²⁴ According to A.P. Chenel and A.S. Simarro, cats in ancient Egypt were associated with an attachment to a certain territory where food could be found. A.P. Chenel, A.S. Simarro, *Słownik symboli*, translated by M. Boberska, Warsaw 2008, p. 114.

²⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 80–82.

²⁶ J. Kwiatkowski, *Klerk męźny*, "Życie Literackie" 1957, issue 40 (6 Oct), p. 9.

untouched while poems with other themes were removed. During WWII, she was a Home Army soldier and wrote under a pseudonym: *Ewa*²⁷.

An application for a permit to print a collection entitled *Wiersze* [Poems] in 1185 copies (much less than was usually printed at that time) was submitted by the Czytelnik publishing house with GUKPPiW on 11 April 1958²⁸ and a review was ready in just eight days: on 19 April. The censor (sex unknown – **no legible signature** available) indicated the thematic division of the collection into two volumes:

The collection consists of two parts. The second part includes strictly lyrical love poems describing feelings of a woman left by her lover. The first part includes poems with basically political consideration. From poems about the occupation (partisan forces, Jews, [illegible deletion] mother’s fear while waiting for her sons who will never come back) the author moves to poems of contemporary themes which from the political point of view are v[ery] good (...) ²⁹

Further on the censor stated the need to intervene in the case of two poems; the themes of which were not related to the Home Army partisan forces but raised the issues of Jews and the repressive policy of the USSR. The censor treated *partisan forces* as a minor notion. None of the poems referring to that theme were challenged by the following two censors: Barańska and Świątycka, who analysed the entire collection.

Zona partyzanta [Partisan’s Wife] is the most expressive of the poems referring to the theme of the Home Army. It presents partisans as tragic heroes who leave their despairing wives to fight for glory. Even though the forest offers some protection, their fate is set. All that remains for them is a “quiet little pile of dirt”, a cross and the pain of their loved ones. Such a perspective emphasises the huge sacrifice and bravery of “the forest people”, thus turning them into heroic figures. The censorship reviews did not discuss poems about partisans presumably because in April 1958 writing about Home Army soldiers as heroes was still acceptable and the form of the poem itself made the interpretation ambiguous. Popowska was not known to be a Home Army underground soldier as she wrote under a pseudonym during the WWII occupation. Moreover, in the quoted period, the authorities strongly promoted information regarding the achievements of the extremely active partisan forces of the People’s Army. Therefore, from the point of view of censorship, the reader could interpret the poem as a glorification of the People’s Army, mainly because the censor assessed poems about contemporary themes as “very good”.

²⁷ A. Szałagan, *Popowska Jadwiga*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, p. 451.

²⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 596, vol. 68/2, l. 280.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, l. 282–283.

On 5 March 1958, the authorities released a preventive control report on a collection of poems by Julian Przyboś entitled³⁰ *Tools of Light* (3253 copies). Interventions were made to a poem which could be classified as literature of reckoning a popular genre at that time³¹. The leading idea of two poems: *Poległy* [The Fallen] and *Jeszcze o poległym* [More On the Fallen] are the words of Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, a member of the Gray Ranks Assault Groups subordinate directly to the Home Army HQ. He died during the first days of the Warsaw Uprising³². However, Przyboś' main achievement was restoring society's collective memory of the former Home Army soldier's poetry, who in the new political situation could become a role model and his output an inspiration for other authors, even those presenting communist attitudes. The final fragment of *Poległy*, dated 1956, reads:

<p>Nie z czarnych ruin, lecz z podziemia sumień odkopujemy po zmoście milczenia, jak kości jego na ofiarę białe, okaleczoną zwyciężonych chwałę, Nike bez ramion</p>	<p>Not from black ruins but from the underworld of conscience we dig up from a conspiracy of silence, as his white bones for sacrifice, mutilated glory of the vanquished, Nike with no arms.³³</p>
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The not so expressive highlighting of the mentioned “conspiracy of silence”, that is, the toning down of the theme of the heroism of the soldiers of the underground army, did not cause any anxiety in the censor (Stępkowski). It also seems important that at the beginning of the poem the author quotes the words of a soldier who is a member of the Home Army but clearly follows socialist ideals and Przyboś' affiliation with PZPR³³.

GUKPPIW also received poems which displayed antagonistic feelings towards texts referring to the theme of the Home Army. One such example is a poem by Aleksander Ziemny³⁴ entitled *Imiona jutra* [Names of Tomorrow] (from the

³⁰ J. Przyboś was not affiliated with the Home Army. He survived a failed attempt on his life by the anti-communist underground. He was a member of the State National Council (Krajowa Rada Narodowa), PPR and PZPR. The publication of the *Tools of Light* collection, in which he included poems of reckoning, coincided with his withdrawal from the Party. B. Dorosz, *Przyboś Julian*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 6, Warsaw 1999, pp. 500–501; E. Balcerzan, *Wstęp*, in: J. Przyboś, *Sytuacje lityczne. Wybór poezji*, Wrocław 1989, pp. XCIII–CIV.

³¹ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 46–50.

³² J. Świąch, *Wstęp*, in: K.K. Baczyński, *Wybór poezji*, comp. J. Świąch, Wrocław 1998, pp. XIV–XVII.

³³ J. Przyboś, *Tools of Light*, Warsaw 1958, p. 17.

³⁴ A. Ziemny (born in 1924) was exiled in 1940 to compulsory work in the forests of the Ural Mountains. He returned to Poland with the 1st Army of the Polish Army, he received the rank of lieutenant and since 1949 was a member of ZLP. K. Batora, *Ziemny Aleksander*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 9, Warsaw 2004, p. 473.

Teraz i zawsze [Now and Always] collection published in 1705 copies). The poem criticises the Home Army underground, particularly the leadership, which supported the traditions of Piłsudski’s WWI Polish legionnaires and based its rule on deception and excess and the naive nature of young men while the Warsaw Uprising was supposed to end their lies they told those young men:

Przyszły rojenia konspiracji.	Thus came underground’s dreams.
Dowódca, legun, wzór patriot	The commander, legionnaire, a model patriot
zbywał en gros sygnety złote	sold by the gross gold signets
i biało-orle czynił gusła.	and performed white-eagle wizardry.
Prawdą karmiło się oszustwo,	Lies fed on the truth,
ukradli młodym czysty płomień,	they stole the flame from the youth,
pierwszy, najświętszy sen o broni	the first, the holiest dream of arms ³⁵

While the poem seemed to fit well with the contemporary trend of post-WWII anti-Home Army propaganda, the censor (Trębicki) did not comment on it either in a positive nor a negative manner, only focussing in the review on the aesthetic value of the entire collection, which was released for publication in April 1956. The censor did not analyse the political meaning of the poem, only indicating those general features of the entire collection which did not suite his taste:

All the works of Ziemy from *Bezdroża* [Wilderness] written in 1946 until his narrative poetry piece *Imiona jutro* [Name of Tomorrow] dated 1954 are tainted with the stigma of first writings, that shoddy and poor poetry. Most of the poems in the so-called collection are reminiscence-themed (it must be stated at this point: memories which have become stale and pale), which the author attempts to rhyme [illegible word] – often unfortunate, lacking any fresh metaphors. It stands for hopeless and dreary dullness³⁶.

Regardless of the rather unfavourable review, Trębicki decided to allow the collection to be printed without any interventions.

The second group of compositions raising topics associated with the Home Army, which GUKPPiW officials released for publication after minor modifications, which reflected the general approach of censors towards poetry³⁷. The only text that can be classified in this category is an anthology collected by J. Szczawiej entitled *Imię nam Polska* [Our Name Is Poland]. During a preventive control of 6 October 1958, censorship removed from the collection: a poem by Cz. Miłosz entitled *Równina* [Plateau], bearing no relation to the theme of the Home Army, and one line from a poem entitled *Nalot na Berlin* [Airstrike On Berlin] by an

³⁵ A. Ziemy, *Teraz i zawsze*, Warsaw 1956, p. 47.

³⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 424 (31/36), l. 120.

³⁷ K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

unknown author³⁸. There were no reservations for the publication of poems by former Home Army soldiers: the aforementioned Krzysztof K. Baczyński, Lesław Bartelski, Zbigniew Solarka et al.³⁹ However, one censor (Zawistowska) indicated the need to remove a fragment from the beginning of the *Introduction*:

Additionally, it is most probably the first word of truth that after years of silence we were able to utter about the heroism of our nation under Nazi occupation⁴⁰.

Without the above sentence the anthology seemed general in nature, thus, was a sign of increased control towards the image of underground activities of the Home Army and the fact that the drive towards national liberty was first distorted and later passed over in silence by the state propaganda.

The third group consisting of poems removed from collections or halted and unpublished were mainly associated with an “**inappropriate attitude**” to the officially acceptable theme of the Home Army.

Since 1956, the authorities voiced a slogan of “exoneration”, in combination with an amnesty, for former Home Army soldiers. Censorship allowed some articles by those returning to the country to be published in the press, yet consistently concealed the fact and the circumstances of emigration of people affiliated with the Home Army and the fate of its soldiers during and after the end of Operation “Tempest”⁴¹. Poems began to include metaphors depicting the phenomenon as a “resurrection of the dead”, in the context of restoring collective memory⁴². However, not all poems related to the “exoneration” corresponded with the expectations of the authorities.

An interesting story of a poet-censor game is associated with a poem by Tadeusz Różewicz⁴³ with the telling title *Posthumous Exoneration*. The first documented at-

³⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/6), l. 8–13.

³⁹ J. Szczawiej, *Imię nam Polska*, Warsaw 1958.

⁴⁰ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/6), l. 9.

⁴¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 269 [17] (Preventive control report of the *Kierunki* journal dated 16 Dec 1956); AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 5 [24] (Preventive control report of the *Kierunki* issue 32); AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 484 (38/6), l. 31 (Preventive control report of the *Życie Warszawy* magazine of 21 Aug 1956).

⁴² J. Waleńczyk, *Wino półśłodkie*, Warsaw 1957, p. 52; M. Jastrun, *Wiersze zebrane*, Warsaw 1956, p. 271–272, 322; Z. Herbert, *Hermes...*, p. 119;

⁴³ Upon graduating from an underground Military Academy in 1942, while awaiting assignment to his company, Tadeusz Różewicz (born in 1921) participated in the cultural life of the underground publishing poems in underground gazettes. As a member of the Press Office, he edited so-called “press clippings”. In 1943–1944, as a soldier of the Home Army operating under the pseudonym of “Satyr”, he fought in partisan companies in the Radom, Włoszczowa, Opoczno and Częstochowa poviats. He participated in Operation Tempest; however, after being accused of propaganda sabotage he was forced to leave his company. It is worth mentioning that Różewicz’s affiliation with the Home Army was also on a domestic level: Janusz, his older brother, who died in 1944, introduced Tadeusz to the underground army and Różewicz later married Wiesława

tempt at publishing the poem in issue 227 of *Życie Literackie* occurred in May 1957. In the preventive control report on Różewicz’s poem, which had been cut from a magazine, glued to the document and struck out by the censor, the case inspector (Kasper) briefly justified his decision: “Removed poem questioned the democratisation which had been implemented in our country”⁴⁴. Consecutive versions of the poem were reworked several times which is why it is worth quoting it in its original form:

Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
naszą obojętność	our indifference
Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
nasze milczenie	our silence
Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
nasze słowa	our words
Umarli widzą nasze pyski	The dead see our snouts
roześmiane od ucha do ucha	laughing from ear to ear
Umarli widzą nasze	The dead see
trące się ciała	our copulating bodies
Umarli widzą nasze ręce	The dead see our hands
złożone do okłasków	ready to clap
Umarli czytają nasze książki	The dead read our books
słuchają naszych przemówień	listen to our speeches
wygłoszonych tak dawno	delivered so long ago
umarli słyszą	the dead hear
mlaskanie języków	clucking tongues
umarli studiują referaty	the dead scrutinize our lectures
biorą udział w dyskusjach	join in on discussions
Wszyscy Żywi są winni	All the living are guilty
ci co uciekli są winni	guilty are those who ran away
i ci co zostali	and those that stayed
ci którzy mówili tak	those who were saying yes
i ci którzy mówili nie	those who were saying no
ci którzy nic nie mówili	those who said nothing
umarli liczą żywych	the dead are taking stock of the living
umarli nas nie zrehabilitują.	the dead will not exonerate us.

Presumably because of an unsuccessful attempt at publishing the poem the author decided to modify it. He changed the title to *The Dead*⁴⁵. In the new version, after: “The

Kozłowska, Home Army liaison officer. A. Szałagan, *Różewicz Tadeusz*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 7, Warsaw 2001, p. 91; Z. Majchrowski, *Różewicz*, Wrocław 2002, p. 63–72.

⁴⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 489 (38/27), l. 12.

⁴⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 287.

dead scrutinize our lectures” **there is: “join in terminated / discussions”, where the added word “terminated” erases the political reading of the poem.** Then, after the line: “all the living are guilty” there is an extension through an “unfinished”, parabolic verse:

winne są małe dzieci	guilty are little children
które podawały bukiety kwiatów	who offered bouquets of flowers
winni są kochankowie	guilty are lovers
winni są	guilty are

The goal of these devices was to make the poem more universal and enable its publication in the *Collected Poems* collection submitted for evaluation by the Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing house. It seems that during the political “thaw” the “generalisation” or rather the specific strategy of “blurring the concrete” could have constituted one of the methods of coping with censorship by poets trying to “smuggle” **contemporary and political content. But this device influenced the interpretation of specific facts.** In the case of Różewicz’s poem, the only proof could be found in the ending, an unchanged punchline with the *de facto* ambitious “**exoneration**”: “The dead are taking stock of the living/ The dead will not exonerate us”.

Even though there are no sources confirming that Wydawnictwo Literackie sent *Collected Poems* to GUKPPiW, one might presume that it was the central censorship bureau that made the decision to remove *The Dead* from the collection. This seems likely since it was archived in the unit of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in the division of Book Records, which stored the interventions made by the GUKPPiW censors. The officer reviewing the to-be-published *Collected Poems* probably had doubts about some of the poems, so the censor signed as J. Kasper, who previously encountered Różewicz’s poems, was commissioned to produce an intervention report and send it to GUKPPiW. Unfortunately, Kasper already knew the earlier form and title of *The Dead*, which was supposed to be published in *Życie Literackie*, which probably influenced the interpretation of the poem by the case inspector and his final decision. The fragment glued to the report⁴⁶ bears a “**dividing**” **marking in pencil after the line “tak dawno zamkniętych” [terminated so long ago]**, which was probably intended as a boundary of what was accepted by censors. Eventually, a decision was made to remove the poem altogether, possibly in concert with the publishing house or the author himself.

The Dead was also submitted in November 1957 for a Polish Radio program in Krakow⁴⁷, i.e. after it was eliminated by the GUKPPiW officer⁴⁸. The preven-

⁴⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 287.

⁴⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 489 (38/28), l. 122.

⁴⁸ The intervention report is missing the date, but one might presume that censorship review of the collection took place between 26 July, the date of submitting it for typesetting, and 8 Sep 1957 and signing-off for printing.

tive control report (dated 13 November) by censor Lekan from Krakow Voivodship Control Bureau for Press (WUKP) apart from red line deletions of poems: *Ten* [This One], *Hiob 1957* [Job 1957], *Oparł głowę na dłoni* [He Rested His Head Upon His Hand], bears no red marks by *The Dead*, only a pencilled “no” with an exclamation mark and circled “minus” in blue ink as an indication the poem was rejected by the censorship officer with a final justification: “All deleted poems – full of nihilism, disbelief, bitterness”⁴⁹. Markings made in three colours may indicate they were applied over time, thus, that there was a discussion between the Voivodship Bureau and GUKPPiW, the latter of which issued the final statement. Eventually, *The Dead* was included in a 1988 collection under the initial title *Posthumous Exoneration* and with a slightly modified text⁵⁰.

Even though the collection was still subjected to censorship review during the most tolerant period⁵¹, i.e. before October 1957, the poem (its second part in particular) could not have been accepted by censorship. Apart from exposing past actions of the authorities in relation to the “exonerated” the poem clearly questioned the reasons for “exonerating” the Home Army soldiers as not only overdue but also as ludicrous when compared to the prior harm for which everyone was responsible. Additionally, *Posthumous Exoneration* may also be linked to the personal experiences of the poet remembering his fallen brother, a Home Army soldier.

It seems that, for similar reasons, on 25 May 1957, during a preventive control of a preview of *Books to be published*, a poem by Anna Kamińska entitled *Milczeliśmy* [We Kept Silent] was removed. It read:

Tak, to prawda, milczeliśmy długo.
Milczeliśmy o trudzie i cierpieniu,
O śmierci niezawinionej i krzywdzie
Dokonywanej pod osłoną prawa.
Partia powiedziała jedno słowo.
I powstało nagle dwudziestu
sprawiedliwych,
Czterdziestu miłujących prawdę.
Nagle ozwało się stu
współcierpiących, (...)

Yes, it is true, we kept silent long.
We kept silent about the hardships
and pain,
About faultless death and injustice
Committed under the pretence of the law.
The party uttered a single word.
And suddenly twenty righteous rose,
Forty lovers of the truth.
Suddenly one hundred sufferers cried
out, (...)⁵²

The third group of halted texts was supplemented by a poem entitled *Plwocina* [Sputum] from the collection *Moje strony świata* [My Cardinal Points] by

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ T. Różewicz, *Poezja*, Cracow 1988, pp. 407–408.

⁵¹ K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵² AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 75.

Jerzy Ficowski, a former Home Army soldier⁵³. With the lack of dating on the censor's report one can only guess that, according to the information located in the printer's footer, the collection was subjected to control between 19 September and December 1957 (from the date when it was submitted for typesetting to the end of the printing process)⁵⁴.

After an unsuccessful attempt at changing the trivial and expressive title *Plwocina* to *Kolczaste widnokregi* [Barbed Horizons] the poem was removed from the collection,⁵⁵ even though the censor intervening on the collection knew that it had been previously published in *Życie Literackie*⁵⁶, which means it must have received a positive review from the WUKP in Krakow,. This is confirmed by the notes next to some of the poems stating the name of the magazine/journal and the issue where a given poem was published. The intervention might have been caused by the fact that a book release had more significance than a press publication which becomes outdated by the next week's issue and which has a specific group of readers.

Unfortunately, the censor did not leave a post-intervention comment, nor did the review survive, thus, one might only presume that the fragment:

Szliśmy dwaj, porzuciwszy kolczaste widnokregi.
Zawołali nam witający,
co im ślina na język przyniosła:
– AK – zapluty karzeł!
– Zaplute karły akowskie!
I do ciężkich cieni nas zaprzęgli,
abyśmy wlekli je za sobą,
po własnej, chętnej grobami ziemi,
kazali karleć
i pluli, pluli niestrudzeni,
na żywe i na umarłe.
Jeden z nas się pośliznął
na ich plwocinie
i padł pod drzewem

Two of us walked, having left the barbed horizons.
Those who saw us cried,
what first came to their minds:
– Home Army – disgusting dwarf!
– Disgusting Home Army dwarfs!
And they harnessed us to heavy shadows,
so that we could drag them behind us,
over our own, hungry for graves earth,
made us dwarf
and spat, spat tirelessly,
on what was alive and dead alike.
One of us slipped
on their sputum
and fell under a tree

⁵³ J. Ficowski joined the Home Army before 1943. At the age of 20 he participated in the Warsaw Uprising. He fought in Mokotów and was captured by the Nazi army. In 1945, he returned to Poland and actively participated in the state literary life. He was also among the poets who wrote commissioned poems; E. Głębińska, *Ficowski Jerzy*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1991, p. 291.

⁵⁴ J. Ficowski, *Moje strony świata*, Warsaw 1957.

⁵⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 20.

⁵⁶ The only difference between the version of the poem that was sent to GUKPPIW and the one published in "Życie Literackie" was the lack of a space between lines 23 and 24, which had no influence on its general message. "Życie Literackie" 1957, issue 8 (24 Feb), p. 5.

Czerwonego Boru –
na zawsze osiemnastoletni. (...)

of the Red Wood –
eighteen forever. (...)⁵⁷

was politically inconvenient for two reasons. First, it mentioned the “Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf” slogan exposing the aggressive nature of communist propaganda towards the Home Army⁵⁸. As early as in March 1956 the authors of an article entitled “*Na spotkanie ludziom AK*”⁵⁹ indicated that the offensive posters and the slogan constituted a form of repression. Therefore, during the announced exoneration, the mentioned slogan, magnified in the poem through the use of irony, became politically unfavourable as one which exposed the hostile activities of the communists. Secondly, the image of the death of a Home Army soldier near the “Czerwony Bór” forest was unacceptably clear in its Aesopian nature, alluding to the Soviet influences [Czerwony = red]. The entire poem, then, could have been perceived as a too aggressive attack against the system, especially when other poems in the collection, e.g. *Milczenie ziemi* [Silence Of The Land], *Drzewo genealogiczne* [Family Tree], *Podróż* [Journey], which only alluded to the Home Army theme were not removed.

Another censor, W. Stankiewicz, considered a poem by Wiesława Sz mukówna entitled *Scherco II*⁶⁰, which was supposed to be published in issue 7 of Wrocław-based *Poglądy*, as a display of aggressive attitude towards the state:

Urodzonym przed pierwszą wojną	To those born before the First World War
Urodzonym po pierwszej wojnie	To those born after the First World War
Urodzonym przed drugą wojną	To those born before the Second World War
Urodzonym po drugiej wojnie	To those born after the Second World War
Kazali nam żyć	They told us to live
To kłamstwo	It’s a lie
Kazali umierać	They told us to die
Dali nam piękne ciała	They gave us beautiful bodies
Zwinne ręce	Agile hands
Bystre oczy	Keen eyes
Smukłe lędźwie	Slender loins
Mocne nogi	Strong legs
Dali nam piękne ciała	They gave us beautiful bodies
Nieprawda	Untrue
Rzucili pociskom na cel	They tossed us as marks for bullets

⁵⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 20.

⁵⁸ Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce, 1944–1970*, Warsaw 2010, p. 277.

⁵⁹ J. Ambroziewicz, W. Namiotkiewicz, J. Olszewski, *Na spotkanie...*, p. 7.

⁶⁰ The lack of clarity of the title could had been a result of a printing error and the intended title might had been *Scherzo*.

Bezbronne karły	Defenceless dwarfs
Na poszarpanie	To be mangled
Na wydarcie krwi	To tear out our blood
Wydali nas ziemi rozległej	They gave us to the vast land
Ludziom wydali ludzi	They gave people to the people
Oni nas urodzili	They gave birth to us
To zdrada	It's treachery
Oni skazali na śmierć	They sentenced to death
Słuchajcie wy	Listen, you
Dalecy nieznanzi	Unknown from afar
To jedno nas łączy	This one thing unites us
Zdrada.	Treachery.

The poem was removed “for its destructive and hostile remarks about the people’s rule”. The mention of “defenceless dwarfs” not only exposed the true nature of communists’ doings after WWII but also suggested that the poem referred to Home Army soldiers and their tragic fate associated with executions and being exiled to the USSR.

* * *

Several conclusions may be drawn on the basis of the analysis of the aforementioned poems. First of all, in 1956–1958, there was a general consent for authors to write about the Home Army, which is confirmed not only by the press debates in literary journals but also numerous poetic pieces related to the heroism and tragedy of the soldiers of the underground army. However, poets at that time, feeling the need for self-censorship because of an unclear political situation, often wrote through the “safe” filter of generalisations. That extended the area of possible interpretations: censorship could consider a poem as pro-People’s Army and therefore pro-communist.

Furthermore, some poems featured a game between the author and the censor, which often consisted of the poet choosing Aesopian language reflected in allegories (Herbert’s dwarf [krasnoludek] as opposed to the forbidden “reactionary dwarf” [karzeł]) or metaphors, which by being based on culture codes producing associations unequivocal for a specific community could become keywords (forest) in literature indicating a specific mode of interpretation. Censors’ helplessness when it came to Aesopian language in poetry was sometimes countered by a small number of copies of a published collection.

Moreover, poets by default were not allowed to refer to or expose certain slogans, e.g. “Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf,” which had been used by communists for propaganda attacks on the underground army. However,

there occurred some oversights in magazines or journals⁶¹ caused by, for example, a lack of detailed guidelines from the state or the new social and political situation which in turn created confusion on how to interpret the texts by censorship officials. That chaos was probably removed in the first quarter of 1957. Collections of poems, on the other hand, which, according to censors, had the “status of a book”, which usually do not become outdated as quickly as the press, where more carefully reviewed in their entirety and any politically inconvenient allusions were removed, usually with the entire poem in which they were found.

The issues associated with contemporary problems of “exoneration” and “amnesty” in relation to former Home Army soldiers constituted a political problem which was particularly controlled. Poems could not question the contemporary propaganda guidelines; otherwise censors removed a given poem in its entirety from the collection or refused to issue a permit for it being published in a magazine/journal or being included in a radio program.

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⁶¹ A fragment of a poem by Czesław Kałkusiński published in “*Życie Literackie*” in June 1956 reads: “I thought they will erect altars for us / and on wounds clotted with pain / shall fall a soothing scent of balm – / and once again the disgusting dwarf / obscures the mirages of proud dreams”. C. Kałkusiński, “*Życie Literackie*” 1956, issue 25 (17 Jun), p. 11; J. Ficowski, *Plwocina*, “*Życie Literackie*” 1957, issue 8 (24 Feb), p. 5.

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Agnieszka Kloc

"There Aren't any Dwarfs; They got out in Time". Censored Image of the Home Army in Polish Poetry in 1956–1958

(Summary)

The paper focuses on censorship board's approach to the subject of Home Army in Polish poetry from the period 1956–1958 of the liberalization of culture. The basic purpose of the research is focused on the identification of censorship reference to the image created by the authors. Moreover, it attempts to specify – on the basis of examples – the kind of content that was accepted, rejected or amended. Juxtaposition of the censor's reviews, "preventive inspection reports" and the content published works allows for the examination of the depth of the censor's intervention and their methods of manipulating historical facts concerning the Home Army. Research of the relationship censor-author allows for analyze "Aesop's language" strategy. The whole of paper is based on a historical context and related phenomena, including the amnesty and so-called the "rehabilitation".

Keywords: Home Army, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature

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Censorship Towards the Subject of the Warsaw Uprising in Belles-Lettres in 1956–1958¹

Censorship, like propaganda, constituted one of the key instruments of the communist regime in the People's Republic of Poland (PRL). Through control and influence the regime shaped literature and ensured that the presented image did not diverge from the applicable "Party policy". Particular attention was placed on political content which, by definition, could undermine the system in place. The "political" category was understood very broadly. The authorities saw the possibility of danger not only in texts describing contemporary problems but also in literature discussing the theme of WWII, a sensitive area for the Party considering the USSR's engagement in the seizure of rule, against the will of the legal Polish government in London and much of Polish society. In those circumstances the absolutely positive image of WWII that the People's Republic promoted by the authorities clashed with the actual course of events, which many people still remembered. In that situation, the task of censorship was to support the official propaganda through manipulating facts, carefully monitoring all content, eliminating inconvenient texts, adding large fragments and thus, influencing people's state of awareness.

This topic also includes the approach of censorship towards the problem of the Warsaw Uprising, which in 1956–1958 received numerous studies in period literature. The main characteristic of that period, regardless of its name (in literary studies it is referred to as the "thaw"² while in historiography it is also referred to as the "October turning point"³), was the political turning point which

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¹ The article was written as part of the National Program for the Development of Humanities: "Censorship towards Polish literature in 1945–1989".

² Vide *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, Z. Łapiński, W. Tomasiak (eds.), Cracow, 2004, pp. 163–167.

³ Vide *Polska 1956: próba nowego spojrzenia. Materiały sesji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Instytut Historii PAN, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne i Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN w Warszawie w dn. 21–22 października 1996 r.*, K. Kersten (ed.), Series: "Polska 1944/45–1989. Studia i materiały", vol. 3, Poznań 1997.

resulted in a liberalisation of cultural activities, though it did not introduce a total freedom of speech. Censorship continued, though, as in the case of other institutions, it limited the scope of its repressions in comparison to the Stalinist period.

For this discussion explication of the activities of censorship towards the specified topic, I focus mainly on poetry and prose of 1956–1958. My analysis considers the so-called “depth” of censorship interventions. In the first group, I included texts which received approval without implementing any changes or with minor interventions which did not alter their interpretations. The second category covers literary works altered considerably through the elimination of fragments which had been deemed inconvenient or politically dangerous (negative censorship) and texts which had been altered by adding passages written by the censors (positive censorship), which modified the general meaning of the text. The third group includes halted and unpublished items. Within these classifications I particularly focused not only on the methods of exerting influence and the scope of content approved by the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows, but also on the attitude of the authors, who often participated in the described events. This analysis reveals the direct influence censors had on the shape of published literature and the related promotion of “appropriate” standards of writing. Those formed because of the confrontation of censors assumptions and the submitted texts, which constituted an expression of the worldview and output of a given author. Additionally, texts which had been subjected to interventions offered the authors perceptible “parameters”, which identified the limits of freedom of speech.

Since the outbreak of the Uprising in Warsaw on 1 August 1944, facts were manipulated. This lasted until 1947–1948, when the topic of the Warsaw Uprising was subdued altogether⁴. The first evaluation of the Uprising was presented in a brochure entitled: *Powstanie w Warszawie – fakty i dokumenty* [Uprising in Warsaw. Facts and documents], issued on 18 October 1944 by the Propaganda Division of the Chief Political and Education Management of the Polish Armed Forces. Its contents, in line with propaganda guidelines, imposed the one proper evaluation of the actions of the Home Army, labelling them as a “criminal political game” and, subsequently, highlighting the achievements of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) underground. In the early 1945, there appeared the “Giant and the disgusting reactionary dwarf” poster by Włodzimierz Zakrzewski, antagonising the population against the Home Army, and on 21 July 1945 a speech delivered by Gomułka completed the previously outlined representation. At the beginning, he recognised the bravery of the people of Warsaw and at the same

⁴ Even though many readers were aware of the administrative ban on raising the topic of the Warsaw Uprising, censorship in 1957 still kept the facts of how for many years the discussed issue in belles-lettres had been concealed from dissipating into general knowledge. Vide AAN, GUKP-PiW, ref. no. 497 (39/3), l. 52.

time emphasised the pointless sacrifice of the thousands of victims. He went on to cite the goals which the Home Army leadership were supposed to be following when commencing the Uprising: to reintroduce the Sanation order, to ignite a civil war to overthrow the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN), to aggravate the Polish-Soviet relations, to disrupt the unity of the allied nations and to conduct an international charade to discredit the “democratic forces” by using the failure of the Uprising⁵.

For the analysis of the discussed topic a breakthrough moment was the death of Stalin and the speech delivered three years later by Nikita Khrushchev which constituted a secret report revealing Stalinist crimes, which in turn resulted in the rise of reform-makers and propagators of tempering the censorship policy. The breakthrough in Poland was the 3rd Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Union (KC PZPR). The authorities condemned doctrine-based policies and the “totalitarian” methods of influencing creators. The mere fact of shaping their vision through free discussion was supposed to be an expression of progress in the state authorities relations with artists⁶.

Changes also applied to the national security forces. Beginning in 1955, political prisoners were starting to be released from incarceration. The debate inside the Party began to include the problem of abuses and infringements of law and order and the need for exoneration. From that reality came the famous article by Jerzy Ambroziewicz, Walery Namiotkiewicz and Jan Olszewski published in *Po prostu*. They indicated the problem of the unfair evaluation of the Home Army members who returned to life within the society. The ensuing debate regarding former Home Army soldiers revived the memory of the organisation, particularly in the context of the Warsaw Uprising⁷.

It should also be stressed that in terms of literature the authors’ departure from the Socialist realist standards and Stalinist rules occurred in a rather chaotic manner. It was more of a rambling than following a specific direction, associated with the ongoing unfocussed processes of change. Artists, often at a loss, tried to seek the limits of creative freedom and the scope of freedom of speech on their own⁸.

The officially “revived” memory of the events in Warsaw resulted in the emergence of commentaries and literary works raising the topic.

⁵ J.Z. Sawicki, *Bitwa o prawdę. Historia zmagania o pamięć Powstania Warszawskiego. 1944–1989*, Poznań 2005, pp. 19–37.

⁶ B. Fijałkowska, *Polityka i twórcy 1948–1959*, Poznań 1985, p. 288.

⁷ J.Z. Sawicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–103.

⁸ J. Galant, *Odmiany wolności. Publicystyka, krytyka i literatura polskiego Października*, Poznań 2010, p. 26.

Poetry

Even in early 1956, GUKPPiW received a collection of poems by Zbigniew Herbert⁹ (*Chord of Light*), which were approved for print in their entirety. In a laconic and generalist review of 5 April the reviewer concluded: “Herbert’s poetry is dominated by lyrical associations – subtlety, play of light (he himself points that out in the title), regardless of the standard of the poem. That can be a war-time recollection, own home or family, Greek mythology or the veneration for the dead”¹⁰. The awkward statement included in the review proved the officer’s helplessness towards Herbert’s poetics¹¹. The censor did not even attempt a deeper interpretation, though literary critics did soon after the collection was published, finding in such poems as: *On Troy*, *Red Cloud* or *Warsaw Cemetery* elements of patriotism and an “attachment to the history of the nation and the price one pays for attachment”¹². The Uprising also echoed in other texts in the collection, for example a fragment of *Three Poems By Heart* drew an image of the tragedy of Warsaw:

Żony w letnie wieczory
cierpliwie czekały na usta
pachnące znajomym tytoniem

in the summer nights wives
patiently waited for mouths
smelling of familiar tobacco

Kobiety nie mogły dzieciom
odpowiedzieć: czy wróci
Gdy zachodziło miasto
gasiły ogień rękami
przytkniętymi do oczu

women couldn’t answer
their kids: he’ll be back
when the city went down
they put out fires hands
pressed up to their eyes

Dzieci z naszej ulicy
śmierć miały bardzo ciężką
[...]

the children from our street
met with a very hard death
[...]

⁹ During the WWII occupation, Zbigniew Herbert was affiliated with the underground – apart from studies at the secret John Casimir University in Lviv he was a member of the Home Army. In 1944, before the invasion of the Red Army, he moved to Proszowice near Krakow and lived there until January 1945. He did not participate directly in the Warsaw Uprising. Vide A. Hejman, *Herbert Zbigniew*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), vol. 3, Poznań 1994, pp. 230–231.

¹⁰ As cited in: K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009, p. 57.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² K. Wyka, *Składniki świetlanej struny*, “Życie Literackie” 14 Oct 1956, issue 247, p. 3.

Ptaki dzieci i żony nie mogą mieszkać w żałobnych skorupach miasta w ostygniętych puchach popiołów	birds children and wives cannot dwell in the city's pitiful shell in the cool down of ash
Miasto stoi nad wodą gładką jak pamięć lustra odbija się w wodzie od dna	the city which stands on water smooth as a mirror's memory is reflected from the river-bed ¹³

It seems that the officer's lack of insight was, in that case, fairly justified. Following the censors's train of thought: many poems had already been published, thus, the fact that they had been verified by the Voivodship Control Bureau for Press meant for the GUKPPiW officer it was only a formality to issue a positive censorship evaluation without any in-depth study of the contents¹³.

Additionally, the fact that the approval applied to a small number of copies (1205)¹⁴ suggested not only that it was assumed that there would not be a large interest in Herbert's poetry among readers, but more to the point as a form of precaution in the evolving situation of literature¹⁵. The authorities manipulated the circulation: a small number of copies reached a small readership, thus any possible ambiguous Aesopian expressions¹⁶ would not find a broader group of readers.

The Uprising was also echoed in a poem by Tadeusz Kubiak¹⁷ entitled *Pieśń o drzewie cynamonowym* [Song Of The Cinnamon Tree] from the *Pierścienie* [Rings] collection. Per the dating of the censor's review, the poetic collection was released to the censorship officer Trębicki on 17 February 1956. A five-day analysis of 44 poems enabled the censor to formulate the main conclusions:

¹³ Z. Herbert, *Chord of Light*, Poznań 1956, pp. 11–12.

¹⁴ The proposed number of copies was defined by the publishing house in the form of a short application for granting the permit for publishing a given book. Usually institutions approved the proposed number of copies, however, in the case of controversial works, the number was modified.

¹⁵ Already by the end of 1955 there appeared voices in the journals "Nowa Kultura" and "Życie Literackie" on the new focus in poetry fulfilled by young writers, such as Herbert. When compared to *A Poem For Adults* by Adam Ważyk published in mid-year, which was evaluated unequivocally negatively by Jakub Berman and Edward Ochab, Herbert's poetry was not considered as political destructive. Vide T. Mielczarek, *Pisarze w PRL "pieszcochy władzy" czy ofiary systemu*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy. Ograniczenie wolności słowa na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, D. Degen, J. Gzella (eds.), Toruń 2010, pp. 219–220.

¹⁶ Even the title of the poem: *Red Cloud* and the words: "A red cloud of dust / summoned that fire- / the setting of a city / over earth's horizon" could be interpreted in two ways: as having an exceptionally (as for Herbert's poetics) literal meaning: the image of rising dust of redbrick buildings being destroyed or the image of burning Poznań, but also the "red" could evoke associations with the Soviet army, particularly in the case of a former member of the Home Army.

¹⁷ Tadeusz Kubiak probably did not participate in the Warsaw Uprising, but he did participate in the underground efforts (member of the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ) and the Home Army). In 1943, he established an underground journal "Jutro Poezji", where he made his début. Vide A. Szałagan, *Kubiak Tadeusz*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 4, Warsaw 1996, p. 429.

Similarly to Różewicz, though using less bold means, mixing blank verse with classic form, Kubiak in the poetry collection encloses the essence of occupation experiences (e.g. the pain of a mother after losing her son), the tragedies of wartime past (*Zegar ratuszowy w pewnym miasteczku* [City Hall Clock In A Certain Town]), he once more gives strong poems with contemporary themes, such as a response to the events in Guatemala – *O drzewie cynamonowym* [On The Cinnamon Tree], etc.¹⁸

In the above-mentioned poem, the censor identified only the description of contemporary events, though it also offered a summary of certain associations: riots in Guatemala¹⁹ with the wartime destruction in Poland including the tragedy of Warsaw in 1944. The lyrical subject presented the following situation:

<p>Widziałem domy opustoszałe okna rozwarte na przestrzał. Tych okien nikt nigdy nie zamykał ani wśród burzy, ani wśród deszczu wśród gradobicia, wśród mrozu i śniegu. [...] Znam domy mojej ojczyzny. To nie były domy miłości ani rozkoszy, ani starości, ani modlitwy. [...] Ach, ludzie. Których nie było udziałem wychodzić z miasta pod milczenie gwiazd, w obojętności wojennego nieba dzielić się chlebem zeschniętym na kamień, [...]</p>	<p>I saw houses deserted windows opened wide. Those windows no one never closed neither in storm, nor rain in hail, cold or snow. [...] I know the homes of my motherland. Those were not homes of love or pleasure, or old age, or prayers. [...] Oh, people. Who did not exit the city under the silence of the stars, in the indifference of the wartime sky to share stone-dry bread, [...]²⁰</p>
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The censor did not notice the reference made by a former member of ZWZ and later the Home Army to the moment when the partisans were leaving Warsaw on the “**indifference of the wartime sky**” – **lack of help from any side**. Additionally, the censor’s exceptionally positive attitude towards Kubiak’s works was associated with his glorifying-communist output devoted to Bierut²¹.

The number of copies, as in the case of Herbert, was not large and amounted

¹⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 424 (31/36), l. 82.

¹⁹ In 1954 in Guatemala, there was a coup d’état, as a result of which the military removed the ruling left-wingers from power; it was accompanied by public disorders.

²⁰ T. Kubiak, *Pierścienie*, Poznań 1956, pp. 59–60.

²¹ M. Głowiński, *Rytuał i demagogia. Trzydzieści szkiców o sztuce zdegradowanej*, Poznań 1992, pp. 110–111.

to 2705 copies. The decision to publish it without any interventions might have been influenced by the fact that some of the poems had previously been printed in journals, thus having been verified, probably by the Voivodship Control Bureau for Press: "Generally, the collection, which includes poems previously published in literary journals as well as in, e.g. the most recent issue of *Twórczość*, makes a quite pleasant impression. Poetry"²².

A collection of poems by Jerzy Ficowski²³, a former Warsaw Uprising partisan, belongs to a group of poetic works raising the topic of the fights in Warsaw and which were subjected to extensive deletions. The collection entitled *Moje strony świata* [My Cardinal Points] underwent verification in 1957. The preserved sheets of the collection bear two-colour corrections, which shows how controversial some of the works were. The initial interventions made finely in pencil were limited to notes only, e.g. "Ż.L. 21 VII 57", indicating the name and issue of a journal where a given poem was published (in this case it was "Życie Literackie" of 21 July 1957) and some minor underscores of single words or expressions. The censor had the most problems with a poem with the trivial title of *Plwocina* [Sputum]²⁴, which described the situation immediately after the Warsaw Uprising when the lyrical subject "gives up" fighting and, at the same time, is faced with the new reality and the slogan coined by communists during the Uprising: "Home

²² AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 424 (31/6), l. 83.

²³ J. Ficowski joined the Home Army before 1943. At the age of 20 he took part in the Warsaw Uprising. He fought in Mokotów and was captured by the Nazi army. In 1945, he returned to Poland and participated in the state literary life. He was also among the poets who wrote commissioned poems. Vide E. Głębińska, *Ficowski Jerzy*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 2, Poznań 1991, p. 291.

²⁴ The poem was removed from the collection, which is why it is worth quoting its key fragments:

Szliśmy dwaj, porzuciwszy kolczaste
widnokregi.

Zawołali nam witający,
co im ślina na język przyniosła:

– AK – zapluty karzeł!

– Zaplute karły akowskie!

I do ciężkich cieni nas zaprzęgli,

abyśmy wlekli je za sobą,

po własnej, chętnej grobami ziemi,

kazali karleć

i pluli, pluli niestrudzeni,

na żywe i na umarłe.

Jeden z nas się pośliznął

na ich plwocinie

i padł pod drzewem

Czerwonego Boru –

na zawsze osiemnastoletni. [...]

Two of us walked, having left the barbed
horizons.

Those who saw us cried,

what first came to their minds:

– Home Army – disgusting dwarf!

– Disgusting Home Army dwarfs!

And they harnessed us to heavy shadows,

so that we could drag them behind us,

over our own, hungry for graves earth,

made us dwarf

and spat, spat tirelessly,

on what was alive and dead alike.

One of us slipped

on their sputum

and fell under a tree

of the Red Wood –

eighteen forever. [...]

As cited in: AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 20.

Army, the disgusting reactionary dwarf?”. The officer decided to change the title to *Kolczaste widnokreghi* [Barbed Horizons]. He introduced the next correction using a red pencil crossing out twice the title *Plwocina* and correcting the previous suggestion written in pencil²⁵. Eventually, the entire poem was crossed out with two red lines (one thin and another thick), which indicate some discussion and that the decision was made by more than one censor. Unfortunately, no post-intervention review survived, so one can only suspect the reasons for removing the poem. First, the “**Home Army, the disgusting reactionary dwarf?**” slogan was no longer promoted in the discussed period²⁶. That was a result of the publication in *Po prostu* in March 1956 of an article by Jerzy Ambroziewicz, Walery Namiotkiewicz and Jan Olszewski entitled *Na spotkanie ludziom z AK* [Meeting the people from the Home Army]²⁷, which the authors began by identifying the offensive posters and slogan which constituted a form of repression. Therefore, during the announced exoneration of the Home Army, the mentioned slogan, magnified in the poem through the use of irony, became politically unfavourable as it exposed the hostile activities of communists. Second was the depiction of the death of a member of the Home Army at the Czerwony Bór forest, seemingly too clear in its Aesopian nature [czerwony = red] and thus negatively affecting Polish-Soviet relations. Finally, the poem as a whole might had been received as an excessively aggressive attack against the contemporary system. The fact that it had been published in *Życie Literackie* under the original title and content was irrelevant²⁸.

No changes were introduced to the other poem entitled *Dogasanie* [Fading]²⁹. The lyrical subject recalls his friends and brothers in arms who had fallen in the Uprising. At the same time, he emphasised the fact that the tragedy was passed over in silence for many years, that it was forbidden to hold any anniversary celebrations or care for cemeteries and he accused the authorities of manipulating the memory about the fallen. Regardless of such passages as:

[...] Tylko goją się rany,
tak na cmentarzach
rośnie las.

P.S.
Chwila milczenia ceniom,

[...] Only wounds are healing,
thus in cemeteries
a forest grows.

P.S.
A moment of silence to the shadows,

²⁵ The style of handwriting suggests the notes were made by one censor using two colours of pencil.

²⁶ Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce, 1944–1970*, Poznań 2010, p. 277.

²⁷ J. Ambroziewicz, W. Namiotkiewicz, J. Olszewski. *Na spotkanie ludziom z AK*, “Po prostu” 1956, issue 11, p. 7.

²⁸ The only difference between the version of the poem that was sent to GUKPPiW and the one published in *Życie Literackie* was the lack of a space between lines 23 and 24, which had no influence on its general message. Vide *Życie Literackie*, 24 Feb 1957, issue 8 (266), p. 5.

²⁹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 36.

<p>a z chwil tych – całe lata milczące, z tych cieni – chmura nad ziemią.</p> <p>[...] Nie myjcie nimi brudnych rąk, łzy muszą zostać czyste. [...]</p>	<p>and from those moments – whole years of silence, from those shadows – a cloud over the earth.</p> <p>[...] Do not wash your dirty hands with them, tears must remain pure. [...]³⁰</p>
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the poem was approved in its entirety³⁰.

Eventually, five poems were removed from the collection³¹, including one which raised the topic of the Uprising and at least three unrelated to the topic but which had been published in *Życie Literackie*.

In early 1958, GUKPPiW received from the Ministry of National Defence *Śpiewnik zastępowy* [Unit Songbook] developed by Elżbieta Dziębowska and Jerzy Dargiel. It was developed for the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP).

During the Warsaw Uprising the ZHP consisted of various organisations, including the Gray Ranks, the battalions of which operated jointly with the Home Army HQ and the Government Delegation for Poland fulfilling a special role in the fights³² and later in maintaining the memory of the events of 1944³³. When verifying the *Śpiewnik*, censorship did not attempt to question the traditions of the Gray Ranks or their engagement in the Uprising. The best known songs, i.e. *Marsz Mokotowa* [Mokotów March] and *Pałacik Michla* [Michler's Palace] (with endnotes regarding their authors and specifying where the songs were sang), which were created during the fights for Warsaw, did not raise any reservations, though the censor in the review dated 25 April did stress their Home Army origins³⁴. The large number of copies (30,000) indicated that singing about “boys from Parasol” and their brave leaders who “march in the front line risking their heads”³⁵ or about Mokotów fighting on its own in burning Warsaw³⁶ did not cause any objections on the part of the GUKPPiW. However, the images of ruins with the “anchor” included in *Śpiewnik* proved unprintable³⁷. That could

³⁰ Ibidem, l. 37.

³¹ Ibidem, ref. no. 591 (60/2), l. 1.

³² Vide Z. Głuszek „Victor”, *Zawsze na pierwszej linii. Harcerstwo w Powstaniu*, in: *Powstanie warszawskie 1 sierpnia – 2 października. Służby w walce*, R. Śreniawa-Szypowski (ed.), Poznań 1994, pp. 53–65.

³³ J.Z. Sawicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.

³⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 600 (68/8), l. 153a, b.

³⁵ E. Dziębowska, J. Dargiel, *Śpiewnik zastępowy*, Poznań 1958, p. 89.

³⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 600 (68/8), l. 153f, g.

³⁷ Underneath the image there was a fragment of *The Internationale* lyrics crossed out in red; a circled arrow indicating that one of the censors signalled the misalignment of the image and the content underneath, which could result in the need to relocate the image. However, the published

indicate that the fight using symbols³⁸, which had been started before the end of Second World War, was still ongoing. *Marsz Mokotowa*, which had neither been questioned in the review nor removed during the primary verification, was removed from the collection. However, the fact that it was archived by the Bureau in the sample copy version could indicate that the censor had doubts about the song, which was eventually eliminated. Yet, it seems much more probable that it was removed by the publishing house (and later the decision was approved by censorship). It is possible that the removal of the song from the collection was caused not by its political meaning but musical issues. *Marsz Mokotowa* did not offer cheerful lyrics and an upbeat tempo, which is important in the case of scout songs.

Therefore, the published version of the songbook included only two songs from the Uprising: *Pałacyk Michła* and *Parasola piosenka szturmowa* [Parasol's Assault Song]³⁹.

Prose

A large portion of prose books published constituted a combination of fiction with recollections by their authors of actual historical events. That resulted in the creation of hybrids: novels with elements of commentary or author's observations, fictionalised memoirs, and recollections expressed in a literary image. Considering the form of the analysis and the extensive nature of the material I shall omit those works which can be classified at the borderline between belles-lettres and factual genres, and I shall focus in detail strictly on fiction.

Very few of the stories which were sent to the GUKPPiW in 1956–1958 directly raised the topic of the Warsaw Uprising. Fragments related to those events, e.g. the prayer of the hospital nurses over the fighters who fell during the fights in Warsaw in 1944 (ending in “for peace on Earth”) or the explanation of the “amnesia” of the main character as a result of the events were rare and discrete instances. Those examples could be found in two stories by Pola Gojawiczyńska: *Za pokój świata* [For Peace On Earth] and *Kapelusz* [Hat]⁴⁰. However, short inclusions on the Uprising did not matter much for censorship and did not raise many

version of *Śpiewnik* missed the image altogether. That confirms not only that the image was inappropriate, but also how negative the attitude of censorship towards the symbol was. *Vide ibidem*, l. 153k.

³⁸ The symbol of the “anchor” was also removed from book previews. *Vide ibidem*, ref. no. 427 (34/6), l. 79.

³⁹ E. Dziębowska, J. Dargiel, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴⁰ P. Gojawiczyńska, *Opowiadania*, Poznań 1956, pp. 250, 253, 260.

doubts. Censor Trębicki only stated in his review that the topic of the story *Za pokój świata* is related to the period of Nazi occupation⁴¹.

On 18 February 1957 GUKPPiW received from PIW a novel by Roman Bratny⁴² entitled *Kolumbowie rocznik 20*. [Columbuses of 1920] without a specified number of copies⁴³. The review of the second volume, the plot of which was set during the Uprising, is scanty and generalist, contained in two short sentences: “The characters from volume 1 participate in the Warsaw Uprising. The intention of placing on page 255 an ongoing evaluation of the Uprising performed by 1st Division propaganda specialists seems questionable”⁴⁴. Many more of the censor’s remarks were included in the discussion of the final volume, mainly because of the **“allusive Soviet elements” and the consequences of Operation Tempest**. Nonetheless, the entire review displays recognition of Bratny’s activities: “It is certain that Roman Bratny, a Home Army officer, editor of the *Pokolenie* journal, has put onto its pages his passion to present the process of how the so-called Home Army complex forms [...]”⁴⁵. The fragment containing the negative evaluation of the Uprising fighters by the Kościuszko Radio Station which raised the censor’s doubts was not removed⁴⁶. Even though the novel did reveal the aggressive communist manipulation (considered by the censor as propaganda of the Polish Tadeusz Kościuszko Division), the second volume together with the other parts received a publication permit already on 30 March.

It would seem that setting the plot in the underground was riskier than choosing regular inhabitants of contemporary Warsaw as the main characters. However,

⁴¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 424 (31/36), l. 86.

⁴² Bratny, being a member of the Home Army, participated in underground literary life and the secret teaching of cadets. At the age of 23, he fought in the Uprising. He was second in command of a platoon in the Śródmieście-Południe group. He received the rank of officer and after the fall of the Uprising he was imprisoned in Nazi POW camps. In 1945, he returned to Poland. Vide A. Szałagan, *Bratny Roman*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 1, 1994, p. 260.

⁴³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/3), l. 369.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, l. 370.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, l. 370–371.

⁴⁶ “Through the static of poor reception [of the radio – A.K.] began to peer single words: In Poznań there are still some militants of Sosnkowski’s fascist gangs fighting in a few streets of Śródmieście. The city, the victim of a criminal provocation, is burning”...

– reported the speaker in a pretentious voice.

Sudden silence struck like lightning.

– This is Lublin speaking, radio station “Kościusz”...

The bottle from Zygmunt’s hand went flying over the table, passing a centimetre from Jerzy’s bowed head and smashed the glass of the radio scale.

– “Shut his damn mouth!” someone shouted hysterically. Jerzy cracked the switch as if locking a spare rifle.

– “Are we gonna create our platoon, Zygmunt?...” he came to him ostentatiously, with his normal determination. – “We are”, he repeated as if he wanted to apologise for something”. (R. Bratny, *Kolumbowie rocznik 20*, vol. 2: *Śmierć po raz drugi* [Die A Second Time], Poznań 1957, p. 255).

the “danger” of the topic of the Uprising itself required the authorities to carefully study the future publication. *Obok zagłady* [Next To Extermination] by Tadeusz Łopalewski⁴⁷, sent to GUKPPIW by the MON publishing house in late July 1957, was released to the censor on 1 August, and on 6 August the review was ready and on 8 August the censor’s signed approval was issued: “Burczyn M. approved for print without interventions”. The pace of the decision-making suggested there were no problems of the “censorship kind” with the novel. However, the review does include some anonymous statements: “A rather medium-grade novel, without any attempts at a deeper evaluation of the events, nor some kind of epic presenting the tragic heroism of the Uprising fighters. The author simply focussed on the fortunes of a single downtown tenement house [...]”⁴⁸, to state in another location: “The atmosphere of the entire book reveals a deep recognition of the bravery and the unwavering moral strength of Home Army fighters as the main driving force of the Uprising”⁴⁹. The inconsistency in the censor’s approach displayed the general consent of the GUKPPIW to writing about Uprising fighters as heroes but without “excessive” glorification of the Home Army. It seems, though, that until the mid-1957, the borderline between permitted and prohibited content regarding the above issue was in flux and largely depended on the view of a given officer and his/her personal “censor parameter”. A big advantage for the reviewer of the novel was the depiction of the landing of the 1st Army of the Polish Armed Forces and the humorous description of the People’s Army partisans and their participation in the “night-time libation at the peasant’s place”. However, the juxtaposition of the bravery of the Home Army and the heroic offensive of the Soviet offensive and the joint fight of the People’s Army and Home Army within the ranks of the 1st Army of the Polish Armed Forces were the main reasons for the positive reading of the content and identifying its optimistic meaning⁵⁰.

The censor’s opinion in a review of mid-1958 by J. Wielopolski regarding a novel by Ryszard Liskowacki⁵¹ entitled *Po tamtej stronie życie*⁵² [On The Other Side Of Life] was quite different. When describing a group of teenaged boys who decided to organise a division for combating the occupying forces, the author did

⁴⁷ Tadeusz Łopalewski (born in 1900) was in Vilnius, which at that time already belonged to the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, when the Warsaw Uprising broke out. He fulfilled the function of literary manager of the Polish Dramatic Theatre. He was not a member of the Home Army. Vide J. Zawadzka, *Łopalewski Tadeusz*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 5, 1997, p. 179.

⁴⁸ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/4), l. 633 [631].

⁴⁹ Ibidem, l. 633 [632].

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Ryszard Liskowacki (born in 1932) at the age of twelve being a member of the Grey Ranks participated in the Uprising. Though young he fulfilled the function of liaison officer in Żoliborz. Vide K. Batora, *Liskowacki Ryszard*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 5, 1997, p. 119.

⁵² The novel, with a planned circulation of 5,000 copies, was sent to GUKPPIW by Lubelska Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza – Lublin.

not specify the political affiliation of the emerging squad, which was, in principal, apolitical, and yet it caused some interpretation problems to the officer:

They [the boys – A.K.] have obviously been inspired by someone [...] the movement has been inspired by the Home Army. Those are not “Grey Ranks”, **though the assumptions continues to reach the reader, neither is it an “official” division of the Home Army, but the inspiration method and the utilisation of those people in action permits such a possibility. And indeed, the later fortunes of the group and the order to join the Uprising activities in particular comes from the still invisible Home Army [...]**⁵³.

The censor proceeded to enumerate the novel’s advantages, i.e. “**realistic recreation of the nightmare of occupation**”, “the hopeless situation of the youth”, the presentation of the “activities of the unidentified instigator” and mainly the fact that the group “**is far from any political paths**” and wishes to fight while the leadership is characterised by “odd procrastination”. This outlined the censorship’s approval for the dichotomy: the gallant and unaware lower ranks and the politically calculating Home Army top echelon. Additionally, in the review the censor attempted to discuss the slogan “to stand with a weapon at your side”. However, the censor supplemented his thoughts with a comment: “[...] it seems, though, that the author did not do it as carefully as the situation required”⁵⁴. The Bureau’s position regarding the slogan in 1956–1958 evolved: only Home Army leadership stood “with a weapon at their side” while regular soldiers willing to fight were curbed and stopped by the top echelon. Nonetheless, the authorities returned in the 1960s to the promotion of the image of a passive Home Army in general⁵⁵.

In line with the censorship requirements regarding “political tendencies” Liskowacki presented the outbreak of the Uprising as chaotic in the context of general confusion, which led to the death of nearly the entire group of boys. Therefore, the political reading of the novel in the discussed instance could not raise any censorship reservations.

Another important, from the perspective of the Bureau, issue was the need to depict the achievements of the People’s Army in the struggle. But a lack of any content regarding the People’s Army did not offer basis for halting the novel. To somewhat justify the above-mentioned “mistakes” the censor concluded:

It [the novel – A.K.] thus lacks space for an even marginal treatment of left-wing combat forces. It is a story of a group of Warsaw youths who wished to fight but did not realise why the fight takes place so much later than they would expect⁵⁶.

⁵³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 599 (68/6), 1. 3.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Z. Romek, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

⁵⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 599 (68/6), 1. 3.

The issue of the author's attitude towards the Soviet Army, stationed at that time near Warsaw, was neither omitted. But a lack of a reaction over his rejection of the Polish Workers' Party's (PPR) program and the criticism and ridicule of the left-wing propagator during a meeting of the underground⁵⁷ indicated low interest on the part of the Bureau in the author's creating or describing the relations between individual underground fractions.

The final fragment of the review where the censor concluded: "It is indeed yet another novel about the Home Army, but considering its fundamentally different approach to the issue as well as the fact that it is Liskowacki's *début*, I support the permit for publication"⁵⁸ indicated that already in mid-1958 works raising the issue of the Home Army were approached reluctantly. The author knew that, hence intentional avoidance of naming the organisation. On the other hand, censors stopped focussing so much on the plot and concentrated on comparing elements of a novel with reality and the promoted assumptions of the authorities.

The group of prose works which were published upon intervention included a work by Jerzy Krzysztóń⁵⁹ entitled *Kamienne niebo* [Sky Made Of Stone]. It was the best example of a novel the plot of which was set during the Warsaw Uprising, but the story focussed on presenting the psychological aspects of the attitudes of the characters while avoiding any evaluation or specific account of the events. One departure from that was a scene in which the Uprising fighters were evaluated by their former professor⁶⁰, but the fragment was eventually censored. The officer, clearly impressed by the novel, focussed in his short review only on the tragedy: "The book drips with terror, terror of death which for six days slowly closed in on those buried alive. The author fortunately spared the readers the description of the final moments of suffocating in the cellar. What there is, is enough"⁶¹. The utterly pessimistic novel, though missing any inconvenient political elements, after intervention on page 58⁶², was published by Iskry publishing house in the suggested number of 10,000 copies.

⁵⁷ R. Liskowacki, *Po tamtej stronie życia*, Poznań 1958, p. 70–71.

⁵⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 599 (68/6), l. 3.

⁵⁹ Jerzy Krzysztóń did not participate in the Warsaw Uprising, but his biography related to the WWII period is particularly interesting. Aged nine, in 1940, while living in Grodno, he directly experienced Stalinist repression: his father was arrested by the NKVD and he, together with his mother and brother, were deported to Kazakhstan. Two years later he managed to join Gen. Anders' army forming in the USSR and with it he evacuated to the Middle East, to Persia, India and Uganda. In 1948, he returned to Poland. Vide J. Zawadzka, *Krzysztoń Jerzy*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 4, 1996, p. 408.

⁶⁰ J. Krzysztóń, *Kamienne niebo*, Poznań 1958, p. 58.

⁶¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 597 (68/4), l. 82.

⁶² Unfortunately, no report of the preventive inspection of the novel survived and it is difficult to state what type of intervention it entailed. One might only assume on the basis of the remaining text on pages 57 and 58 that it was related to the evaluation of the Uprising fighters as national heroes.

A novel entitled *Pejzaż dwukrotny* [Double Landscape] by Lesław Bartelski⁶³, a former officer at the Bureau of Information and Propaganda of the Home Army HQ in Częstochowa, raised many controversies. It was also an excellent example of how a group of censors with completely different views came to an agreement. Bartelski's manuscript was sent by the Czytelnik publishing house on 3 October 1958 for an application for a permit with a deadline of 10 October for 5,000 copies⁶⁴. The first extensive review by censor Rutkowski of 16 October clearly indicated that the novel could not be published. He mainly focussed on the analysis of the feelings of the characters, representatives of the Home Army lower ranks, whose actions were determined by the "underground habit", the "myth of discipline" and the "cult of loyalty" towards the Home Army leadership. The fact of Rutkowski's focussing on this psychological aspect led to the conclusion that the novel's title should be: *Bohaterowie są zmęczeni* [Heroes Are Tired]. Yet he reserved his biggest accusations against the text for the final part of the review, criticising the manner in which the author handled the issue of the youth within the ranks of the Home Army. Through "original and impressive" deduction he concluded that the novel was founded on historical fatalism and indicated the need to reject the heroic creation of people who displayed patriotism and ideological focus:

Bartelski handles the problem of Home Army youth not only ahistorically, but, what is even worse, fatalistically. Thus, he offers historical fatalism which turns those patriotic and ideology-focussed people into wrecks. [...] It is unacceptable to turn those people into such pompous characters who have the right (and that is the worst thing here) not to believe in anything [...] and that is a political problem. [...] They [the characters – A.K.] wish to endure in Warsaw [...]. Whether they will conspire remains unknown. Whether they will start new lives also remains unknown. Such an arrangement is politically (but also historically) detrimental and untrue. It elevates the Home Army mass as spotless heroes without absolving many of them of the evil that they had surely committed. [...] I believe the book is not appropriate for publication⁶⁵.

⁶³ Aged only nineteen Lesław Bartelski participated in the defence of Warsaw during the September Campaign. After the capital was captured by the Nazis, he was imprisoned. He escaped and returned to Warsaw. He was active in the creation of the underground as a member of ZWZ, later of the Home Army and he participated in the underground literary life. He took part in the Warsaw Uprising initially fighting in the Baszta Home Army regiment and then in the Headquarters of the 5th District in Mokotów, for which he received the Cross of Valour. After the Uprising he was taken to Świdnica as a forced labourer; he soon escaped to Częstochowa where he fulfilled the function of officer at the Office of Information and Propaganda of the Home Army HQ. In the early-1945, he returned to Warsaw soon becoming a member of the Polish Writers' Union. Vide A. Szalagan, *Bartelski Lesław*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 1, 1994, pp. 108–109.

⁶⁴ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 596 (68/3), l. 277.

⁶⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 596 (68/3), l. 290 [287–288].

Regardless of some of its contradictory passages, the review did present some fundamental conclusions. The accusation of its ahistorical nature indicated that, according to the authorities, the narrator should present the story in a way which would not contradict contemporary propaganda and at the same time it should remain in compliance with the pre-defined method of historical narration, it should offer an account of the past regardless of personal experiences or any ideas for making the story more attractive. The second accusation, regarding its fatalism, constituted in the eyes of the censor a confirmation of his own judgement about the optimistic Socialist realism convention applicable during the Stalinist times and still partially applicable at that time. However, the main flaw of the novel was the fact that it presented the heroism of Home Army soldiers, regardless of any division into lower ranks or top echelon.

The negative evaluation of the novel required another review by a different officer. Out of two “landscapes” (the period of the Warsaw Uprising and the following events) Podhorska selected the post-Uprising time and focussed on the participation of the main protagonist not in the fight for Warsaw but on his activities in the partisan forces. Apart from the murder of a soldier from Bering’s army, the somewhat idealised figure of the main protagonist, Nurt and the artificial (i.e. differing from the actual historical facts) nature of some of the scenes, she noticed in the novel many positive elements: the objective presentation of the Home Army underground, statements about the quick reconstruction of Warsaw, the lack of political reservations and the generally good impression which the book supposedly made. The proposed interventions applied to only four pages⁶⁶.

Having two contradictory reviews, it was necessary to hand the matter over to another censor who became an arbitrator issuing the final judgement⁶⁷. Therefore, in his review Stępkowski focussed mainly on undermining the arguments of Rutkowski, the author of the negative review. He began with the psychological analyses of the attitudes of the characters, whose behaviour he justified with the shock caused by the failure of the Uprising, thus rejecting the claim about the “historical fatalism” stating that: “The accusations of ahistorical and fatalist nature and objective falsehood [...] are, in my opinion, exaggerated, forced and biased”⁶⁸. Additionally, in the character of Bizun Strzępkowski he found a representative of Home Army top echelon and specifically defined him as a Sanation officer and a commander of the Freedom and Independence organisation, and positively evaluated Nurt’s opposition to his orders. Moreover, he saw originality

⁶⁶ Ibidem, I. 291 [292–293].

⁶⁷ In the event of a negative evaluation by the third censor and when confronted with the particularly favourable review by Podhorska, the novel could had been released to another officer for evaluation. As Kamila Budrowska stressed, in the case of controversial works the number of initial reviews could reach a dozen or even more. Vide K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁶⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 596 (68/3), I. 295.

in the creation of the main protagonist and his fictional fortunes explained using actual events:

To demand from the author for Nurt or others like him to immediately declare on whose side they are on [...] is to hanker for literature which is derivative and formulaic. We know what happened later to those people from our own observations and the most recent history [...] most of them entered active life. So what if it is missing from the book... maybe the author will write a sequel⁶⁹.

The suggestions to change the text applied to individual details on nine pages of the novel.

The third review concluded with a decision approving the book's publication upon applying a few interventions. However, for the novel to be approved for printing and editing required the decision to be made as a group and unanimously. First, through discussion, the group convinced Rutkowski to change his position, which he confirmed in writing on 30 October on one of the copies of his review⁷⁰. Then, there was a meeting of a commission composed of: Stępkowski, Świątycka and Szlajfer; they decided that interventions would be applied to five pages⁷¹. Specifically: on page 56⁷², the name Radkiewicz⁷³ was removed. The goal was to avoid ridiculing not so much the person (in 1957 Radkiewicz fell into disgrace among the Party) as the institution: the Public Security Ministry at the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN). On page 79 "Ukrainians" were replaced by "własowcy"⁷⁴, which made the passage historically incorrect as no troops associated with General Andrey Vlasov participated in the Warsaw Uprising. However, the 31. Schutzmannschafts-Bataillon der SD commanded by

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

⁷⁰ Rutkowski wrote: "In relation to the review by comrade Stępkowski and the discussion on the book I agree with the comments by comrade Stępkowski – to publication of the book with minor interventions" (ibidem, l. 297).

⁷¹ Ibidem, l. 291.

⁷² In the initial version of the text, after the Warsaw Uprising, Andrzej, one of the characters, said to Nurt: "– And what did you do with the rifle, you blockhead? You gave it to the museum or donated it for the poor at the brother Radkiewicz' shelter?" while in the published version Andrzej said: "[...] You gave it to museum or donated it for the poor?" (L. Bartelski, *Pejzaż dwukrotny*, Poznań 1958, p. 58). Vide AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 19.

⁷³ During the Warsaw Uprising, Stanisław Radkiewicz led the Public Security Ministry at PKWN (he fulfilled the function until the end of 1944). As a Minister of Public Security (since 1954) he was responsible for organising Stalinist terror in Poland according to the Soviet formula. In 1957, he was punished for Stalinist crimes and removed from PZPR only to be reinstated three years later.

⁷⁴ The fragment: "**The passage was risky, under machine gun fire from both sides – the Water Supply field was filled with Ukrainians of the worst kind [...]**" was changed to: "[...] filled with własowcy of the worst kind" (L. Bartelski, *op. cit.*, p. 79). Vide AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 20.

Petro Dyachenko did participate in the Uprising, thus Bartelski's censored description was accurate. The goal behind that intervention was probably to emphasise that collaborationist Ukrainian units of fascist bias participated in the Uprising to avoid fostering in Poles any aversion towards the USSR. For censors the term "własowcy" was mainly a metonymic encompassing Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians fighting with the Nazis against the USSR, however, it was also possible that the term was used at GUKPPiW in the form of a mistake⁷⁵ lingering until the present day⁷⁶.

Deeper interventions were made on page 102 where a fragment on the arrest of Gen. Leopold Okulicki, the last commander of the Home Army, was removed and new text was added. In that case, the censors' intervention was conducted quite ingeniously: by changing a few words the censor gave the entire fragment a new logical meaning (a blow for the characters was not the arrest of Okulicki anymore, but the loss of a radio station)⁷⁷. A certain blurring of the facts was introduced in another location. The deletion by censors of the "reactionary dwarf" caption underneath a poster made the fragment quite enigmatic; after the intervention the fragment could be interpreted in various ways, even contrary to what GUKPPiW had intended⁷⁸. The goal of the above-mentioned modifications was

⁷⁵ Jerzy Kirchmayer, general and historian, in his 1959 study, which also passed through GUKPPiW at the end of 1958, claimed that in Warsaw there fought the RONA Brigade (known for its particular cruelty towards the civilian population) while Vlasov was organising ROA. Therefore, the complete differentiation between the two units was visible and it was not changed by censorship. However, while writing his review one of the GUKPPiW officers considered as an obvious fact that "Vlasov's troops" operated during the Uprising and did not see a difference between the fact of organising the group and its participation in the fights. Vide J. Kirchmayer, *Powstanie Warszawskie*, Poznań 1959, p. 260, ref. 1; AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 38.

⁷⁶ *Gdyby Polacy wygrali w Warszawie* [Had Poles won in Warsaw]... [an interview by Bartosz T. Wieliński with Dr. Jochan Böhler], *Ale historia*, issue 176 ("Gazeta Wyborcza" supplement), 30 Jul 2012, p. 10; http://www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl/Archiwum/1,0,7628093,20120730RPTAH,Gdyby_Polacy_wygrali_w_Warszawie,zwykly.html [accessed on: 1.03.2014].

⁷⁷ The original text read: "You, dear cadet, must understand, how stations are hard to come by these days. How they are following hard on our heels from every side. You must know that Gen. Niedźwiadek was arrested two months ago in Pruszków? – I heard. – It was widely discussed. But why am I mentioning it, dear cadet. Those kind of blows strengthen our internal discipline. So I cannot just forget about the case of the radio station and its mysterious disappearance [...]" while after the intervention: "You, dear cadet, must understand, how stations are hard to come by these days. They are following hard on our heels from every side, we are losing people. – I understand. – I'm mentioning these matters, dear cadet, as those kind of blows strengthen our internal discipline and force us to work even harder. So I cannot just forget about the case of the radio station [...]" (L. Bartelski, *op. cit.*, p. 102). Vide AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 21.

⁷⁸ The meaning of the fragment: "[...] Irena thought she knew one of them [the youths – A.K.], the slender handsome dark-haired man. When passing her, they stopped and the handsome one looked insolently at her. – "Face of nothing!" laughed his companion. They came closer, self-assured, eyes fixed on Irena. When she turned back following their reaction she saw a poster. It was torn, faded, nearly completely indistinct. **She could still make out a part of the text: ... REAC-**

to avoid any possible associations with the repressive communist policy against the Home Army.

One of the main points during the preventive inspection was the author's presentation of the behaviour of the Red Army stationed a few dozen kilometres from the city during the heat of the Warsaw Uprising. Any statement that might have indicated that the Soviet leadership intentionally held the front underwent particularly careful analysis. The preventive inspection report indicates that for one of the censors even the sentence: "[Nurt – A.K.] was there once, he made his way with the boys to the Vistula as a cover unit – as the Home Army units from Rembertów, Praga, Anin fell back, waiting there for a contact with the Soviet Army"⁷⁹, though included in the published text, did raise considerable doubts. But the short fragment included at the beginning of the novel regarding the fighting on the outskirts of Warsaw was a narrative device generally accepted by the censors. That logically justified the lack of Soviet support as it was impossible considering the heavy fighting on the extensive front. The proposed text modifications presented above (on pages 56, 79, 192, 194, and 204) were sent to the publishing house where Kopyńska, chief editor of *Czytelnik*, was supposed to undertake negotiations with Bartelski. Moreover, the official note stated that the ending of the novel should also be altered:

I also indicated that the present handling of the book's conclusion on page 235 could be understood completely differently as the bureau cannot intervene here; I asked comrade Kopyńska to request the publishing house to re-consider the text on this page. I was assured that she will do so. Answer received⁸⁰.

On 7 November, nearly a month after the deadline specified by *Czytelnik*, GUKPPiW issued a print permit upon introduction of the interventions⁸¹. The publishing house complied with the obligatory changes on five pages, but it did not introduce the optional re-editing of the ending.

* * *

TIONARY DWARF. The young men left exchanging ironic grins. They clicked their heels like professional army men. They returned once more and the handsome dark-haired one said loudly while looking at the poster: – “Face of nothing!” [..]” (L. Bartelski, *op. cit.*, p. 194 – underscore A.K.), after the sentence in bold was removed and the third after it was left, became even more mysterious. Vide AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 22. Soon after Soviet troops entered Poznań there began to appear posters with the representatives of the new authorities (e.g. Michał Rola-Żymierski or Wanda Wasilewska) so the intervention made the interpretation unclear.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, l. 20.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, ref. no. 596 (68/3), l. 291.

⁸¹ Ibidem, l. 277–278.

The “Summary of interventions” within the period of 1 July 1957 – 15 June 1958 and the 1958 “List of items halted by censorship” indicate that within that period no poetry collection which directly raised the topic of the Warsaw Uprising was halted. Thus, within the specified period, the method of censoring collections of poems regarding the fighting in Warsaw was no different from the general principle of censorship⁸². Compositions which contained unwelcome content were simply eliminated from the collections and the permit applied to the remaining ones. One interesting case was the attempt to change the title of a poem by Ficowski, which eventually proved futile.

In 1956–1958, censorship did not particularly focus on “tracing” in poetry elements related to the Uprising which offered ambiguous interpretations. Poems with extensive metaphors based on political allusions were consciously or sub-consciously filtered through the control bureau’s requirements. Poetry referring to the fighting, the tragic image of the Uprising or the memory of the fallen was also accepted by censorship. Furthermore, the fact of a previous publication of a work in literary journals, i.e. the fact that it had previously been approved, could, depending on the situation, serve as an argument for publishing the entire collection (mainly in 1956) or ignored (since mid-1957). It seems it was associated with the bureau’s conviction of poetry’s elitist nature and its minor social influence.

Novels, on the other hand, were subjected to a more complex censorship process which indicated the existence of various degrees of intervention. They could be divided into two main groups: novels published without any interventions (not raising any political issues or free of any evaluation of the Uprising and focussing on social or psychological issues; e.g. *Obok zagłady* by Łopalewski) and texts in which the authors attempted to handle the issue in a generalist manner (e.g. Bartelski in *Pejzaż dwukrotny*). The third group (halted novels) remained “empty”, but a significant indication are in archival sources from mid-1958 referring to factual genres. Reviews included important traces indicating that poetry and prose works with extensive stories were disowned and the preferred type included texts describing in a “faithful” or “scientific” manner the past events without the detrimental, in the view of censorship, “glorification of the Home Army”. It seems that the topic of the Warsaw Uprising, which constituted a part of the so-called Home Army problem area, started to be considered unwelcome⁸³ in mid-1958 at the latest, which was immediately reflected in GUKPPiW decisions.

As the above editorial stories indicate, censors did not acknowledge the existence of literary fiction in their interpretations or considered it to a minimal and minor extent, every time referring to the “historical” image of the past created by the communist propaganda. Whenever faced with ambiguity in setting the time, defining a given organisation or individual characters they always referred to the reality: the

⁸² K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁸³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 611 (68/21), l. 2, 3.

historical context and the political meaning. The goal was to assess whether a text adhered on the whole to the pre-established “objective truth”. Fictitious characters were analysed by censors as representatives of a specific social group (organisation) whose features were supposed to present certain established models.

Additionally, the reviews (regardless of many internal contradictions) offered a specific method of reading novels which raised the topic of the Warsaw Uprising. They included certain fixed control elements, i.e. reference between the story and the reality, the censor finding positive aspects of the work, outlining political problems (this offered greater discrepancy: the sense of the Uprising, “standing with a weapon by one’s side”), the outbreak of fighting, the attitude towards other nationalities (hatred towards the Germans and the so-called “własowcy”), the method of presenting soldiers with a division into lower ranks and top echelon, the significance of their role and the political superficiality, the definition of the author’s attitude towards the People’s Army, the Polish First Army and the Soviet Army (the issue of passiveness during the Uprising), whether the publication was the author’s début and the general meaning of the book. The presence of the above-mentioned issues in reviews proves that censors possessed detailed guidelines regarding the interpretation of items related not only to the Home Army problem area but also to the Warsaw Uprising. The reviews also displayed a specific perspective, sometimes artificial, for the reading of novels as a juxtaposition of regular Home Army soldiers with the leadership or the Uprising fighters (as a uniform group) with civilians not participating in the fighting. Such a device was particularly important for approaching the issue of “standing with the weapon by one’s side”, which was only to apply to the top echelon of the Home Army, the London government and the Government Delegation for Poland. If a future publication did not meet this criterion, the censors would “let it slide” and issue a publication permit and at the same time would ostentatiously raise an alarm and emphasise the “flaw” of the novel.

Critical reviews did not affect the fact of granting a publication permit, even without any corrections (as in the case of the novel by R. Liskowacki entitled *Po tamtej stronie życia*). In those conditions, not only texts which handled the topic of the Warsaw Uprising superficially focussing on the psychology, the experiences of regular inhabitants had a high chance of being published in an almost unchanged version, but also novels and poems which referred to political problems, preferably not in a too pungent manner. Nonetheless, it was unacceptable to recall the slogans or the methods used by the propaganda during the Uprising: the slogan “Home Army, the disgusting reactionary dwarf” was removed from texts of all types. The situation was different in the case of the control of press where infrequent instances when the slogan was tolerated did occur⁸⁴.

⁸⁴ Cf. C. Kalkusiński, ***, “Życie Literackie” 17 Jun 1956, issue 25 (230) p. 11; J. Ficowski. *Plwocina*, “Życie Literackie” 24 Feb 1957, issue 8 (266), p. 5.

Any negative statement about the Soviet Army, let alone its passiveness during the Warsaw Uprising, was unconditionally removed. The same applied to national issues: the presentation of the Germans as dehumanised oppressors was considered by censorship as an advantage of a work while if a text included passages referring to Ukrainians fighting on Wehrmacht's side, they would always be replaced with the still non-existent "własowcy" term.

Finally, authors were among the non-literary factors which could ensure a positive disposition of censorship towards a given text. Those making their début, publishing their works in state publishing houses (MON publishing house in particular) and most of all members of the Home Army were allowed to do more than others. A publication which described the Warsaw Uprising in line with GUKPPiW guidelines written by an actual witness to the events was an indirect confirmation of the communist "objective truth" about the Uprising.

The years 1956–1958 were clearly a period of liberalisation. After almost a decade of non-existence the topic of the Warsaw Uprising re-appeared in literature. Since 1956 the Bureau received poems which were an instant response to the changes in the country, though they were not free of the evident self-censorship on the part of their authors. Longer prose pieces appeared in 1957, a year which was special because of the exceptionally lax censors' approach. But already in 1958 the level of criticism towards texts raising the topic of the Home Army intensified, which in turn resulted in a decrease of the presence of the topic in belles-lettres.

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Agnieszka Kloc

**Censorship Towards the Subject of the Warsaw Uprising in Belles-Lettres
in 1956–1958**

(Summary)

Right from the beginning, the subject of the Warsaw Uprising was often manipulated or even entirely erased from public discourse under the Stalinist regime. It was only after the liberalization of culture and the easing of censorship-related repressions that the said topic returned in literature. The paper focuses on the censorship bureau's approach to the image of the Uprising presented by writers. Moreover, it attempts to specify – on the basis of specific examples – the kind of content that was accepted, rejected or amended. The juxtaposition of censors' documents and the content of the published works allows for the examination of the depth of censors' interventions and their methods of manipulating historical facts. Those areas of special interest include: presentation of the division among the insurgents who were supposed to belong either to the brave ordinary soldiers or the passive leadership, as well as the attitude towards the People's Army, the First Polish Army, the Home Army or the Red Army, with special regard for its passiveness during the Uprising.

Keywords: Warsaw Uprising, censorship in Polish People's Republic

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***The Issa Valley* in Censorship Documents On the Thaw Reception of Czesław Miłosz's Novel**

“One of the books, unknown to the so-called ‘wider audience’, reached with difficulty, a book the fortunate owner of which will not want to give it to fellow man, unless he/she receives in return *Journey to the End of the Night* or *The Vatican Cellars*. White cover paper. Czesław Miłosz *The Issa Valley*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1955”.

(J.M. Rymkiewicz, *Materiały do portretu dziecięcia Europy*; a fragment of a removed review of *The Issa Valley*; 1957)

The Issa Valley by Czesław Miłosz, first printed in the initial six issues of the Paris-based *Kultura* in 1955, was published in the same year by Instytut Literacki as the 10th volume of the *Kultura* Library and, in spite of censorship, gradually began to reach Polish readers. The goal of this chapter is to, on the one hand, trace the reception of the novel during the thaw period in the light of official national publications and in the light of Control Office documents on the other.

Issued and halted reception proofs

The novel, appreciated by both Paris and London emigre communities¹, was also recognised nationally, though not as much as *The Captive Mind* or *A Poetic Treatise*. The lack of a wider interest in the book could not be explained by the fact of “assigning” it to Miłosz as the year of its double publication was also the year in which Miłosz was once again discussed in the national commentaries spurred by the September publication of a story entitled *Nim będzie zapomniany*

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¹ Londyńczyk [J. Mieroszewski], *Najwybitniejsza książka roku 1955*, “Kultura” (Paris) 1956, issue 4, p. 92.

[Before He Is Forgotten]² and a polemic response by Flaszen to the story by Brandys³. The voices raised in the Polish cultural and literary journals between the autumn of 1955 and autumn of 1957 were proof of mainly critical attitudes towards the emigre writer. Commentators mainly focussed on Miłosz as the author of *The Captive Mind* and their delayed “reception” (because of censorship) obscured the writer’s most recent publications, particularly because they reached Poland with some delay. Because of the lack of a publication permit in Poland, Paris-based *Kultura* did not reach Polish readers⁴, which they often complained about in press releases, which were consistently removed by censorship. Therefore, in 1956, there was almost no evidence of the reception of *The Issa Valley*. There were also relatively few in 1957. Censorship documents are also free of any traces of attempted re-prints of fragments of the novel, though there was a place in Poland for a fragment of Miłosz’s first novel entitled *The Seizure of Power*⁵, while in 1957 individual parts of *A Poetic Treatise*⁶ and other poems by Miłosz were published and there were a relatively large number of discussions about them. The faint interest in the novel could only be explained by its absence or its delayed availability since the often referenced *A Poetic Treatise* was published a few months later than the novel. It might also have been a result of self-censorship: the knowledge that the Control Office intervened in texts related to the Borderlands theme and those reminding, if only allusively, of the ethnically complicated past as well as the present of those areas. Moreover, *The Issa Valley* was not a work for which the fragments could function as “winged words” or comments on disputes and polemics of contemporary times, while that was exactly how both *Treaties* functioned (in the form of quotes or crypto-quotes) (cf. sub-chapter *Winged words*). The fact that the majority of comments about Miłosz at that time were critical, entering into polemic with his political views, was not insignificant and perhaps

² K. Brandys, *Nim będzie zapomniany*, “Nowa Kultura” 1955, issue 38.

³ L. Flaszen, *O trudnym kunszcie womitowania*, “Życie Literackie” 1955, issue 44.

⁴ Paris-based “Kultura”’s national publishing permit was officially revoked by the order of the Main Director of GUKPPiW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) of 3 July 1950. A communication discovered in a censorship documents at the State Archive in Poznań sent out from the central office to all voivodship Control Bureaus read: “Pursuant to Art. 2 Para. 1 Letter B of the Resolution of the Prime Minister dated 9 May 1949 on the organisation and functions of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows and subordinate bureaus (J. of L. of the Republic of Poland No. 32 Item 24), I hereby revoke the publication permit and prohibit the propagation of the “Kultura” journal published in Polish in Paris”. Considering the date when the communication was sent to divisions, the ban was actually binding since mid-July 1950 [cf. APP, WUKPPiW in Poznań, ref. no. 14, l. 39].

⁵ The fragment was included in the December issue of “Życie Literackie” of 1956 (issue 52/53, pp. 5–6) where it received a commentary by W. Maciąg (*Miary protestu*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 52/53, pp. 5, 14).

⁶ *A Poetic Treatise* [fragments], “Ziemia i Morze” 1957, issue 1, p. 4; *Oda*, “Ziemia i Morze” issue 6, p. 2.

even decisive. Through its disparity and apolitical nature, *The Issa Valley* did not qualify as a target for attacks. That reception paradox was confirmed in the very first Polish text referring to *The Issa Valley* – a column entitled *Piękno i polityka* [Beauty and Politics] by Zygmunt Lichniak, published on the penultimate page of the Christmas issue of the PAX-published *Kierunki* journal concluding the year 1956⁷. In fact, the book was also referenced by Tadeusz Byrski, who praised it, though those were only fringe remarks in an article on poetry⁸.

In 1957, two more reviews of the book were published: by Irena Sławińska⁹ and Jan Błoński¹⁰ and also remarks by Jerzy Zawieyski were included in fragments of a journal published in *Twórczość*¹¹. Additionally, important material offering an account of the reception of the novel can be found in the Control Office documents. A report made after a preventive inspection of Łódź journals in 1957 offers an interesting archival resource in the form of an extensive, in-depth and very favourable review of Miłosz' discussion of *The Issa Valley* submitted for publication with *Kronika* by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz, at that time assistant lecturer of the University of Lodz Polish Studies. The article was entitled *Materiały do portretu dziecięcia Europy* [Material for the Portrait of the Child of Europe] and it was, among those already found, the most extensive text on Miłosz removed in its entirety by censorship¹². A review of censorship's "thaw" folders revealed four more findings regarding the item. The first one was an intervention into a review by Jan Błoński¹³ included in *Przegląd Kulturalny* material. The remaining three can be found in folders documenting the operations of publishing houses (this will be discussed later): two regarding attempted publications of the novel in the domestic market¹⁴ and the third regarding the publication of an essay collection by Jerzy Zawieyski, which included a commentary to Miłosz's novel¹⁵.

In the chronologically first Polish text on *The Issa Valley* Lichniak clearly, though not directly, indicated the ambivalence surrounding Miłosz displayed by contemporary polemics about the author of *The Captive Mind*: while his literary

⁷ "Kierunki" 1956, issue 32/33, p. 11.

⁸ Byrski stated: "After WWII, a new source of the excellent poet emerged: prose. I do not intend to write about his *The Captive Mind* or *The Seizure of Power*. They are too difficult to evaluate. They include many excellent fragments which will be inscribed in history, yet his passion for polemic forced him to produce excessively contemporary assessments. I wish to highlight an excellent book which offers a revitalising source of childhood memories: *The Issa Valley* (year 1955). The author who seemed to had found the proper way of expression only in poetry turned out to be a very good prose writer as well.

⁹ I. Sławińska, *To jest daleki kraj...*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 1957, issue 16.

¹⁰ J. Błoński, *Dolina Issy*, "Przegląd Kulturalny", issue 24 (13–19 June 1957), pp. 10–11.

¹¹ J. Zawieyski, *Nad książkami w roku 1956*, "Twórczość" 1957, issue 10/11, p. 47.

¹² AAN, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 475 (37/32), l. 142.

¹³ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 510 (39/27), l. 109.

¹⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 268]; AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 14.

¹⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW; Training and Documentation Unit; ref. no. 1809, l. 80.

talent was appreciated and his poetry admired, he was criticised for his attitude, his escape and his views on the involvement of intellectuals in communism. Lichniak who himself criticised Miłosz in the first issue of *Dziś i Jutro* in 1956 for *The Captive Mind*¹⁶, praised *The Issa Valley* in the final issue of *Kierunki*:

“*The Issa Valley* is beautiful”, I told Mikołaj, “read it and decide for yourself. You were a poet, you are a politician, you can help me get approval for an evaluation that in the case of Miłosz we can and we should also gather the strength to praise that apocalyptic beauty”. Mikołaj read it and said: “*The Issa Valley* is beautiful”. Something between an epic steel engraving of childhood memories and a lyrical very soft gouache of poetic prose, musing on the charms of Lithuanian landscapes, customs, the atmosphere of the land which you refer to in the moment of defeat: thou art like good health... In all that you can spot the hand of a good craftsman perfecting every detail with cool consideration and hot emotion¹⁷.

By stressing the apocalyptic nature of the novel, Lichniak wanted to clearly differentiate between the evaluation of Miłosz’s political views and the evaluation of his thematically different Lithuanian prose. He went on presenting with subtle irony the paradox in the reception of the work in the context of how the author’s attitude was perceived:

Again pain dominates the question: how could he have done such a book? And how is it that he writes such poems...

I lend colleague Z. *The Issa Valley*. He also read it and admitted that he cannot say that “it is ugly”. But that he must and can say that other thing. And went on about the Lithuanian passport. “Why exactly Lithuania?” he asked. I tried to explain that it basically makes no difference, that actually it might as well be Mesopotamia. He eventually waved it off. I got the impression that he mucked something¹⁸.

The quoted dialogue concisely and accurately reflects the thaw discussions about Miłosz and the problems the Polish critics had with *The Issa Valley*. Another proof is the bizarre note included in the August issue of *Nowa Kultura* in 1956. Its title: *The Issa Valley* was misleading as actually the author meant to condemn Miłosz for emigrating, the act of condemning, magnified by outside importance, was assigned to a French critic from *Le Figaro Litteraire* who in turn quoted a fragment of the introduction by Jaspers to *The Captive Mind*. That layered criticism was presumably aimed at authenticating the evaluation of Miłosz (since they

¹⁶ Z. Lichniak, *Spojrzenie z ukosa, ale nie zezem*, “Dziś i Jutro” 1956, issue 1.

¹⁷ Idem, *Piękno i polityka*, “Kierunki” 1956, issue 32/33, p. 11.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

in the West write like that about him...) but also to relieve the commentator of *Nowa Kultura* (anonymous in fact) of responsibility for the words:

The Issa Valley is the title of the third book in succession by Czesław Miłosz translated into French. The two previous ones were *The Captive Mind* and *The Seizure of Power*. When presenting a rather extensive summary of the story of Miłosz's book the critic of *Le Figaro Littéraire* quoted instead of his own an evaluation by a well-known existentialist writer. "In the introduction to *The Captive Mind*, Karl Jaspers," wrote Jean Blauzot, "emphasised what was typical and tragic in the case of Miłosz, an intellectual emigre": "Even if he (Miłosz) manages to acquire a new passport, he will be cut off from his roots. What can he become in spiritual, moral, and human terms"¹⁹.

The words of the French existentialist, taken out of context from the *Introduction*, were supposed to apply to a broader context. But the author of the note failed to mention this, plus the majority of *Nowa Kultura* readers probably did not know the introduction and only a few were able to read Miłosz's book. Thus, the information about *The Issa Valley* proved to be only a pretext for yet another attack on the emigre poet.

Another chronologically consecutive proof of the negative reception of *The Issa Valley* was a review by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz entitled *Materiały do portretu dziecięcia Europy* that was removed by censorship.

Materiały do portretu dziecięcia Europy

The text submitted to *Kronika* is worth mentioning extensively as it has never been published. Upon the introduction, which particularly alarmed the censor (cf. motto of this article), Rymkiewicz, by alluding to the ambivalent perception of Miłosz, tried to shift the focus to the apolitical values of his output:

I am convinced that out of all Miłosz's books published abroad, it is *The Issa Valley* – and not *The Seizure of Power* or *The Captive Mind*, attractive also for non-literary reasons – that could become a bestseller in Poland, a book of the season. In this case, it would gather many devoted readers. We should include among them all those who in their IDs in the *place of birth* section have the abbreviation: USSR (...) ²⁰

¹⁹ [author missing] "Nowa Kultura", issue 35 of 26 Aug 1956.

²⁰ Cf. Preventive inspection report no. 77/57; "Kronika" issue 8 of 16–30 Apr 57 [AAN, WUKP-PiW ref. no. 475 (37/32), l. 142].

The highlighting of the novel's biographical inspirations approximated it to topics forbidden by censorship and could have influenced the final decision to remove the article. Rymkiewicz, presenting the main plot, makes a reference to Mickiewicz. However, it was not the Lithuanian theme of the work that seemed the most important:

When writing about Miłosz's novel, the critic was ready to summarise the work using a crafty subtitle: *Dolina Issy czyli ostatni dwór polski na Litwie. Historia szlachecka z XX wieku* [The Issa Valley, or the last Polish manor in Lithuania. Nobility history from the 20th c.] And that was it. But the first layer, interesting only because of its morals, did not determine the value of the work. What was more important was the attempt to take an attitude towards the past which has been uncommon in Polish literature. Miłosz the prose writer remained in line with his poetic expression of 1947:

Wybacz mi, proszę, brak tego wzruszenia,
Które prowadzi przemocą z powrotem
W miejsca i wiosny dawno zapomniane,
Aby maluczki uwodził poeta
Patriotycznym sentymentem, serce
Cisnął stęsknione i farbując łzy
Mieszal dzieciństwo, młodość, okolice.
Mnie to niemiłe

[Forgive me, please, the lack of that emotion,
Which led by force back
To the places and springs long forgotten,
For the little people to be seduced by the poet
With a patriotic sentiment, the heart
He tossed yearning and dying the tears
Mixed childhood, youth, the surroundings.
That is unpleasant to me.]

he wrote in a poem entitled *On a Bird's Song Heard on the Banks of the Potomac*. *The Issa Valley* seems to have been created with complete awareness that when one looks into the *Lakes of the past*: "tafla ich rdzą powleczone inną ukaże twarz niż się spodziewałeś" [their russet face shall present differently than you would expect.] The Materials for the portrait of the child of Europe are yellowed, frayed and difficult to decipher. Therefore, there is a danger of blurring the text and finding various interpretations for it. The changeability and uncertainty of the past requires the person recreating it to maintain a distance from the events he/she describes. The author was able to maintain that distance by assuming the po-

sition of a chronicler or by creating characters and perceiving the world through their eyes. An approach similar to that of Mickiewicz when he wrote *Ballads and Romances*. By attempting to describe the Invisible Force operating on the banks of the Issa, the moving columns of steam and creatures with three Tatar heads, reaching for motifs of a folk song, (maybe even the same one that Mickiewicz used*), Miłosz reached for a writing technique and a manner of perception similar to that used in *Ballads and Romances*. It seems quite appropriate to recall his words in *A Semi-Private Letter about Poetry*: “Were I to read *Ballads and Romances* as we read them at school, I would have to come to the conclusion that the author of *Zima miejska* [Urban Winter] was childish in them and I would not be able to explain their place within his output. I love them for all the shades of distance Mickiewicz displayed towards Nowogródek songs and tales, a distance full of careful praise, for his embodiments of the characters of hunters and maidens, for his abundance of skills for underlining intricacies and the use of simple language. It is a work of artistic irony (not irony in the common sense)”.

Miłosz stressed several times that he was given the role of a chronicler. However, to maintain that role, to conduct that game to the end, is not easy. Surely it was difficult for the chronicler to keep his distance, remain only a cool or even a sensitive observer when he was bound to the events he described by many threads of emotion and sentiment. The approach did not fail him when he was outlining the setting of the great adventure of Tomasz Dilbin, when he presented the mixture of folk beliefs, politics, nationalist resentments, when he introduced the reader to the intricacies of the family tree of the Surkonts and the Dilbins. However, in the 1948/1949 narrative poem entitled *Toast* [The Toast], the chronicler’s pen was more virulently and menacingly. In *The Issa Valley*, that pen became slightly quieter and kinder. How to describe demons, which, wearing the dress of Immanuel Kant of Królewiec, live on the Issa? Forces which regardless of whether they can help or harm man are helpless when it comes to his will? The kind sound of the pen, that is the first sign of menace which consists of surrendering to sentiment. That is why Miłosz more often used the other method of maintaining distance and perceived the valley of the Issa through the eyes of his characters. Thus, even when using warm and kind words, he strived to avoid perceiving distant times through the rainbow of a tainted teardrop²¹.

It was symptomatic that the author of the review revealed an excellent knowledge of all Miłosz’s works, including commentaries, and used it to present *The Issa Valley* as a continuation, though formally different, of previously raised themes as well as a work to which Miłosz’s later works referred (at that time, Rymkiewicz shared many of Miłosz’s views. The author of *A Poetic Treatise* would become an ally of the future creator of contemporary classicism in the dispute with Przyboś’

²¹ Ibidem.

avant-garde). The interpretative context, apart from the clearly important Mickiewicz, included both Miłosz's previous works and *A Poetic Treatise* published after *The Issa Valley*:

Surely the readers will not discover anything psychologically sensational in the description of Tomasz's childhood. The question: why one becomes who he/she is and not someone else? must be shared by every child. Tomasz discovers the world just like we all used to once. Thus, we will find in *The Issa Valley* accounts of the first encounter with books, of the first encounter with the phenomenon of death and passing, of the first musings on the laws governing the life of plants and animals. The world of snakes and bees, the kingdom of birds – that is the valley of the Issa seen through the eyes of Tomasz. There are also other worlds, enclosed in books, which bring about the visions of distant countries and stories from several centuries back. All that patiently awaits to be discovered and Tomasz will rip the curtains of childhood, one by one. Hieronim Surkont, Arian, will introduce him to the house of history, Romuald Bukowski, his neighbour, to the house of nature.

(...) The narrator of Miłosz's novel remains hidden, he views the world through the eyes of a naive child and his knowledge of the expected does not exceed Tomasz's knowledge. Thus, the reader as well shall discover new things each time. It is not the first time that Miłosz assumed the attitude of a naive observer. If the recurrence of the circumstances: the gate overgrown with vines, beetles hiding in the hot bottom of peonies and orchids, is not enough to identify the similarity, then the scene with a map where under the boy's fingertips rush small horses and dogs, and people no bigger than ants should immediately bring to mind the correct association. That is *Świat, poema naiwne* [The World, Naive Poems]. By repeating the method of perception the developed there Miłosz's win is twofold: he maintains the distance to past emotions avoiding the all too common in literature teary memoir sentimentality and presents the obvious psychological conditions of a child in the form of discoveries.

The Issa Valley has some other links with Miłosz's poetry. A careful critic will find them mainly in the mode of constructing the image, similar to that in novels and poetic works. If interpreted using a dictionary, the epithets used by the poet and the prose writer would seem identical. But that is not what I mean at this point. It is also necessary to postpone any attempt at finding in Miłosz's narrative poetry motifs, and there are plenty of those, which, previously only signalled with a few strokes, become expanded in *The Issa Valley*, even receiving their own fictional subplots. Two most important similarities linking the novel to the poet's other works are, first of all, the above-mentioned similarity of the attitude of the writer and author of *The World* and, secondly, the fact of raising in *The Issa Valley* the same themes as in the fourth part of *A Poetic Treatise* entitled Nature. Both in his poetry and *A Poetic Treatise*, Miłosz attempted to describe the relationship between man and nature presenting his idea of

the relations and differences which exist between us and the kingdom which cannot be described in words. (...) ²²

Rymkiewicz proceeded to offer some quotes from *A Poetic Treatise* to indicate the similarities between a narrative poem and the novel in their view of nature as that which links man to the animal world. He also quoted fragments of the poem *Miłość* [Love] from the narrative poem *Świat* [The World] to indicate the possibility of a unity with nature even though the human mind remains on the borderline marked by civilisation. Tomasz's story concludes with him exiting the Arcadian world. What is interesting is the style of the review. By utilising poetic devices, the author lyricised his own language foreshadowing his poetic talent which he revealed in some years:

“All there is, is to wish you luck, Tomasz”. That simple sentence concluding the story I read as ironic. “All there is, is to wish you luck, Tomasz”. The island of joy, to which you can never go back, you are leaving, still unaware; but History already awaits you, rather cruel one. A careful reader will find you on the pages of *The Seizure of Power*. Underneath the wheels of a departing aeroplane you will see a country covered with snow for centuries. Born on the Issa, in the last Soplicowo, you shall be called: the child of Europe ²³.

A censor by the name of Damian Kulak initially did not plan to remove the entire text, as the justification in the intervention card suggested:

Article halted to be discussed with GUKP (in line with the instruction not to promote this type of authors). Additionally, I believe that if it receives a publication permit, the initial remarks of the reviewer should be removed ²⁴.

Therefore, he had some reservations not in relation to the theme of the article submitted for verification but to the author himself. The censor's uncertainty and a lack of readiness to make an independent decision was significant. The need to consult with his central supervisors (who eventually halted the article) proved that applicable provisions were unclear or that there was an unwritten practice in the bureau of gradual tempering their usage. Bear in mind that the intervention was made on 13 April, i.e. after the Polish press published fragments of Miłosz's works as well as numerous discussions of his output ²⁵ and, even more important

²² Ibidem.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ Cf. i.a. R. Matuszewski, *O Traktacie poetyckim Czesława Miłosza*, “Nowa Kultura” 1957, issue 8, pp. 2, 7; J. Kwiatkowski, *Poeta epoki*, “Życie Literackie” 1957, issue 11, p. 3.

in that case, before two reviews of *The Issa Valley* were published. In less than two weeks after the rejection of Rymkiewicz's discussion, *Tygodnik Powszechny* published two articles sympathetic towards Miłosz: a review of *The Issa Valley* by Irena Sławińska and an article about his poetry by Zdzisław Łapiński²⁶. The review of *The Issa Valley* by Błoński was published in June. What does the chronology indicate? Since it was permitted to not only mention Miłosz but also publish texts sympathetic to him (an exception applied to praises of *The Captive Mind*²⁷) the reason for the intervention must have lay outside censorship regulations. Probably the article was removed because the Łódź-based *Kronika* remained under careful supervision of censors, particularly since the first issue when the insolent editorial board tried, to no avail, to publish a fragment of *The Captive Mind*²⁸. It could have influenced the tightening of Łódź Control Office approach to the journal. Had Rymkiewicz's article ended up on the desk of another censor or had it been sent to another periodical, it would have been published as in the case of permitting the publication in *Tygodnik Powszechny* of the review by Irena Sławińska.

Approved for publication

The review was published in the Easter issue of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Its author offered Miłosz's novel many kind words calling it "exceptional", "charming and so shocking". She noted its humanistic layer which enclosed the tragedy but also the beauty of human experience. The narration of the novel is conducted from the position of a wise and mature person, though, at the same time, emotionally engaged in the issues of the presented world. "In that world," wrote the author of the review, "there is basically no judgement about man, there is no fault, there is only the tragic nature of the clash of the great power of necessity or passion". Miłosz's book was particularly close to the author of the review also because of her origin. Born in Vilnius, Sławińska studied at Stefan Batory University. Therefore, the former inhabitant of the Borderlands, aware of the possible problems with censorship, even though she mentions the national disputes referred to in the novel, she also tried, as Miłosz himself intended, to indicate the universal character of the novel's world ("It is a distant, unique, exotic coun-

²⁶ I. Sławińska, *To jest daleki kraj...*, Z. Łapiński, *I z ruchu zebrać moment wieczny*, "Tygodnik Powszechny", 1957, issue 16 of 21.04.57, p. 9–10.

²⁷ Though, in that case one could also find inconsistencies, e.g. in the form of an article by A. Mularczyk and K. Dziewanowski defending *The Captive Mind* from Kałużyński's attack (cf. *Wielki konflikt i... makulatura*, "Świat" 1956, issue 47).

²⁸ Cf. chapter on *The Captive Mind*.

try, as if outside the borders of Europe and the 20th century”), which was not negatively affected by referring as the context *On the Niemen* by Orzeszkowa and Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* as works mythicising the Lithuanian space. The universal character is further confirmed by metaphysical subplots in the novel when “God and Satan enter Miłosz’s poetic world. He enters together with the man from the Issa, with his naive unconventional faith but also outside that, as if from the narrator himself”.

The folder containing prevention inspection reports of *Tygodnik Powszechny* of 1957, though full of various material, lacks any traces of interventions into Irena Sławińska’s review. The Control Bureau was less benign when handling the other review of the novel: Jan Błoński’s published in June in *Przegląd Kulturalny*. According to the report card, the text was submitted for inspection on 12 June and was evaluated by two officers of the Bureau. In the form, it was marked that an intervention was “necessary”. Fragments struck out by the first censor (in the card in black pencil) are marked below in bold in square brackets:

[It is a story (more of a story that a novel) about everything that was “before”, that is before the protagonist became a European, a Pole, a citizen of the 20th century.] The prehistory of an individual: exactly in that sense that the individual has not yet managed, at least consciously, to enter history.

(...)

Tomasz also meets a teen-aged boy who profanes the host wishing God will strike him with lightning. He also suffered from a “secret illness”. **[One might assume that the son of a landless widow will become a communist in the future: and he will try to give some meaning to life. But the poet has, considering his calling, some other more spontaneous solution in store.]**

(...)

The Issa Valley was published by *Kultura* in Paris in 1955. Soon, it will be published in Poland as well²⁹.

The second censor added his own corrections (correcting the first censor as well) in green ink, limiting, both in the case of the first and the second fragment, his interventions as much as possible, at the same time removing the note about the planned publication of the novel in Poland. The final version of the article was the version after the second intervention:

²⁹ Preventive inspection report no. 25, “Przegląd Kulturalny”, issue 25, [AAN, GUKPPiW; ref. no. 510 (39/27), l. 109.]. The text was published in issue 24 of “Przegląd Kulturalny”.

It is a story (more a story than a novel) about everything that was “before”. The pre-history of an individual: exactly in that sense that the individual has not yet managed, at least consciously, to enter history.

(...)

Tomasz also meets a teen-aged boy who profanes the host wishing God will strike him with lightning. He also suffered from a “secret illness”. One might assume that the son of a landless widow will become a communist in the future: and he will try give some meaning to life. But a poet has – another solution.

(...)

The Issa Valley was published by *Kultura* in Paris in 1955³⁰.

The first intervention proved that censors read Błoński’s review carefully, particularly his remarks on the autobiographic nature of the novel (for the artist “his own past constitutes (...) creative material”). Therefore, seeing in Miłosz the prototype of Tomasz, they removed the kind words about the author that in adulthood the protagonist became “a European, a Pole, the citizen of the 20th century” in line with the principle not to present Miłosz in too favourable a light. The intervention in the second fragment was eventually limited to the removal of the phrase belittling the new faith which stated that the choice of communism is a “quite non-spontaneous solution” for the peasant protagonist. The final deletion (regarding the information that the novel will be published in Poland) heralded the tightening of the publishing policy. It preceded the October decision of the Control Bureau to remove *The Issa Valley* from the announced publications of Wydawnictwo Literackie for the first quarter of 1958³¹, which proved synonymous to a rejection of the publication permit application.

In the censorship documentation of publishers

In the report card after the title and technical details regarding a given item, the publisher included a description. It deserves closer inspection for two reasons: first, the period of the novel’s plot was slightly shifted forward, second, the author of the note stressed the novel’s image of the relationship with nature limiting as much as possible any references to history, possibly in order to appease censorship through emphasising the book’s apolitical nature:

³⁰ J. Błoński, *The Issa Valley*, pp. 10–11.

³¹ Report of preventive inspection of Publishing announcements no. 40; Book documentation (reviews, interventions). Various publishers, cat. A; [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 268].

The novel includes various biographic elements. The story is set in Lithuania during WWI and in the years directly preceding it. However, it almost does not reach the consciousness of the protagonist, a talented boy by the name of Tomasz. Unaware of the laws of history he learns the laws of nature by living in close contact with it, amongst the primitive in terms of morals and economic advancement rural population. The problem of nature and its laws, which apply to all living things from birth to death, is raised throughout Miłosz's output. (...) ³²

Thus, in October, *The Issa Valley* vanished from any publication announcements. The decision was confirmed in March of the following year according to the *Preventive inspection report no. 3, Books announced for 1958*, the National Library publishing house. In section 20 of the catalogue censors removed: Miłosz Cz. *The Issa Valley*. Wydawnictwo Literackie. The note stated the price of the book and the planned number of copies: 15 PLN; 10,000 copies. In that instance, the description was brief and laconic: *The Issa Valley* is “**A novel about childhood and youthfulness. The story is set in Lithuanian lands**”³³. A summary of GUKP interventions for the period of 1 Jul 1957 – 15 Apr 1958 indicated that *The Issa Valley* was one of 67 books confiscated (or intervened into) during the time – within only ten months. The summary includes the name of the author, title of the item, publisher and a short description (unfortunately, it was not a justification of the decision but only information about the type of intervention): “The publishing house applied for an approval of the work. The Bureau's response was negative”³⁴. In the summary, *The Issa Valley* was joined by such works as *Wspomnienie i notatki* [Memories and Notes] by Rowecki-Grot and *Next Stop – Paradise* by Hłasko (also confiscated in its entirety).

On the same month when *The Issa Valley* disappeared from Wydawnictwo Literackie's announcement, the book received an enthusiastic evaluation in *Twórczość*. It was not, however, a review, rather a collection of pages from Jerzy Zawieyski's journal; in one of those marked 24 March 1955, the author shared his impressions upon reading the novel:

Reading in the afternoon: Miłosz's novel entitled *The Issa Valley*. Constant awe. What an outstanding prose! It is actually poetry. Miłosz's word is concrete, real, yet poetic. It probably is not the novelist prose mode of writing but everything here is interesting, revealing, extremely fresh. *The Issa Valley* – the land of Vilnius, the story of Tomasz – **is the story of the author himself. Through the means of his marvellous speech Miłosz can not only bring about the atmosphere of the land of lakes**

³² Ibidem.

³³ Book documentation (interventions, reviews) [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/5), l. 14].

³⁴ Department of Non-Periodic Publications; DPN-03 A, Summary of interventions; 1958 [AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 591 (60/2), l. 4].

but also offers people so interesting and diverse, so moving and so original that that is the most astonishing. The characters of Batłazar, both grandmas, grandpa, priests, children – they will remain in the memory of literature forever. It's a shame *Kultura* printed only 50 pages of the novel³⁵ – and I don't think I will read the whole soon. Great joy that Miłosz is writing there. He writes about his childhood, about the country so it will surely be an excellent and magnificent work. The charming dash of irony elevates Miłosz's work high. It is sometimes reminiscent of Mann, but only sometimes; sometimes also of Nałkowska. Those are only flashes of other people's traces and dust of others. But everything is so Miłosz-like, his own, even that which is not that pleasant. Because Miłosz is difficult, not always even or kind. Rather harsh, terribly keen, perspicaciously intelligent, passionately revealing reality. He is not indulgent to anyone. He is merciless. But that is how a writer should see the world because such a view offers a lot of truth, more than if he had kept silent about it, omitting the things that are painful, sparing someone or something – for the sake of propriety or nobility even³⁶.

That grand commendation of Miłosz was, through the form used, somewhat camouflaged. The published pages from the journal covering a period from 16 March until 29 September 1955 included various mentions about Polish and foreign writers: Gombrowicz, Dąbrowska, Nałkowska, Eliot, Mann, etc., as well as the writer's impressions after watching theatre plays. The accumulation of cultural events and names of writers, among which Miłosz was in no way highlighted, enabled the author to draw the censor's attention away from the ill-viewed writer. But already a year later the same text was removed³⁷ from a submitted collection by Zawieyski entitled *Próby ognia i czasu* [Trial By Fire and Time]. A folder marked *Intervention reports in religious books* includes a letter of 1958 sent from the Poznań publishing house PALLOTINUM to GUKPPiW with a request for a publication permit for his literary essays³⁸. In the enclosed test print censors marked interventions. They removed fragments in which Zawieyski, from the position of a Christian, indicated the lack of Marxism, when he entered into a polemic with Żółkiewski suggesting that gagging writers will reflect negatively on the quality of literature, and when he presented Sartre as

³⁵ Zawieyski's remarks indicated that at that time, in late-March, he only knew a fragment from the first issue of "Kultura".

³⁶ J. Zawieyski, *Nad książkami w roku 1956*, "Twórczość" 1957, issue 10, p. 47.

³⁷ The situation was not extraordinary. Any text, even the most innocent, had to be submitted for inspection before its new publication, even if it had been published recently. The guidelines, which sometimes changed overnight, required a re-inspection often concluding with a removal of such a text, which writers often complained about when they attempted to submit for publication collected essays or stories which had previously been published.

³⁸ *Intervention reports in religious books (political interventions) 1958* [AAN, GUKPPiW; ref. no. 1809 (361/3), l. 67].

an illuminating example of the consequences of living a life without God filled with fear. The removed fragments included a sympathetic account of reading the Paris-based *Kultura*, including Miłosz's texts on translations of Gałczyński and on Pankowski and the publishing of *Twórczość* entire paragraph on *The Issa Valley*. *Próby ognia i czasu* was published according to the announcement in 1958 missing the removed fragments. The remarks on *The Issa Valley* were also missing from the following three publications of various fragments of Zawieyski's journal, even though they covered the year 1955³⁹. They have never again been published.

The intervention in Zawieyski's journal occurred in June 1958, but let us return to December 1957 when Jerzy Kwiatkowski mused on *The Issa Valley*. He included it in an extensive discussion of *Poemat o czasie zastygłym* [Poem of the Frozen Time] when pondering on nature in Miłosz's works. "**Miłosz praises Nature**, he seeks its strength by attempting to face History"⁴⁰. Miłosz tamed Nature which brings about "biological and metaphysical tragedy", the dread of death, pain and passing, which can actually be overcome by accepting the world and its laws:

The origins of that victory in the internal debate on nature, in the debate which is conducted by every writer, every person in general, should be sought for much earlier. The document – much later. The document is *The Issa Valley* published in 1955; the origins is the poet's childhood spent amongst primitive nature and people⁴¹.

Interestingly enough, the majority of critics writing about the novel placed considerable emphasis on its imagery of nature and its relationships with the life of the inhabitants of the Lithuanian countryside. But all reviews and remarks left out the metaphysical aspect of the novel. Błoński defined Domcio as the son of a landless widow, yet it was he that Miłosz entrusted with uttering the most dramatic question of theodicy. Such a distribution of emphases in reviews could have been a result of the problems associated with religion (domestic writers were used to censorship's aversion to such topics), but it could have also been a result of the suggestion by the author himself who omitted that aspect (consciously or not) when talking about his novel in *Ankieta noworoczna* [New Year's Questionnaire] conducted among emigre writers by the Polish Division of BBC Radio Station at the turn of 1955. Miłosz said, e.g.:

The story is set in some out-of-the-way rural backwoods after WWI. I was most interested in describing certain natural observations, which does not mean that the book

³⁹ Cf. *Brzegiem cienia. Kartki z dziennika* (Znak, 1960); *W alei bezpożytecznych rozmyślań*, PIW, 1965; *Kartki z dziennika 1955–1969* (Pax, 1983).

⁴⁰ J. Kwiatkowski, *Poemat o czasie zastygłym*, "Twórczość" 1957, issue 12, p. 83.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

does not include persons, some tragic, others comical. The novel will be published soon in Paris, in Polish. It is currently being translated into the French⁴².

The above statement was puzzling. Not only did it not encourage reading the novel but it also seemed to undermine its value (“**describing certain natural observations**”, “in some out-of-the-way rural backwoods”). He did not approach the central theme, instead directing reception towards the superficial layer of the text, which was also confirmed by the last post-thaw comment on the novel published in *Dziennik Polski* in the early-1958:

Swiss press published a review from the German translation of a new book⁴³ by Czesław Miłosz, a Polish writer, who after WWII abandoned the Polish diplomatic service and remained in the West – *Tal der Issa*. In the book, Miłosz recalled his childhood years spent in a small village near the Polish-Lithuanian border. Zurich critics highly esteemed the novel emphasising its major qualities: its realism when presenting the Borderlands life of a Polish village, excellent psychological observations, beautiful descriptions of nature and interesting approach to distant political events and social transformations (the times of WWI as the autobiographic background for the recollections of the writer living in the patriarchal environment of an old family⁴⁴.

In order to discuss the book, the author of the comment used the same trick as the author of the 1956 comment, though towards a different end. The reference to the Swiss critics was supposed to, this time, authenticate the positive image of the novel, though the comment, published after the period of Miłosz’s presence in the Polish press and after several articles about him, sounded as if it dealt with a work completely unknown to Polish readers. Even the title expression “a new book by Miłosz” about a novel which had been published three years earlier, and after *A Poetic Treatise* was published in a book form, seemed as if the author was discussing a distant phenomenon alien to domestic readers.

* * *

Considering the above-mentioned material one might pose certain hypotheses which, unfortunately, might prove unreliable, thus, they should be formed with great care, taking into consideration, numerous censor oversights which usually increased during times of political change (censors were not certain how lib-

⁴² Ankieta noworoczna (conclusion); aired on: 1.01. 1055; <http://www.polskieradio.pl/Player>.

⁴³ *Das Tal der Issa* [*The Issa Valley*], translated by Maryla Reifenberg, cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1957.

⁴⁴ [author missing] *Nowa książka Miłosza*, “*Dziennik Polski*”, issue 5 of 7 Jan 1958.

erally they could approach writers and publishers) and incomplete and sometimes improperly preserved Control Bureau documentation. In the case of interventions in periodicals, there were rarely any justifications of removals, so valuable from the point of view of academic research. They were usually included in voivodship division documentation and almost never in intervention reports by the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows. To ensure a complete image it is necessary to study censorship documents in connection with published versions of the texts which enables reconstruction of the “provisions”, though it is also vital to carefully trace the evolution of the Control Bureau’s attitude towards Miłosz: he appeared in national press only to disappear some time later depending on the time of publication, type of periodical and the context in which he was mentioned. What can be said based on the discussed material is: between the autumn of 1955 and the autumn of 1957, the provisions did not block the possibility of publication of references to Miłosz. Authors could also freely write about him in a critical, though not exclusively, way. The reception of *The Issa Valley*, a novel enthusiastically received by literary researchers Sławińska and Błoński, showed that one could write a factual discussion of Miłosz’s works, which even today would not seem outdated, deprived of the Marxist staff (that was not challenged by the similarly factual and extensive review by Rymkiewicz removed by censorship rather for its unfortunate placement in a periodical which had incurred the Łódź Control Office’s displeasure). Meanwhile, the ban on non-serial publications of Miłosz’s works was maintained. Moreover, it was prohibited to announce any publications of his books in Poland. The justifications indicate that it was a transitional period: there appeared new central directions, censors consulted many interventions with division chiefs or with the Chief Bureau over the telephone. They knew that it was actually prohibited to promote Miłosz in Poland, let alone praise (not to “relish” like Piechal “about him”). The situation was re-tightened in 1958. Any references to Miłosz were consistently being removed from most publications regardless of the fact whether they appeared in a positive or neutral context (as exemplified by Zawieyski’s journals).

A study of the official and censored reception of *The Issa Valley* offers only partial examination. It is impossible to reconstruct on its basis the complete image of the activities of censorship towards Miłosz in the thaw period. It could only be possible upon consideration of contemporary reception of his other works and texts about him.

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Marzena Woźniak-Labieniec

***The Issa Valley* in Censorship Documents
On the Thaw Reception of Czesław Miłosz's Novel**

(Summary)

Czesław Miłosz's *The Issa Valley* [*Dolina Issy*] was published in the Paris Literary Institute in 1955 and soon after started paving its way to readers in the author's native country, in spite of the censorship. This article traces back the novel's reception in the so-called Thaw (post-Stalin) period (1955–1957) in the light of official domestic publications and the documents of the Censorship Office. Those years saw publication of several argumentative and favourable essays on the novel (by e.g. I. Sławińska, J. Błoński, J. Zawieyski). The censors banned just one extensive discussion text on *The Issa Valley*, by Jarosław-Marek Rymkiewicz, and this owing to where it was published. A ban on publishing the poet's works in a nonserial form was maintained. In that transitional period, new

directives were coming from the communist-party headquarters, and the censors would often consult the heads of departments they reported to, or the Central Censorship Office directly. The situation grew severer by 1958, with the poet's name being consistently removed from most publications.

Keywords: Czesław Miłosz, *The Issa Valley*, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature, literary life after 1945

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The Polish Trial of Kafka. On the Reception of Franz Kafka and So-Called “Dark Literature” by the Censorship Board¹

This study is devoted to the censors’ reception to the output of Franz Kafka and other authors from the late-1950s considered as representatives of so-called “dark literature”, i.e. Camus, Sartre, and Faulkner. The archival material on which I based my analyses, though incomplete (because of the random nature of archival findings), cast some light on certain mechanisms of how censorship operated in the second half of the 1950s and enable a broader view of the literary life of that time. The category of “dark literature”, **purely historical today, should be considered** as superficial and cognitively vapid; however, it cannot be omitted when attempting to reconstruct the cultural life of that time.

Until 1956, the only Polish book edition of Kafka’s works was *Trial* translated by Józefina Szelińska (sometimes ascribed to Bruno Schulz) in 1935. The years immediately after WWII did not bring any new translations or significant studies and only infrequent and scattered press notes about the writer². Two larger articles by Sandauer, published in *Odrodzenie* in 1946, stood out. He presented Kafka as a representative of “mystical realism” and discussed Western, mainly French, “dark literature” associated with existentialism³.

During the Socialist realism period it was obviously out of the question to publish Kafka’s works. Dogmatic Marxism treated Kafka, just like Joyce or Proust, as a model example of a writer-decadent; his works were rejected because of the pessimism, anti-rationalism and vapid formalism that were associated with

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¹ The article was written as part of the National Program for the Development of Humanities: *Censorship towards Polish literature in 1945–1989*.

² Short mentions of the writer appeared, e.g. in “Znak” (1946, issue 2), “Gazeta Ludowa” (1947, issue 328), “Nowiny Literackie” (1948, issue 36), “Tygodnik Powszechny” (1947, issue 11) and “Odra” (1947, issue 35). I quote this information from Daniel Kalinowski (*Światy Franza Kafki. Sekwencja polska*, Słupsk 2006, p. 122).

³ A. Sandauer, *Literatura fatalistyczna*, “Odrodzenie” 1946, issue 47; idem, *Kierunki literackie we Francji*, “Odrodzenie” 1946, issue 51–52.

them and they were considered a sign of bourgeois moral decay⁴. In Poland, such opinions discrediting the author of *The Castle* (and his posthumous Polish “descendants” of the 1930s) were formulated by, e.g. Adolf Sowiński and Kazimierz Brandys⁵. In the majority of socialist countries the situation finally changed in the early-1960s, partly under the pressure of Jean Paul Sartre, who in 1962 at the international Congress for Peace in Moscow demanded that Kafka should be “legalised”. Another breakthrough was the academic session devoted to the writer held in May 1963 in Czech Libice. It eventually guaranteed that his output be present in the Eastern Bloc countries and though the debate surrounding it never ceased, the top-down “approval of Kafka” was never revoked⁶.

In Poland, Kafka had already received an “introduction to licence” along with other works of so-called “dark literature” in 1956. Fragments of his prose pieces were printed, after undertaking certain precautions⁷, in *Przekrój*, *Twórczość*, *Kierunki*, and *Po prostu*. Soon, the time came for book editions: in 1957, the reissue of *The Trial* and *The Judgment* (a collection of nine stories) were published; in 1958: *The Castle*; in 1959: *Letters to Milena*; in 1961: *Diaries* and *Nowele i miniatury* [Short stories and miniatures]; and in 1967: *Amerika*. Those first editions were accompanied by a vivid debate and the first disputes of interpretation, including attempts at confronting Kafka with the literature and culture of the People’s Republic, which was being designed anew at that time.

The issue of Kafka’s “acceptance” was, at that time, extremely important and it represented numerous other problems influencing the character of the post-thaw socialism. The high hopes regarding the wave of translations of Western literature and the associated anxiety of Marxists kindled at the outset a dispute

⁴ The whole situation was probably largely influenced by the negative evaluation of Kafka’s works formulated by György Lukács, literary historian and critic, who was widely respected and who was not dogmatic (vide G. Lukács, *Opis czy opowiadanie. Przyczynek do dyskusji o naturalizmie i formalizmie* [Narrate or Describe? A preliminary discussion of naturalism and formalism], translated by B. Rafałowska, “Przegląd Humanistyczny” 1959, vol. 4–5). It should be mentioned that in the 1950s in Marxist groups in France there was a fierce debate “should we burn Kafka?” (that was the, quite provocative, title of a survey in *L’Action* weekly) only to, i.a. through the voice of Georges Bataille, “save” him for Marxism.

⁵ Sowiński (*Chwalca minionego czasu*, “Nowa Kultura” 1950) wrote in response to Kisielewki’s article while the article by Brandys (*Odpowiedź wulgaryzatora*, “Kuznica” 1949, issue 42, p. 2) was a response to Sandauer’s article.

⁶ Vide D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁷ According to Kalinowski (*ibidem*, p. 125), the earliest translations of stories – *The Metamorphosis* and the later *In the penal colony* – appeared in “Przekrój” in 1956, though the editorial board added to the first issue a request for the readers to send in their opinions whether Kafka’s stories were fit for serial printing and whether there was any interest in those. The review did describe Kafka’s text as “difficult and symbolic” in a popular weekly, but it was also possible that the reservation and the request addressed to the general public was supposed to serve as a form of political alibi.

over whether Kafka's works should even be printed and if they were worthwhile and whether their reading could be reconciled with socialism. From the very beginning of his presence in Polish culture Kafka had, to some extent, been the subject of various conflicts which extended far outside his works. The attitude towards Kafka, particularly before 1959, revealed, i.a. the ideological disagreements among Polish Marxist critics (the dispute between the dogmatists and revisionists)⁸.

The post-October reception of Kafka was presented in detail by Daniel Kalinowski (to whose findings this study owes much)⁹ which is why I shall not delve into it here. But I shall quote an interesting opinion by Andrzej Wirth which served as the source of the debate, though eccentric and isolated, as it said a lot about the contemporary social, political and cultural landscape. His statement was probably the boldest attempt at inscribing Kafka's works in the Polish reality of the late-1950s and finding a fitting ideological "loophole".

Kafka's Faustus is, for us, and quite unequivocally, a positive character of the "past period", he seeks "socialism which is likeable", not "thanks to" but "against" reality. The search is, just like in real life, tragic and comical at the same time. It is that mad metaphysics of bureaucracy, which Kafka casts over his world, that best describes the atmosphere of the times when personal bonds were threatened utterly [...]. I believe that the Polish audience would read *The Castle* today not metaphysically or religiously, but in that only compelling way: as a reflection of failures, defeats, pride and terror of the time, the meaning of which was revealed by the Polish October. [...] That is art fit for Poland¹⁰.

The revolutionist reading proposed by Wirth (who openly proposed to view *The Castle*'s main protagonist as a model communist) could not expect to be accepted either by critics of Marxism¹¹, or by those who interpreted Kafka along the religious or existentialist lines and it was even rejected through common sense¹².

⁸ Vide ibidem, p. 133.

⁹ This applies mainly to two chapters of his book: *Kafka i polska "odwilż"* [Kafka and the Polish "thaw"] and *Czarny Kafka* [The dark Kafka]. Indirectly, I am also using two other valuable texts on which Kalinowski himself based his statement: by Halina E. Góral (*Recepcja twórczości Franza Kafki w Polsce Ludowej*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis" XXVI 1976, pp. 141–163) and Janusz Lewoń (*Pożytki ze światełk komety*, "Akcent" 1982, vol. 2, pp. 59–65).

¹⁰ I quote after Kalinowski (*op. cit.*, p. 128).

¹¹ Janusz Wilhelmi blatantly defined Wirth's idea as an attempt to saddle others with the problem. Vide J. Wilhelmi, *Pierwsze koty za płoty*, "Trybuna Literacka" 1959, issue 6.

¹² A critic under the pseudonym of Chochoł (Aleksander Jerzy Wieczorkowski) wrote: "Had Wirth added to the sentence forty-four volumes of in folio explanation (which will probably happen soon either way), that what he meant for was a kind of a parable, metaphor or ellipsis [...] and whole-heartedly assured everyone that he wrote everything for the benefit of our culture, I dare

Wirth's idea did, however, indicate (quite directly) one of the reasons behind *The Trial* and *The Castle*'s connection to every day Polish reality. Undoubtedly the experience of Stalinism, with its bureaucracy, painful absurdity and constant sense of threat, was one of the main causes of the demand for such literature and, at the same time, one of the causes of its superficial and utilitarian (or even obsessive) reception¹³. In a sense, Kafka's return, together with the Theatre of the Absurd and other "dark literature", was the return of what had been ousted; whatever Socialist realism tried so diligently to remove from sight.

The specificity of the Polish reception of Kafka at that time was also determined by the intermediation through the context of French culture¹⁴; mainly through existentialism. The author of *The Trial* was listed as a representative of the "Theatre of the Absurd" together with Sartre, Camus or Beckett as well as, which is much less obvious from today's perspective, Caldwell, Faulkner or Polish authors like Schulz or Gombrowicz. Fiercely debated at that time, the category of "absurd", ambiguous and burdened with moral doubt, was often used as a frame enabling the setting of false relationships, superficial philosophical and artistic ties or defining strong ideological oppositions. The contemporary reception to Kafka in Poland was, thus, encumbered by simplifications, superficial judgments and utilitarian approaches. Many of its features made it similar to a fashion, which was perspicaciously grasped at that time by Artur Międzyrzejcki¹⁵. It was, in fact, the intermediation through French culture but also, to a similarly large extent, the **"café" fashion for literature and philosophical "darkness", operating with emotions and cancelling any significant intellectual differences, that**

say that, apart from some noble intent, the sentence contained pure nonsense" (Chochół, *Ratujmy Kafkę przed egzegezą*, "Współczesność" 1959, issue 8, p. 2).

¹³ That kind of reception was specific for, i.a. commentators of then influential "Współczesność". As Maciej Chrzanowski pointed out the studies published in the journal "discussing such authors as Caldwell, Proust, Kafka, Gide, de Sade, Poe or Beckett usually displayed scanty knowledge of the 20th-century history of literature" (M. Chrzanowski, *Oblicza "Współczesności"*, Warsaw 1987, pp. 167–168. As cited in: D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 142). Obsessive interpretation was discussed by Kijowski in relation to Wirth's interpretation. Vide A. Kijowski. *Polski Kafka*, "Teatr i Film" 1958, issue 1.

¹⁴ The first post-WWII comments and Sandauer's articles immediately established that kind of context for the reception of Kafka's works. Cf. D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁵ In *Moda na Kafkę* [Kafka Fashion] ("Świat" 1957, issue 43) Artur Międzyrzejcki stated: "And yet the today's Kafka fashion, its café literariness and snobbish superficiality, is actually a surprising and in no way unequivocal phenomenon. It, for example, identifies the exceptional quality of the author's imagination and praises it for reasons which, generally speaking, resemble the considerations because of which a similar fashion displayed its recognition of Chagall's paintings. The world constructed through imagination, the result and the culmination of the act of creation of an unparalleled strength, the complete structure of *The Trial* and *The Castle* remain in the shadow. It is also difficult not to entertain the thought that by praising the talent and lamenting the torments of the author's desolation people have dispatched him, just in case, to the academic pantheon from which no one will ever have to be haunted by the unique account of evil on the human land, of anxiety, sorrow and extermination" (cited after: D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 127).

was responsible for, not completely unjustified but hastily nonetheless, tossing Kafka into the (brimming) container of existentialists¹⁶.

By contrast, the significance of Kafka for young writers of that time was indicated by a somewhat cutting remark by Jan Błoński, who concluded: “Answers to a survey sent out to young writers regarding their favourite authors listed all the greatest names, the inspirations of the 20th century. No one went lower than Kafka, Beckett or Faulkner... Sartre is liked no more, Mann is nowhere to be seen”¹⁷. Even though Kafkaesque influences, motifs and “moods” were often being traced but could not be found, it is certain that **“Kafka” became one of the most significant points of reference of that time.** “Kafka” was considered broadly: as a certain literary and biographical phenomenon, as a figure of tragic fate, a literary and existential legend¹⁸. The author’s work, because of its autotelic nature (setting one’s own rules of interpretation), the ability to provoke various interpretations coupled with its immunity to any of those (as Adorno noted: Kafka’s work is a “parable the key to which had been stolen”¹⁹), in time became a type of projection screen for the interpreters of various schools and orientations worldwide enabling various kinds of abuse. This also applied to the post-October Poland. Kafka’s work also left, apparently, a considerable freedom of interpretation.

The shape of reception of Kafka and the “dark literature”, reconstructed in detail by researchers, should be supplemented by one minute, though essential and previously unknown element: a short censor’s review of Kafka’s works. In GUKPPiW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) there survived, i.a. a hand-written review of *The Trial*, which was reissued in 1957. It was created on 21 May 1957 and signed by censor Jarecka:

The Trial is a typical example of Franz Kafka’s output, which is extremely popular but difficult to classify under any specific genre. In my opinion, *The Trial* is a typically psychological novel, the plot of which is limited to the feelings of a person who was

¹⁶ Such commentators as Zbigniew Bienkowski protested against such an association (*Camus anty-Kafka*, in: idem, *W skali wyobraźni. Szkice wybrane*, Warsaw 1983, p. 239–253). Vide: T. Mackiewicz. *Kafka a filozofia absurdu*, in: *Poetyka egzystencji. Franz Kafka*, E. Kasperski (ed.), T. Mackiewicz (cooperation), Warsaw 2004, pp. 295–306.

¹⁷ J. Błoński. *Zmiana warty*, in: idem, *Odmarsz*, Cracow 1978, p. 17 (first printing: *Zmiana warty*, Cracow 1961).

¹⁸ It is best exemplified by works for which Kafka himself was an inspiration, i.e. works by such renowned writers as Stanisław Grochowiak (*Franz Kafka*), Rafał Wojaczek (poems: *Ja, Kafka* and *Wyrok*) or Tadeusz Różewicz (plays *Pułapka* and *Odejsie głodomora*), to name but a few major authors and works directly referring to Kafka’s work.

¹⁹ Vide T.W. Adorno, *Zapiski o Kafce* [Notes on Kafka], translated by A. Wołkiewicz, in: *Nienasycenie. Filozofowie o Kafce*, Ł. Musiał, A. Żychliński (eds.), Cracow 2011, p. 131. Adorno also claimed that the parabolic nature “expresses itself not through expression but by its repudiation, by breaking off” (ibidem).

arrested but not imprisoned. He considers himself innocent, throughout the story strives to find the reason for his arrest. Eventually, without ever finding out the truth, he dies. It is only having read the book that one realises that the title does not denote a court trial, as one might expect after reading the initial chapters. *The Trial* rather stands for specific human relations which are committed for trial. That train of thought leads to death, which he views objectively and accepts quietly, though he never learns why everything happened the way it did. It is a peculiar type of fatalism, a progressing paralysis of human will which overwhelms the reader. Nonetheless, Kafka's novel is extremely interesting. Beautiful style, though as if mathematically perfected. The book was re-issued²⁰.

The conclusion: *grant the permit* was approved on 23 May 1957 (confirmation was recorded on the same card in different pen). The novel was printed by PIW in the number of 20,000 + 253 copies.

In the same year, the Chief Bureau received a request for a permit to publish a collection of stories entitled *The Judgment* translated by Juliusz Kydryński. The censor evaluation was signed on 12 April 1957 by Maria Szymańska.

It is a set of a few stories by Kafka and the title *The Judgment* was taken from the first, probably the best known, one. The body of Kafka's stories consists of extraordinary, unbelievable even people's fortunes. The writer almost always introduces, apart from regular characters and events, absurd and paradox to emphasise or even exaggerate human nature and motivations. In *In the penal colony*, he expressed a deep protest against terror, against non-humanitarian, inhumane penalties used by people. I have no reservations²¹.

The censor's supervisor approved the publication on 13 June 1957. Less than a year later, on 19 March 1958, the censorship bureau issued a permit for the publication in *Czytelnik* the writer's last novel. *The Castle* was evaluated by Renata Świątycka:

Huge, near empty village covered with snow with a castle on a hill towering over it which actually is not a castle, to which no road leads, to which no one from the village has ever been. This is the setting of the novel's plot. K., supposedly a surveyor, who comes to the village attempts and fails to reach the castle; his motivation remains unknown. Access to it is guarded by a huge army of busy office workers, who, in reality, are doing nothing – and piles of files, completely meaningless. In the afterword to *The Castle* Karst concluded that no one knows what Kafka wanted to say through his

²⁰ AAN (Archives of New Records). GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/3), l. 317.

²¹ Ibidem, l. 283.

novel. I personally see it as a biting irony targeted at the state machine, and the human society in general. Human life seems full of absurd and fiction at the same time as no one or nothing forces the supposed surveyor and the people in the village to submit to the castle, nothing forces the surveyor to strive to reach the castle²².

Several issues in the quoted reviews deserve careful consideration. First, the censors noted the extraordinary nature, the overwhelming sorrow of the works. It was a censorship standard in relation to all “pessimistic” literary works, that, though rather naive, the mode of reception did not diverge much from the contemporary, not only non-academic, reading focusing on such qualities as the tragic nature and claustrophobic mood. What is interesting, successive officers of the Chief Control Bureau of Press (GUKP) did not evaluate the pessimism negatively but they did when evaluating books.

Secondly, they offered an approach to reading Kafka’s works through the prism of humanism (understood mainly as humanitarianism). That reading key was used quite often in official discussions of “progressive” Western literature, i.e. that which could at least be slightly aligned with the ideals of socialism. When reviewing in the late-1950s the works of Eric Remarque, Stefan Zweig or Lion Feuchtwanger, GUKP officials emphasised their humanist content and the anti-fascist or anti-imperialist reading and educational qualities²³. Censors also were able to easily find strong ideological foundations in order to “**release for publication**” such writers as Caldwell and Faulkner, who were also associated with “dark literature”. All it took was to shift the centre of gravity of their “pessimism” to the, obviously unquestionable, elements of criticism of American society (racism, severe differences in quality of life, hypocrisy). I would like to use as an example a fragment of a review of *Sanctuary* published in 1957 by PIW:

²² Ibidem, ref. no. 596 (68/2), l. 354–355.

²³ A preserved review (of 26 January 1956) of *The Pretender* by Feuchtwanger read: “The plot of Feuchtwanger’s historical novel refers to the turn of the 2nd century A.D. and is set in Asia Minor, within the borders of the Roman province of Syria and the neighbouring independent Arab and Seleucid minor principalities. However, the specific and historically accurate location and course of action should not cloud the actual idea behind the novel. In the short introduction the editors aptly indicate that ‘according to Feuchtwanger’s own words, the technique of a historical novel is used by him to paint as accurately as possible the contemporary reality by placing contemporary content within the framework of a historical story’” (ibidem, ref. no. 434 (31/36), l. 45–46). Then, in a review (of 16 March 1957) of a novel by Stefan Zweig entitled *The Story of Magellan* the censor emphasised its educational qualities: “**I believe this book to be a truly interesting and beneficial read which is why it can safely be recommended for the youth. It includes many educational qualities: it promotes gallantry, courage, justice, honesty, it familiarises the reader with the history of that period and it teaches geography. Finally, in the book the author argues that the notion of man fostered by his will and resilience proves stronger than the elements that one solitary man can turn the dreams of generations into reality and everlasting truth**” (ibidem, ref. no. 426 (34/4), l. 349–350).

Faulkner's novel, the story of which takes place in the State of Mississippi, USA, fulfils a denouncing function. Not only the facts presented in the book, which alone constitute sufficient "aggravating" material, but also its artistic qualities, the style, the language, the imagery introduce the reader to that peculiar atmosphere of the "American way of life" in the version specific of the more backward areas. It is an atmosphere of crime, beastliness, sexual deviation, incredible drunkenness in the "underground" [...] **on the one hand and bribery, hypocrisy, pursuit for money, cruelty, thoughtlessness and terrific indifference to injustice on the other, i.e. among the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia.** Thus presents itself, as the author describes it, the "dominant morality" of that society. [...] **The book is filled with pessimism. The author sees no force that could change the existing human relations.**

Irrespective of its obvious pessimism, Faulkner's novel received the censor's approval and, on top of that, was recommended as the perfect cure for the too extensive revisionist tendencies:

Even though Faulkner's novel ought not be treated as a complete representation of the social relations within the described area (e.g. there is not a single worker character), let alone the image of life in the USA in general (southern states are backward areas), the book does present the fundamental elements of bourgeois morality. The publication of the book would seem to me fitting for our times very well. Additionally, for those who in the period of renewal of our moral life seek classical role models in the West, Faulkner's book is the proverbial bucket of ice-cold water on your head to curb your enthusiasm. It makes you consider whether those "obsolete forms" can still serve as role models. I hold reservations towards some fragments for the presented in them "representations of morality" (pp. 217–221) and (240–242). Though I do not express my opinion about them, I consider it to be my censorship responsibility to direct the management's attention to the a/m fragments²⁴.

The positive evaluation was, in that case, well justified and the only stain on the novel was its pessimism (considering the American reality it was not associated with the critical evaluation of the reality but a lack of conviction about the possibility of a social change), though even it became somewhat justified.

The novels by Feuchtwanger, Zweig or Faulkner were immersed in specific social, political and historical realities. Kafka's prose works, of course, cannot be read with a similar key. Nonetheless, they were somewhat included in the category of "humanism", which,, though completely simplifying them and quashing their entire parabolic ambiguity, did make it possible to tame them and diminish

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 251–252.

their “inhuman” dimension, which a few years earlier would most definitely had been considered as a sign of bourgeois decadence.

The thorough attempt at juxtaposing the vision of the reality presented in *The Castle* and *The Trial* and the state ideology (even in its Thaw version) would have revealed a deep discrepancy between them. By persistently seeking in Kafka a “positive” satirist/mocker, a critic of the society and striving to find a conciliatory space within the most broadly understood “humanism”, censorship officers tried to safely avoid the problem, while at the same time neutralising any possibility of generalised anti-totalitarian, and in turn anti-Stalinist, reading (the mentioned article by Wirth being one of such)²⁵ or even an anti-communist reading in general²⁶.

When one compares the quoted reviews with other censorship documents what is striking is their superficiality (they were more of short impressions than well-argued political or critical reviews) as well as their factual, virtually non-ideological neutral-descriptive tone. No attempt at confronting the meaning of *The Trial* and *The Castle* with the standing ideology had been made; there wasn't even a rudimentary consideration of the potential political or educational detriment of the literature. The fact that censorship officers, just like contemporary critics²⁷, treated Kafka already as a classic seems interesting.

Moreover, no anti-formalist motifs appeared in the reviews²⁸. The minor remark about *The Trial*'s near “mathematical” precision was formulated within the

²⁵ Zbigniew Bieńkowski stated: “In *The Castle* the author presents a subtle almost elusive mechanism of moral oppression operating according to the latest formula. It is an annihilation method while preserving all pretences, painless, which does not leave any trace. Since Kafka's times, the world has made much progress in improving it. We are aware, we know the victims that died with tears of gratitude. Kafka showed it using the example of K”. (Z. Bieńkowski, *Kafka, piekło metafizyki*, “Twórczość” 1958, issue 1, p. 93). Julian Stawiński concluded that in *In the penal colony* the author depicted “the entire psychological mechanism of Nazism” (J. Stawiński, *Sprawozdanie z ludzkiego absurdu*, “Nowe Książki” 1957, issue 20, p. 1221).

²⁶ According to the (biased) account by Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, such anxiety was supposedly expressed directly during the above-mentioned international conference in Libice near Prague. Grudziński claimed that the conference organiser was encouraging socialist countries to accept Kafka with the reservation that the responsibility of Marxist critics was “to ensure that even in the gloomiest of minds there would not appear an analogy between our authorities and the Kafkaesque vision of bureaucratic harassment and cruelty” (G. Herling-Grudziński, *Kafka w Rosji*, in: idem, *Upiory rewolucji...*, Z. Kudelski (ed.), Lublin 1992, p. 49. As cited in: D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 136).

²⁷ Vide D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

²⁸ It is worth remembering at this point that the virtually unlimited scope of poetic freedom and the waived interventions in the formal and literary issues began at the time of the October turning point. Before that, in the period of the most severe rigorism, the job of bureau officers was to seek out not only specific content but also excessively complex poetics and eliminating any traces of “formalism”. Vide K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009, p. 64. The first editions of Kafka's works were published during the peak of censorship liberalisation. As Budrowska noted it lasted from October 1956 until October 1957, “though it was not a complete ‘censorshipless’, rather a less in-depth control than before” (ibidem, p. 11). And yet censors did not return to verifying formal-literary matters upon the re-tightening of the trend in the cultural policy, i.e. after 1958.

framework of aesthetics, as a part of an approving remark on the beauty of the style (which seems to had been borrowed from the editorial afterword). Of course, the quoted reviews remain fundamentally anti-formalist in the sense that they were maintained within the lines of realist and psychological categories, they reduced the logic specific for the work to “peculiarity” and omitted its integral literariness. But, as I have mentioned before, it was a more general rule. The literariness of Kafka’s work was gradually becoming valued, after the first wave of biographical, quasi-existentialist and religious interpretations had passed.

One might assume that the monolith of *The Trial* or *The Castle*, as well as the writer’s entire output, could not be fragmented and divided into approved and censored elements. It could only either be accepted or rejected as a whole. Minor interventions would not be able to diminish its intrinsic, potentially dangerous intellectual and emotional content. Thus, it seems that censors did not have much to do there. Everything depended on the pre-established scope of tolerance and the pre-accepted reading key.

This might indicate that the “**case of Kafka**” for the approval and final publication of his works after 1957 was in Poland s was made at a higher level so that any possible censor reservations could not alter that decision. It is possible that censors’ reviews were nothing more than a formality. The fact that such situations occurred at the Chief Bureau was confirmed by the review of the first edition of a novel by Beckett, a writer who was similarly anxiously anticipated by readers and just as potentially “dangerous”. The author of *Molloy* apparently received a similar free pass, which protected him from censor’s accusations of pornography and nihilism²⁹.

A similar situation occurred in the case of *Existentialism is a Humanism* by Jean Paul Sartre. The censor considered its philosophical and political meaning seeking inconsistent and tried, as much as possible in the brief and temporary form of an official review, to confront it with the philosophical principles of Marxism:

²⁹ The censor was extremely laconic in evaluating Beckett’s prose: “Item of low value. Focus of attention is placed on an asocial individual: a beggar. Melancholic deliberations marked with dejection and mockery towards the surrounding world. It is difficult to find positivism in the novel. In some instances, the descriptions are disgusting – pornographic. Considering the fact that the item is of low value and, on top of that, translated from the French, I believe (irrespective of possible interventions) that it would be advisable not to print it. (A waste of paper and money.) [...] Suggested interventions with short justifications: pp. 54, 90, 91, 96, 98. Pornography” (AAN, GUKPiW, ref. no. 596 (68/2), l. 336). The evaluation, dated 7 March 1958, concluded with a list of suggested interventions. A note by Strasser, director of the Bureau, both confirmed the validity of the censor’s reservations and completely overturned them: “On 27 Mar, the Central Committee (KC) discussed the case of publishing Beckett. [...] GUKP reservations were legitimate. However, considering the fact that we support the release of major directions of literary works to the readers and that the number of copies is low – grant the approval” (ibidem, l. 337).

One could [...] agree with many assumptions made by Sartre, one might even take them to heart because it is truly, in my opinion, a philosophy of action, a philosophy with man as its subject, an optimistic philosophy. Problems arise when one proceeds to the second part of Sartre's *Marxism and Existentialism*. It offers what is often referred to as a revision of Marxism.

Sartre poses that existentialism developed at the periphery of Marxism, not in opposition to it. He acknowledges Marx's philosophy accepting a lot of his arguments. Marxism, he wrote, [...] could not completely satisfy our need for understanding the world as it locked itself in one place, it turned into solidified idealism. It is the biggest accusation posed by Sartre against Marxism. [...] The following consists of a criticism of Marxism, its fossilisation, dogmatism, denial of facts, and falsification of history. The author disputed the Stalinist system throwing some harsh words against it. [...] It is all about giving succour to the inefficient Marxism, Sartre wrote. Marxism must cleanse and renew itself, become once more a philosophy of our times and at that point existentialism will lose its *raison d'être*. In general terms, Sartre's philosophy is convincing. One can disagree with some of the ideas which might seem inconsistent. Maybe because they were presented in a summary form and their meaning has been misperceived. However, the general tone of the work and the principles included in it force the reader to consider that we might be dealing with an ally. We must ask ourselves whether the ally is currently helping or harming us³⁰.

Finally, the censor pointed out the small number of copies (5,000) and the specialist character of the book and motioned for it to be released for publication. That attempt at ideological confrontation, undoubtedly one of the major tasks of censorship officers, was, in that case, completely disregarded by the censor's supervisor who in an a-few-sentence-long note on the review, quite disrespectful in its tone (and extremely colloquial), dismissed the reservations and settled any doubts for the benefit of the French philosopher, probably according to a decision made at a higher level:

The inconsistency that the author of the review accused Sartre of (sic!) may just as well be assigned to the reviewer because comrade Stankiewicz agreed with the philosophy of existentialism – because it is a philosophy of action, an optimistic philosophy, only to fall into conflict when confronting it with Marxism. So what is the essence of Sartre's revisionism – **something doesn't play out here. And the suggestion to print is fine**³¹.

³⁰ Ibidem, ref. no. 426 (34/4), l. 224–225 (a review by Henryka Stankiewicz of 19 October 1957, WUKPPIW in Łódź).

³¹ Ibidem.

It is difficult to draw any absolute conclusions in this case but it seems that in the above-mentioned instances the censors' opinions lacked any moving force from the beginning. The decisions to publish authors so significant for contemporary literary and philosophical landscape as Sartre, Beckett or Kafka were apparently made at a higher level and they were the result of more general factors of the contemporary political and cultural situation. Then, an ordinary censor was placed in a situation where he/she not so much issued an evaluation, as he/she had to guess what the "proper" evaluation should be. The eventual question in the quoted review ("whether the ally is currently helping or harming us?") directed at the "higher level" seems to confirm that³². One might surmise that such situations occurred quite often in 1957, i.e. in the period of the biggest liberalisation of censorship, when the principles of control and the scope of freedom of speech fluctuated and formed anew.

The censor's noticeable approval or, in any case, sympathy as an interpretative principle seeking common areas rather than areas of conflict was particularly striking when juxtaposed with the official tone of the evaluations issued before the October breakthrough. At this point it seems valuable to recall the censor's comment to *The Stranger* by Albert Camus of 1948. The GUKP officer stated that the book contained the "entire meaning and essence" of existentialism and attempted a short reconstruction of the principles of that philosophy. The review, rejecting the novel's application for publication, concluded as follows: "Not only does the entire book require interventions but also the entire philosophical system together with its creators"³³. The difference between that statement and the censor evaluation formulated after 1956 about the works by Camus, Kafka and Sartre may be considered as a measure of the changes brought about by the "Polish October"³⁴.

The liberal nature of censors' decisions might also come as a surprise when it is juxtaposed with the opinions formulated by party Marxists after the turning

³² Of course, by displaying excessive vigilance the censor did not risk much, he/she could be reproved for the so-called "censor nosiness" at the most.

³³ Review of 17.01.1948. As cited in: D. Jarosz, *Zapisy cenzury z lat 1948–1955*, "Regiony" 1996, issue 3, p. 12. According to Mariusz Zawodniak the halting of the print of a fragment of *The Stranger* in "Kuźnica" in 1948 was associated with an extensive attack on existentialism, including on what was viewed as the Polish version of it, i.e. the works by Borowski and Nałkowska. I am referring to a paper entitled *Cenzura a tużpowojenne życie literackie. Kilka kontekstów, kilka przykładów* [Censorship and the post-WWII literary life. A few contexts, a few examples] delivered during a conference entitled "Literatura w granicach prawa (XIX–XX w.)" [Literature within the legal framework (19th–20th c.)] held on 18–19.04.2013 in Białystok. The paper will be published in a post-conference volume.

³⁴ *The Stranger* was eventually published in 1958 by PIW. Censorship documents also include an evaluation of Camus' collection entitled *Exile and the Kingdom* (review by Renata Świątycka of 7.01.1958) which maintained a completely approving tone. The book could expect to be favoured considering its anti-colonialist reading and social engagement. Vide AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/3), l. 42/279.

point in 1956. A representative example of that offered the declaration made by Zbigniew Słojewski, who in 1958 in *Współczesność* condemned pessimism and the universalist claims of the prose works of Kafka, Sartre or Camus (in line with the contemporary trend to lump those three authors together). Słojewski spoke on behalf of the “normal” reader, using a normative tone, thus emphasising the sickness in the world-view and aesthetic attitude of the writer:

That skinny lunger was not able to see beyond his spittoon, and yet how madly grand were his ambitions and how grotesquely huge was his egoism. [...] Only the jealousy of a lunger made him write all the mad ideas pointlessly. [...] The reader does not want that, it is alien to him, he wants life. [...] The edibility of foods with which they try to feed the reader are being refused, disapproval and disgust is expressed towards the dispassionate asexual style which they use to talk about life and the world³⁵.

Censors’ reviews, when compared to the quoted evaluations, seem friendly and completely void of dogmatism. However, there is no internal inconsistency within the system: the times of ideological radicalism and perfect cohesion had passed while the fact of granting Western literature, including the ideologically dubious, the right to exist did not necessarily have to mean ideological approval. As Mariusz Zawodniak argued, in Socialist realism control functions were mainly fulfilled by critics which might indicate a censorship model of literary criticism³⁶. Similarly after 1956, though on a smaller scale and with a less direct result, the statements of critics associated with the Party fulfilled those type of control functions. Censors, in turn, though having a direct influence on publishing decisions, enjoyed a different status: their opinions were much more pragmatic while their ideological autonomy was lower.

Since 1957 and after March 1959 in particular, within the framework of the “fight with revisionism”, **the authorities limited the tolerance towards “dark literature”**. During the 3rd convention of PZPR it was personally condemned by Władysław Gomułka (in a speech re-printed under the title of “Chcemy literatury służącej życiu” [We want literature that serves our lives]):

Then why many contemporary writers and other creators have for so long wandered to ideological crossroads and have been losing their ties to the leading socialist forces

³⁵ J.Z. Słojewski, *Wychyleni w stronę śmierci*, “Współczesność” 1958, issue 25, p. 4, 6. As cited in: D. Kalinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Statements by some independent critics maintained similar tone. One of them concluded that “Kafka was, in fact, crazy, more precisely: a schizophrenic”... (J. Stadnicki, *Wariackie papiery*, “Prawo i Życie” 1959, issue 1, p. 5). Vide also an anonymous article fiercely criticising the fact of publishing Kafka: P., *Dla kogo?*, “Sztandar Młodych” 1956, issue 168, p. 4.

³⁶ Vide the previously quoted paper by Zawodniak; cf. footnote no. 33.

of the nation? It is caused by revisionist and bourgeois-liberal political tendencies. Because of them there has been created a number of works of detrimental ideological meaning. A dark literature has been created which promotes despair and weakness in man, works which smear socialism and idealise its enemies. We have refused and we will continue to refuse to publish such works as they do not constitute works of art but weapons of political propaganda of anti-socialist forces. [...] Revisionists accuse us that we do not want lacquer art. On the contrary. [...] The truth about socialism is sufficiently optimistic on its own. All you need to do is to view reality through the eyes of the driving forces of the nation, not through the eyes of snobs and bourgeois criticsers of socialism³⁷.

It is symptomatic that in the same issue of *Trybuna Literacka* next to the text of Gomułka's speech announcing that revisionism shall be dealt with also included a text by Zygmunt Kałużyński about the "case of Kafka", which was probably an expression of the official stance of the Party on Kafka. In many instances it proved to be aligned with the earlier censor reading (though, with a visible previously mentioned difference in interpretation and ideological freedom):

Therefore, Kafka is an outstanding metaphysical writer and only because of that can he be interesting to us. Obviously Kafka can also be interpreted differently, e.g. as a satire against the absurd totalitarian bureaucracy; that has been attempted. We currently have the Wirthian proposal for seeing in the protagonist of *The Castle* an idealist-communist fighting for the difficult social ideal. That interpretation, however, visibly deforms Kafka: his theme is the issue of the Man – God relationship and it can only be omitted through intense pretending and persuasion. And the trick also proves unnecessary. [...]...there must be a place for Kafka in our culture which is broadening its horizons. Anyone who has studied metaphysical obsessions in the contemporary society [...] cannot cope without Kafka. Not to mention the beauty of his literature and the humanist value it carries³⁸.

In a contemptuous manner Kałużyński tackled both pro and anti-socialist interpretations of Kafka and reserved for him a safe place in the zone of metaphysics, in the pantheon of "humanistic values". He concluded by protesting against the Wirthian attempt at a deeper integration of Kafka's works with socialism and expressed directly the pragmatic principle which, it seems, will serve as the basis for further "consent for Kafka" on the part of the authorities: "At this point it seems fit to use the 'Polianthes tuberosa principle'. That is a term from

³⁷ The speech was printed in, i.a. "Nowe Drogi" (1959, issue 4) and "Trybuna Literacka" (1959, issue 11).

³⁸ Z. Kałużyński, *Przemysłnictwo? Owszem, ale innym wąwozem! (Z dziejów mitologii współczesnych)*, "Trybuna Literacka" 1959, issue 11, p. 535.

Żeromski. He stated that the Polianthes flower is not useful for the worker in any way – but does he because of that stomp on it with the heel of his boot?”³⁹

Kałużyński’s text seemed to explain why the “re-tightening of the policy” after 1959 did not alter in any major way the situation of Kafka’s output and Western literature (in 1959, *Letters to Milena* was published and two years later: *Diaries* and *Nowele i miniatury*). From the point of view of the authorities, including the Chief Control Bureau, what was important, apart from his presence in the official circulation, was also what could be said **about** the work and even more so **in association with** the work in relation to Polish reality. In fact, the procedure of censoring literature, particularly that which was not associated with the situation of the PRL or detached from any specific social and political reality, was not so much (not only) about approving or halting specific works of literature but controlling their reading and neutralising any potential revolutionary interpretations. Thus, the forewords and afterwords to Polish editions were just as significant if not more significant than the actual content of a given work. *The Trial*, the first to be published (and treated as the most important work by Kafka), included a brief foreword “From the editors”, which used a specific “taming” trick: it referred to the documented social sensitivity of the author, though it had absolutely no relation to the work itself. I quote the very beginning of the foreword:

Franz Kafka, throughout his life and his output, was a strange and extraordinary figure and the fortunes of his writing heritage were no less exceptional. He was born in Prague, he spent there the majority of his years working as an official of the state worker insurance company. He knew the world of Austrian bureaucracy up close, he experienced the contemporary labour from the inside. He even devised plans of social reform and in one of those he wrote about “the labour life as a matter of conscience and faith in fellow humans”. He was also amazed by workers’ patience: “How humble those people are! They come and ask us! Instead of launching an attack on the enterprise and smash everything, they come and ask”. **But it was not the social problem that became the focus of his interest.** Nor, apparently, did literature⁴⁰.

He went on to talk about Kafka as a tireless radical seeker of truth, about the stylistic mastery and the mathematical precision of his works, about the multitude of its possible meanings (including “Marxist interpretation attempts”) only to then transfix him in the role of a classic-moral philosopher:

One thing is certain: with the publication of *The Trial*, the 20th century literature and literature in general have gained a grand artist, a master of words and one of

³⁹ Ibidem

⁴⁰ *Od redakcji*, in: F. Kafka, *Proces*, translated by B. Schulz, Warsaw 1957, p. 251.

the greatest moral philosophers with such severe authority and uncompromising maximalism that to find someone equal to him one would have to, according to some critics, reach all the way back to Dante⁴¹.

The concise panegyric in honour of the *grand writer*, putting aside any detailed interpretation, fit the poetics of a publishing commentary perfectly but probably had an additional objective. As long as the initial reference to the social sensitivity of the author of *The Castle* (and, in turn, the reference to his “strangeness”) **would provide a type of political alibi for him, the final resolution was supposed to guarantee the status of a universal writer for him and assign him a place above any social and political conflicts of the epoch.**

That type of “humanistic” **but at the same time “bronzing” reading, assigning** Kafka the status of a classic, was practised by critics of various world-views who represented various ideological and social interests. They used somewhat similar interpretative tactics aimed at ensuring Kafka a secure place in Polish culture. Thus, for example, the previously quoted independent critic who wrote under the pseudonym of Chochoł evaluated Wirth’s concept as absurd (and noted, with astonishment, his agreement with Kałużyński) and concluded that “all it takes to assign him a place on the shelves of our libraries is to acknowledge his humanism”...⁴² Wirth’s idea – bold, eccentric, surely strategically calculated and yet exaggerated in a sense, reconciled the opponents and helped devise a model of reading that could be accepted by various sides of the dispute on Kafka.

It is worth mentioning that the commentaries attached to the following first editions: the foreword by Roman Karst to *The Castle* and to *Nowele i miniatury* and by Zbigniew Bieńkowski to *Letters to Milena* (Krakow, 1959, translated by F. Konopka) were already free of any “strategic” elements, they went deeper into the world of his works utilising at ease, i.e. Freudian and quasi-metaphysical categories.

One of the most valuable and skilful advocates in the Polish “trial” of Kafka was Roman Karst, a loyal translator, commentator and defender, at that time still a member of the Party (often trying to mediate between the Party and “revisionists”). His foreword skilfully avoided any shoals by finding an interpretative path which enabled him to “smuggle”⁴³ the work of the author of *The Judgment* but did not force a reconciliation of its meaning with communism. It skilfully popularised but did not seal him in empty lofty statements and did justice to purely literary qualities⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 253.

⁴² Chochoł [A.J. Wiczorkowski], *op. cit.*, “Współczesność” 1959, issue 8, p. 2.

⁴³ The term “ideological smuggling” was coined in 1953 by Jerzy Putrament to combat aestheticising tendencies of contemporary art.

⁴⁴ Karst prepared, i.a. the first more serious comprehensive literary research work (of a familiarising nature): *Drogi samotności. Rzecz o Franzu Kafce* [Paths of solitude. On Franz Kafka]

At the same time, the censorship bureau analysed more closely the local “dark literature”, which in an obvious way was related to Polish reality. In censorship reviews on Polish works created at the turn of the 1960s censors diligently recorded all instances of pessimism and criticism, with a distinction between politically detrimental and harmless pessimism, insignificant existential pessimism and metaphysical pessimism, not aimed against the foundations of the current political system. Censor notes often included some regrets, sometimes delivered in a didactic or somewhat indulgent tone, about the “trend” of existential doubt, despair, etc.

The quoted censors’ reviews defined a broader phenomenon: the special flexibility of contemporary interpretative rules, fluctuations in the criteria used for evaluating literature (as well as other elements of social life) by decision-makers, Party critics and censors alike. To quote John Bates, one could use the distinction between “doctrine-based assumptions” and “operating ideology”⁴⁵. According to Bates, during the Stalinist period GUKP “grinding” a work according to criteria which oftentimes were mutually exclusive⁴⁶. The fluctuations in the criteria that were used (the pragmatic selection of some or other elements of the doctrine currently in force), which served as a proof of inconsistency or “hypocrisy” of the system or was rather a result of clashing positions, is perfectly visible in censors’ reviews and remains a permanent element of the ideology of the PRL. That instability and changeability of rules in 1956–1959 certainly contributed to the liberalisation of cultural life. The contemporary reception of Kafka, which mainly consisted of seeking gaps and “legal loopholes” ensuring him the right to remain in PRL, seemed a perfect example of that.

(1960). In the extensive sixteen-page-long foreword to *The Castle* Karst professionally and without unnecessary tricks for taming the “strange” and extraordinary nature of the writing, introduced the readers to the artistic and intellectual world of Kafka. He also emphasised the importance of negation as a force driving his works. He concurrently questioned the validity of religious exegesis (by Max Brod, Fürst and Rochefort) and nullified all other enclosing, i.e. reductive interpretations as well. He did, however, emphasise the ethical maximalism, the unwavering pursuit of the goal and the principle of “absolute responsibility” established by Kafka. He also repealed the falsely posed problem of “pessimism vs. optimism” (which is surely a good antidote for the simplified reading) to perceive Kafka as a tireless “fighter” who “focussed on the fight itself regardless of the fact whether its goal was possible to reach or not” (R. Karst, *Posłowie*, in: F. Kafka, *Zamek*, translated by K. Radziwiłł, K. Truchanowski, Warsaw 1958).

⁴⁵ The distinction was introduced in relation to Eastern Bloc states in Western political sciences. Bates quoted the concept after Ray Toras (*Ideology in Socialist State. Poland 1956–1983*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 27–29, 36–38). Vide J. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, “Teksty Drukie” 2000, issue 1–2, p. 96.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

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Kajetan Mojsak

**The Polish Trial of Kafka. On the Reception of Franz Kafka and So-Called
“Dark Literature” by the Censorship Board**

(Summary)

The article discusses the reception of Franz Kafka’s novels and the so-called “dark literature”, popular after 1956, by the censorship board. It presents the discussions around Kafka’s work and various interpretational strategies used to secure this literature a place in the culture of People’s Republic of Poland. The article presents analyses of the censors’ reviews of Kafka’s (but also Sartre’s or Faulkner’s) novels and offers insight into the censorship process and the literary life of the late 1950s in general.

Keywords: Franz Kafka, censorship

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Routine But Ribald. Intimacy in Stefan Żeromski's Journals

Stefan Żeromski's *Dzienniki* [Journals] are undeniably one of the most famous texts of the 19th-century Polish intimate diary writings. The author of *Ludzie bezdomni* [Homeless People] wrote his diary between 1882 and 1891. His lively correspondence with his fiancée (and future wife), Oktawia Rodkiewiczowa, started to fulfil the memoiristic function at that time¹.

According to Stanisław Piołun-Noyszewski, Żeromski's relative and biographer during the interwar period, private records of the writer were supposedly quite innocent in character. "They include literary attempts, idealistic erotic poems and glued-in letters from his first love"², Noyszewski wrote in 1928. Two post-war editions of *Dzienniki* verified this. Roman Zimand noted that "scholars, and probably common readers as well, believe that where eroticism was concerned, *Dzienniki* did not shy away from drastic descriptions. It was quite remarkable in the 19th century that Żeromski, the diary-writer, was far bolder when writing about eroticism than Żeromski, the novelist"³.

In reference to the uncensored handwritten material,⁴ such a thematic classification is even more justified. Therefore, Żeromski's *Dzienniki* can be viewed both as a literary training ground and as a record of a young man maturing and entering the realm of sex⁵. Hence the strong presence of the subject of morality next to multiple literary attempts and reviews of books and theatre plays. If we narrow it down to the eroticism-related issues, we will find the following list of subjects: autoeroticism, sexual initiation, sexual experiences associated with both

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¹ Discussed by Z.J. Adamczyk and Z. Goliński in *Nota wstępna* to: S. Żeromski, *Dziennik z wiosny 1891*, Kielce 2000, pp. 7–8.

² S. Piołun-Noyszewski, *Stefan Żeromski. Dom, dzieciństwo i młodość*, Cracow 1928, p. 4.

³ R. Zimand, *Diarysta Stefan Ż.* [Stefan Ż., the diarist], Wrocław 1990, p. 76.

⁴ To be found in repositories of the National Library. Available in the form of microfilms.

⁵ Cf. P. Rodak, *Miłość w dzienniku Stefana Żeromskiego: między sztambuchem, listem i powieścią*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 2010, no 2; idem, *Między zapisem i literaturą. Dziennik polskiego pisarza w wieku XX*, Warsaw 2011.

paid love and love free of the mercantile liability, and venereal disease, which Żeromski suffered from several times. Our insight into his personal affairs is not limited to the author and his partners. It is worth noting that, occasionally, Żeromski allowed us to see his closest surroundings.

As far as the *Dzienniki* are concerned, the problem of self-censorship and morality-related censorship is an interesting issue. An analysis of the private records of the author of *Dzieje grzechu* [A Story of Sin], conducted for that very purpose, will allow us to answer two questions. First, how did Żeromski write about private issues? Second, which issues, and to what extent, were these issues considered taboo for Żeromski himself, society in general, readers of the hand-written diary, and finally, the editors of two 20th-century book editions⁶.

One of the most important features of Żeromski's *Dzienniki* were their honesty and openness in accounts related to eroticism. The author's notes represent another step in the evolution of personal document literature. Starting with the Saxon period, more and more attention was devoted to personal issues, breaking the convention of writing about events "in order to introduce new, emotional motifs in order to 'talk about oneself,'" as Hanna Dziechcińska noted,⁷ Żeromski was surely pushed towards honesty both by the example of his predecessors and his youth. His version of it is nonconformist, extremely emotional, inspired by such literary masters as Aleksander Świętochowski, known for his acute critical writings (as the editor of initially *Przegląd Tygodniowy* and later *Prawda*) or French naturalists Guy de Maupassant and Emil Zola⁸.

To some extent that honesty, which often became an intentional violation of taboo, could be evaluated through the analysis of literary ideas of Żeromski recorded in his *Dzienniki. Pierwszy raz* [The First Time], a draft describing the sexual initiation of an 18-year-old bride in Hotel Saski (1 October 1885)⁹. In addition, a 26 January 1887 entry read: "Yesterday when I was writing *Z teki obiektywisty* [From the Objectivist's File], I saw a meeting of a brother and a sister in *ojkema*, or a regular brothel in other words."¹⁰ An interesting thing to mention

⁶ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, study by W. Borowy, S. Adamczewski, J. Kądziela, preface by A. Wasilewski, 1st ed., Warsaw 1953–1956, vol. 1–3. S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, preface and study by Jerzy Kądziela, 2nd ed., Warsaw 1963–1970, vol. 1–7. S. Żeromski, *Dzienników tom odnaleziony*, preparation for printing, preface and notation by J. Kądziela, Warsaw 1973.

⁷ H. Dziechcińska, *Pamiętniki czasów saskich. Od sentymentalizmu do sensualizmu*, Bydgoszcz 1999, p. 62.

⁸ "Naturalism! Zola, Maupassant, Alexis, Goncourtowie, Dostojewski – they will all squint their eyes before wondrous details of my muse," noted Żeromski in one of his entries. S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, p. 165.

⁹ Roman Zimand hypothesized that the draft was written by Żeromski in order to convince his lover to intensify their relations. Cf. R. Zimand, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–85.

¹⁰ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, p. 123.

is a review of a drawing by Adam Wiślicki, editor of "Przegląd Tygodniowy", to whom Żeromski sent a text with hopes for publishing:

Dear Sir! The drawing not only is not objective but also untrue in the tiniest detail. Why do young people, beginner writers, take worthless delight in the filth?... A pity! There are imaging capabilities¹¹.

On 13 June 1888 Żeromski noted down an idea for another, also morality-related, short story:

He saw her for the last time in his life when the mountains of misery tumbled onto his shoulders, when he lost all will to work, to live. She refused a kiss out of trivial stubbornness. She made up her mind – and decided to be chaste. But she deceived him eagerly, she toyed with him with delight. It was then that he learned that she let him down forever. It was that blow that was the final straw in his life. Then on a lonely night, when he was listening to the rustle of cherry leaves through an opened window – the idea for revenge came to his mind. (...) He did an easy thing: he wrote to his beloved's husband, told him everything, marked every detail. (...) The husband (...) asked him for a meeting. They met. Then the lover, the challenged, raised his revolver first... and killed the husband of his beloved. He then went to the police and reported the accident. The rest is boring¹².

The scale of honesty of the diary records could also be seen in the reactions of people who read it. One such interesting account came from Janek, Żeromski's secondary school friend, who "was disappointed reading the filthy paper sheets!"¹³. The source for that criticism could be found based on the content of the analysed volumes (1–5)¹⁴, autoerotic practices and sexual contacts of Żeromski and his friends with prostitutes. The reaction of Oktawia Rodkiewiczowa, whom Żeromski asked to read all his records during their engagement period, was even more revealing. The decision to postpone the wedding showed how difficult it was for even a 30-year-old, experienced woman (a widow and mother to a small girl) to read his account considering the morality-related elements included in it¹⁵.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 159.

¹² S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, p. 140–141.

¹³ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, p. 21.

¹⁴ In the article, I used the term "volume" in reference to hand-written journals by Żeromski and the term "collection" in reference to the division used in printed editions.

¹⁵ The account is known from Henryka Witkiewiczowa, nee Rodkiewicz diaries. Cited after: *Kalendarz życia i twórczości*, S. Eile and S. Kasztelowicz (eds.), Cracow 1976, p. 116.

The indicated honesty of his records, sometimes exhibitionist in form, was not, however, equivalent to a rejection of all inhibitions¹⁶. Self-censorship appeared in *Dzienniki* for three reasons: shame, respect for cultural taboo and self-creation. In all instances, it is related to the issue of morality. Depending on how much shame was internalised by Żeromski, he used different instruments of the Aesopian language. He omitted some subjects with almost utter silence, e.g. his relationships with his sisters. Others he coded, like autoeroticism and paid love. Most frequently, however, he used **metaphor, allusion, circumlocution, and ellipsis**. He used them mainly when recording his sexual experiences. It is evident that the strongest instrument of the Aesopian language, arising from rejection, is silence. According to the dictionary differentiation of these concepts¹⁷, he use of a language code is associated with the feeling of shame, i.e. a situation when we decide that something is inappropriate, and it is a considerably internalised process. The use of metaphor, allusion, circumlocution and ellipsis is associated, on the other hand, with cultural taboo, an external compulsion not to write about certain matters arising from good upbringing and social status, fear of being vulgar, and with Żeromski's desire to create a specific image in the eyes of his readers (or reader-mistresses). Żeromski's choice of Aesopian language instruments corresponded to his age: the older he got, the less restrained he was in his writings.

Artur Hutnikiewicz noted that “Żeromski was raised in an undoubtedly religious home. During his early years spent at school, he was, as confirmed by his own records, a pious and devoted boy, and then adolescent”¹⁸. The first symptoms of the crisis of faith came in the later grades of secondary school. The period, during which Żeromski entered puberty, offered records depicting the dramatic struggle of an 18-year-old trying to preserve his moral chastity. The pressure of religious morality was so strong that all the records relating to autoeroticism were meticulously coded in volumes 1, 2 and 3¹⁹. It is also shown by a note made in volume five, where the 21-year-old Żeromski described, with disgust and disbelief, his friend:

Stanisław (...) started to talk about his current physiological-moral mood. He consciously committed the last act of this crime three weeks ago! Now, he said, the mood returns leading him to the crime each day. What an awful character, what a disgusting

¹⁶ Cf. J. Paszek, *Danae Żeromskiego*, “Teksty” 1974, no 1, p. 71. Jerzy Paszek stated that “in *Dzienniki* the images of love are realistic, with no poetic colouring and no internal censorship”. This was contested by Roman Zimand. See: R. Zimand, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁷ Elaborated upon by Kamila Budrowska in *Cenzura, tabu i wstyd. Cenzura obyczajowa w PRL-u (1948–1958)*, “Napis” 2012, S. XVIII: *Tabu i wstyd w literaturze i kulturze*, pp. 229–232.

¹⁸ A. Hutnikiewicz, *Żeromski*, Warsaw 2000, p. 36.

¹⁹ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, pp. 127, 138, 221, 264.

creature was there before my eyes! This man, the greatest thinker among us, the most talented pupil in the secondary school, is an onanist! He passionately drinks vodka in order to silence his conscience, memory, and mind. Out of some unstoppable mercy, I have entered the stinking pit of his suffering (...)²⁰.

The fact that his friend was a homosexual surely supported the perception of autoeroticism through radically religious (as a “vice” or a “crime”) and medical (as “disease”) categories. What is interesting is that Żeromski simply reported on the fact. He did not dwell on that fragment of Stanislaw’s confession. He instead summarized it all with a general reflection that his friend’s life was “a rotten puddle of mud.”²¹ Żeromski’s diary records showed that in the secondary school period he sought the ideal of manly purity, advocated in guides by Samuel Smiles *Self-Help* and *Character*²². The author postulated the need to master one’s instincts since only through moral purity, **virtuous life, and work can manly character** take shape. The 19th-century struggle with “instinct”, “desire”, “unbridled temperament”, “immature energy” and “passion” was realised, according to Ewa Paczoska, through “quite solid recommendations concerning, e.g. sexual education of young men, frightened with the image of masturbation as the main source of diseases of the body and the soul”²³.

Secondary school students perceived onanism as a greater sin against moral purity than buying the services of prostitutes. Therefore, they shamefully hid it from their peers; it was a taboo, and it was treated pharmaceutically²⁴. Sexual relations with mistresses and prostitutes received far less criticism from Żeromski. He did code the information about sexual initiation, which took place during a visit to a prostitute²⁵, but he was much more open about it a year later in his diary²⁶. Żeromski disguised the temptation to use the services of a prostitute in a metaphor of a blood devil and described his internal struggles a number of times. Not always did his morality prevail over passion, as demonstrated by the several instances of venereal disease he suffered from when composing the diary. He was no different from his peers. Iza Moszczeńska, discussing a survey conducted in 1903 among 140 male students of the Technical University of Warsaw

²⁰ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, p. 93.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 95.

²² Traces of those texts can be found, for example, in the first collection of *Dzienniki*. S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, pp. 209–212, 214, 218, 222, 223, 226.

²³ E. Paczoska, *Ideal czystości i piekło mężczyzn w literaturze drugiej połowy XIX wieku*, in: *Kobieta i rewolucja obyczajowa. Społeczno-kulturowe aspekty seksualności. Wiek XIX i XX*, A. Żarnowska and A. Szwarc (eds.), Warsaw 2006, p. 62.

²⁴ It can be deduced on the basis of an entry dated 17 January 1883 r., S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 139.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 271.

²⁶ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, pp. 50–51.

showed that they underwent their sexual initiation between the ages of 16 and 19, and about 40% of them suffered from venereal diseases, some repeatedly²⁷. Using the services of prostitutes was a rather standard practice amongst Żeromski's colleagues. The resulting diseases affected both men and women of his social class. A telling example was the history of an affair of the author of *Dziennik* with his stepmother's sister. It was almost a recreation of the events of the autobiographical novel by Gabriela Zapolska – *O czym się nawet myśleć nie chce* [What You Don't Even Want to Think About]. The novel described a family suffering from a venereal disease. The situation was even more tragic when readers learn that the husband infected not only his wife but also their unborn child. It was the child that paid the ultimate price for the father's sexual freedom – the child died due to venereal complications²⁸. In Żeromski's biography, the story is the other way around – the wife became infected through sex with a lover, who used the services of prostitutes. She then infected her husband in their bedroom. Both lovers went out of their minds suspecting, falsely, that she was pregnant. The situation is both tragic and comical since the husband, also unfaithful, blamed himself for his wife's condition. At the same time, the lover was happy about the married couple's sexual abstinence.

The husband was so preoccupied with his gonorrhoea and stomach pain that he has completely forgotten his horns... Yesterday, when he was about to leave for work, he wished Helena "good luck..." We are setting nicely, but the gonorrhoea does its job, too. Every cloud has a silver lining... It was worth it; now the gonorrhoea separates that couple quite fine²⁹.

Żeromski's partner, unlike Marysia in Zapolska's novel, was an experienced woman and quietly sought help from a Warsaw doctor³⁰. It can be cautiously concluded that venereal diseases were common in Żeromski's society and, as a result, they were a standard conversation subject, also in the presence of young, unmarried ladies. A testament to that fact was the 7 June 1886 entry, inspired by a conversation with his friend, Ms. Celina Żółkowska:

²⁷ I. Moszczeńska, *Czego nie wiemy o naszych synach – fakta i cyfry dla użytku rodziców*, Warsaw 1904, pp. 42–48.

²⁸ Aleksandra Grotowska on Zapolska and reception of her novel: "*O czym się nawet myśleć nie chce*" a jednak trzeba mówić. *O dziełach Gabrieli Zapolskiej i ich recepcji w środowisku współczesnym autorce*, "Napis" 2009, S. XV: *Umysły zniewolone. Literatura pod presją*, pp. 253–266.

²⁹ 15/08/1886 entry, vol. 9. Manuscript held in the National Library of Poland, Warsaw ref. no. mf. 1330.

³⁰ 09/07/1886 entry, vol. 9. Manuscript held in the National Library of Poland, Warsaw ref. no. mf. 1330.

... leaving our place, she advised me not to see her out (her mother was there) "since such late hour carries the risk of a disease..." Great Jehovah, even spinsters know about my illness! Forget the parson, but spinsters... Run, Stefek, from Kielce because excommunication is at hand... The parson backbites me ignominiously, to tell the truth... however, I forgave him for he does not know what he does... It was all dr Strawiński's doing. He revealed the damned "orchitis". It is said a bad memory comes from a bad thing. In the end, it does not have to be that bad... if it does not hurt me³¹.

The quoted fragment shows that self-censorship was also known from the Saxon diaries. When describing intimate situations, their authors frequently employed Latin phraseology which limited, due to the language barrier, obscene meaning of the erotic content³². There were examples of self-censorship in the 17th-century medical guide by Stanisław Sławkowic who used Latin to inform about intimate matters³³. It seems that Żeromski was familiar with that motivation and used Greek and Latin phrases when his private life met medicine. Żeromski's reserve in writing about private issues also resulted from the fear of being too literal, too vulgar. Żeromski the diarist was more concerned with emotions than physiology. It was often the case that he refrained from putting down a word, or emotion, which could violate his artistic taste through literalness or association with an anatomical detail³⁴. That happened, for example when he wrote about moral objections of a mistress, which were reflected in certain limits she set in her bedroom. "I cannot explain it literally because it is drastic for me. All, all of my dreams came through. And yet... she allows for much and not enough at the same time"³⁵. Several paragraphs later he voiced the feeling of dissatisfaction and constraint which, indirectly, made the internal self-censor visible: "Oh, let all of these sheets be covered in this red lava river, slowly flowing through my veins... As a black angel, I go to sleep..."³⁶ The author's attention was focused, to a large extent, on the artistic shape of his memoirs. A testimony to that was the entry of 14 October 1885, his 21st birthday:

³¹ 07/05/1886 entry, vol. 9. Manuscript held in the National Library of Poland, Warsaw ref. no. mf. 1330.

³² I. Maciejewska, "Te rzeczy..." – przejawy autocenzury w prezentowaniu treści erotycznych (na przykładzie prozy czasów saskich), "Napis" 2009, S. XV: *Umysły zniewolone, literatura pod presją*, pp. 70–71.

³³ M. Krzysztofik, "O nieplodności w stanach małżeńskich" – czyli jak XVII-wieczny kalendarzysta-lekarz omawia oraz cenzuruje tematy wstydlive, "Napis" 2009, s. XV: *Umysły zniewolone, literatura pod presją*, p. 44.

³⁴ See, e.g. 28/08/1889 entry, S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 6, p. 206.

³⁵ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, p. 313.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 314.

She came back from town and laid her hand on my forehead... and gone was all the sadness and feeling of sorrow... Later, the evening hour... The lovely hour! The last pages will I devote to such hours. Not now. Later, when watched through a prism of idealism, it will be beautiful³⁷.

It seems that Żeromski's tendency to idealize his partner and their mutual feelings frequently protected the diarist from obscenity and, therefore, from crossing cultural taboo in the way he talked about intimate relations. It should be stressed, however, that apart from elevated, lyric style, *Dzienniki* also features a low style. Roman Zimand noted that the diarist "could write about eroticism not only in the lyrical style". He could make the account humorous or brutal, almost naturalistic, including drastic details. The researcher was correct, in my opinion, to try and convince us that when compared to the lyrical parts, the naturalistic ones were in the minority and referred to casual, or problematic, mistresses³⁸.

Information encoding and euphemisation of his declarations in Żeromski's notes was related to the fact that the journal was made public. Apart from his secondary school friend and his fiancée, we know of a number of other people who read his diaries. Those included: Antoni Gustaw Bem, his secondary school Polish language teacher; Ludwika Borkowska, his sweetheart; and Helena Radziszewska, his mistress. According to Roman Zimand, the autumn 1885 entries concerning Radziszewska were a kind of a cipher, a coded means of communication with both lovers, or a form of putting pressure on the woman who still was not his³⁹. Żeromski's lovers and female readers of his private writings were his first censors. A description of the state of the manuscript left in the first printed version of *Dzienniki* leaves no doubt that the morality-related interventions were quite frequent. That is indicated by crossed out words, and torn out or cut out pages⁴⁰.

The lack of coherence of the printed text due to moral issues resulted from, among other things, decisions made by editors and typesetters. Let us be reminded that *Dzienniki* in its full version (except political and morality-related cuts) was published twice by the "Czytelnik" publishing house. In both cases, it was in the period of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL). The first edition was published in years 1953–1956. It was edited by Waław Borowy, Stanisław Adamczewski, and Jerzy Kądziała. The next edition entered production ten years later. The second edition was published as part of *Dzieła* [Works] – a huge project to publish Żeromski's works, edited by Stanisław Pigoń. He was, in fact, responsible for the content supervision of the second edition of *Dzienniki*. Jerzy Kądziała, involved in the first edition, was responsible for typesetting. The new edition was updated

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 313.

³⁸ R. Zimand, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–96.

³⁹ Ibidem, pp. 82–85.

⁴⁰ See, among others, S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, pp. 75, 302, 313, 351.

with two previously unpublished volumes, corrected and extended considerably, in comparison with the 1950s edition. It took publishers seven years to finish the project (1963–1970); and if we include also *Dzienników tom odnaleziony*, the period covered ten years (1963–1973).

The morality-related content in *Dzienniki* was the greatest editorial problem of both editions⁴¹. At the beginning of the 1950s, Żeromski's wife and daughter disagreed with publishing the diary. They referred to Żeromski's verbal provision that his works were not to be published for 50 years following his death. The condition was disregarded in the case of both publications⁴². A compromise was to introduce moral censorship. The author of the *Preface* to the first edition defended the editors from the accusation of seeking scandal by writing, among other things: "out of respect for the author's will, the published text omits certain intimate and drastic issues, a condition put in his testament"⁴³. The *Editorial note* repeated the note from the *Preface* regarding the omission of those fragments of the writer's manuscript "which applied to more personal matters"⁴⁴. The second edition also included morality-related cuts. However, in the *Preface* to collection 1 of the 1963 edition, Jerzy Kądziała explained that the 1st and 2nd editions were mostly different in terms of the number of omissions

which far fewer than in the 1st edition of *Dzienniki*. The editors returned intimate sections of the text in the belief that the author himself was conscious of the possibility that his works would be read by incidental readers and future generations (...)⁴⁵.

When removing the "intimate and drastic" fragments the editors of the first edition considered as unprintable: morality-related issues concerning Żeromski's closest family – his stepmother and sisters, autoeroticism, venereal disease, details of his sex life (visits to prostitutes, descriptions of intercourse), and the author's comments on other people (e.g., implying incest). The greatest number of omissions could be found in the volumes edited by Stanisław Adamczewski (volumes 3–15). Compared to those, the text edited by Waclaw Borowy (volumes 1–2) and Jerzy Kądziała (volumes 17–21) retained greater coherence. To some extent it was the content itself that had some influence on the extent of censorship. Volumes edited by Adamczewski described the tumultuous period of Żeromski's affair with

⁴¹ The political tone of the diary was as important. Beata Utkowska touched upon the subject in *Sporny wzorzec rusofobii. Stefan Żeromski wobec Rosji i Rosjan w "Dziennikach"* (typescript). I approach this issue in *Intymistyka i cenzura – na przykładzie pierwszego wydania "Dzienników" Stefana Żeromskiego*, in: "Lancetem a nie maczugą". *Cenzura wobec literatury i twórców w latach 1945–1965*, K. Budrowska and M. Woźniak-Łabieniec (eds.), Warsaw 2012, pp. 179–193.

⁴² More on the subject, in: K. Kościewicz, *op. cit.*

⁴³ A. Wasilewski, *Przedmowa* in: S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 1st ed., vol. 1, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Editorial note*, in: S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 1st ed., vol. 1, p. 40.

⁴⁵ J. Kądziała, *Przedmowa*, in: S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 40.

Helena Radziszewska and venereal disease problems, which he suffered from several times in his youth. It was not the only factor, however. An analysis of the entire material suggests that personal views of editors might have also influenced it. One suspects that they respected different editing rules and they differed in their assessments of what was moral and what was not. Adamczewski was more reserved towards erotic content; Kądziała was more liberal. Borowy's position was hard to define due to the fact that his portions were relatively uncontroversial.

An intervention-based comparison of both editions confirms information found in the *Preface* by Kądziała. The majority of the 1st edition volumes suffered the omission of one or two fragments. The difference was clearly visible in volume 6, which underwent 26 morality-related and 5 family-related interventions (regarding Żeromski's sisters). The second edition saw them reverted.

However, the situation was different in the case of volume 9 which in both editions included a considerable number of interventions. The **number of omissions** decreased from 58 to 15. All fragments skipped in volume 9 were morality-related. They concerned Żeromski's and his mistress' venereal disease, the erotic adventures of his friend and the descriptions of sexual activities using religious metaphors, which could be seen as a kind of blasphemy. **The text proper was updated** with original confessions regarding his affair with Helena, autoeroticism and using the services of prostitutes.

The editing behind the scenes, including the editor's views on morality-related censorship in *Dzienniki*, was partially revealed through letters to Stanisław Pigoń sent by Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Czytelnik" publishing house and Jerzy Kądziała, written during works on the second edition of the diary. It seemed that both editors believed that the less interventions, the better. As early as 1957 Jerzy Kądziała outlined editing rules for the 2nd edition of *Dzienniki* to Stanisław Pigoń. In section 2, he suggested:

When possible, the text should be kept in the original form, or at least we should not overuse censorship in its inherent functions. Those fragments which cannot be saved as well as the necessary abridgments (e.g. from Sienkiewicz's "Hania", the Russian lectures in the Warsaw Veterinary School) should be described quantitatively in a footnote⁴⁶.

Therefore, the editor assumed that it would not be possible to publish the entire text. The reason was both moral and political. In a letter to Stanisław Pigoń dated 26 November 1963, Kądziała explained in detail the idea from a few years back:

⁴⁶ A letter by Jerzy Kądziała to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 26 Nov 1957. Korespondencja Stanisława Pigionia – Kądziała Jerzy 1947–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10778 III, l. 55.

Regarding *Dzienniki*: just like in the 1st edition, I would like to refrain from any interventions into the writer's texts. One section of my contract provides that I am to contribute the text as a whole: coherent, amending all previous omissions (too many and performed by editors with no thought on rules). The text A, i.e. amended with insertions, could be compared with the current version. Not soon, though, since vol. 1 has been barely moved to printing (...). If I remember correctly, vol. 1 did not contain any "problems".

There will be some, quite serious ones, in vol. 2, dealing with the beginning of an affair with Helena. I think it would be appropriate if Professor, reading vol. 2 with notes in updated typescript, expressed his view on the matter and shared his possible suggestions. Leaving everything for Mrs. Jedlicka [a Wydawnictwo "Czytelnik" editor – K.K.] to decide upon seems to be a bad idea.

Theoretically speaking, it seems prudent to retain psychological reflections on love (abundant in mature novels) and remove "factographic" drastic fragments. And, of course, we should try to retain as much political views as possible, though, judging by the experiences with the "dictionary" [*Słownik współczesnych pisarzy polskich* (Dictionary of contemporary Polish writers) – K.K.], will not be easy⁴⁷.

The problem of whether, or to what extent, to censor, the morality-related fragments of *Dzienniki* was discussed many times by Kądziela, Pigoń, and "Czytelnik" representatives – mainly Wanda Jedlicka, the director of the humanities editing team, and Alicja Podzielna, her deputy (during her illness and after Jedlicka's death in 1967). In 1961, it was proposed to establish a special committee to decide upon text omissions in *Dzienniki*. The committee was to consist of members of the Polish Writers' Union. Those plans were cancelled after consulting Stanisław Pigoń⁴⁸. Eventually, it was agreed that the omissions were to be decided upon by three parties: Pigoń, Kądziela and the editing team of "Czytelnik". Any discrepancies were to be settled by the Krakow-based editor. If the parties had been unable to reach an agreement, an arbiter would have been appointed (though it seems that such a situation had never happened)⁴⁹.

When working on the first collection of *Dzienniki*, Pigoń was in favour of retaining the highest possible coherence of the text. Wanda Jedlicka, in a letter dated 27 September 1962 assured him:

⁴⁷ A letter by Jerzy Kądziela to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 26 November 1963. Stanisław Pigoń – Jerzy Kądziela letters between 1947–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10778 III, l. 63.

⁴⁸ A letter by Jerzy Kądziela to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 6 June 1961. Stanisław Pigoń–Jerzy Kądziela letters between 1947–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10778 III, l. 59.

⁴⁹ A letter by Wanda Jedlicka to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 19 March 1963. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letter, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 135.

As far as omissions in the text are concerned, **I would like to assure you that the omissions** in collection 1 have been reintroduced. It is our ultimate goal to limit ourselves to a necessary minimum. This approach results from respect towards the writer's family and care for his memory⁵⁰.

She used similar arguments in later correspondence as well:

I do not know if the respect for the great writer requires us to highlight or to hide the most intimate issues. What would the author want if he was to share his "confessions" with the reader? And lastly, isn't the editor discretion-bound and shouldn't he be tactful towards the author's next of kin?⁵¹

Jedlicka used the same argument as Kądziela in her attempts to resolve Pigoń's doubts concerning the omissions. She was aware of the fact that the text would be censored by GUKPPiW (Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) for political reasons⁵². It also seemed that it was Wanda Jedlicka who advocated greater omissions in the text of the diary than Pigoń or Kądziela. Some explanation of her views can be found in Pigoń's words, which she referred to in a letter dated 7 December 1963:

I believe there is no need to remove everything. If some small allusions or remarks are left, and they are not too embarrassing, then maybe they should not be necessarily removed⁵³.

The views of the Krakow-based editor on morality-related censorship in *Dzienniki* did not evolve much over all those years when she worked on Żeromski's diary. It could be seen in a letter dated 19 December 1967. Alicja Podzielna, the editor, defended herself against the accusation of "spoiling the author's image and ignoring some aspects of his character and life in general". Those accusations came from Pigoń, who verified the content of the notes, which were to be pub-

⁵⁰ A letter from Wanda Jedlicka to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 27 Sep 1962. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letters, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 131

⁵¹ A letter from Wanda Jedlicka to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 14 Jan 1963. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letters, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 132.

⁵² A letter from Wanda Jedlicka to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 19 Jun 1963. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letters, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 138.

⁵³ A letter from Wanda Jedlicka to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 7 Dec 1963. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letters, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 144.

lished as the last, separate volume of the edition. In his opinion, those should be amended with, among other things, information on Żeromski's venereal disease, and they should highlight the role of the **stepmother in his affair with her sister**, Helena Radziszewska, his relations with his sisters, contacts with prostitutes, and discussion on the coded notes concerning autoeroticism in the first volumes. Podzielną saw Pigoń's lack of consistency in those propositions. She explained that "this and not the other meaning of *Dzienniki* was critical to the form of the commentary, and it was difficult to expect the commentator to highlight those fragments we are struggling to hide in the text."⁵⁴ In her defence, she referred to Pigoń's own guidelines, clearly defined in his letters sent to "Czytelnik":

I am still perturbed by the issue of the text's coherence. I cannot accept the thought that the editing process was to accept, in detail, all sexual references. I am still in support of general omissions. (letter dated 14 March 1963)

Scatologies are, of course, to be reduced here and there, which I have marked separately. (letter dated 6 June 1964)

I remove only the ultimate obscenities: mostly everything relating to the disease, the Debe handbook, and the more appalling blasphemous allusions. (letter dated 3 April 1963)⁵⁵.

The issue of morality-related censorship in both editions, as preserved in the documents of the GUKPPiW, stored in the Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archives of New Records], was marginal. Much more attention was paid to the political tone of *Dzienniki*. The GUKPPiW received a typescript censored by the "Czytelnik" and the editors. The fact was voiced in the review of the 2nd edition of *Dzienniki*, dated 17 April 1953. A censor, while addressing the interventions proposed in the text, stated: "I would like to note that the editing team removed several sections concerning the erotic experiences of Żeromski"⁵⁶.

The information on morality-related content was published in the review of the 2nd edition, developed on 3 October 1962 by Władysław Kałucki. The author wrote:

The propositions of changes to the new edition of *Dzienniki*, filed presently by the "Czytelnik" Publishing House, concern exclusively the first part of *Dzienniki* and aim to reintroduce some texts which had been removed, i.e. dotted /.../, in the 1953 edition. I do not know the reasons behind those omissions. The Publishing House, in

⁵⁴ A letter from Alicja Podzielną ("Czytelnik" Publishing House) to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 19 Dec 1967. Stanisław Pigoń – „Czytelnik” letters, Publishing House, Humanities Department, Warsaw 1954–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10758 III, l. 164.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 375 (31/31), l. 830–831.

its preface to the first part in 1953 explained that the omissions and dotting concerned “the most intimate issues of the author”. The text to be placed in the dotted sections does suggest that the original omissions resulted from, at least partially, censorship reasons. In fact, I believe that the same reasons do not allow the text to be approved for publication as a whole even today⁵⁷.

Later, Kałucki listed additions proposed by the editors which, in his opinion, raised no censorship-related objections. However, he was neither meticulous (he listed only some of the additions which were introduced to the first three volumes of the new edition) nor precise (he confused dates of the omissions in the previous edition).

The review of the second collection by Irena Nowołowska, dated 25 February 1964, revealed interesting behind the scenes activities in the editing process in the case of *Dzienniki*. The censor wrote:

(...) The contents of the collection, when compared to the previous edition, were expanded to include the newfound material (one volume in the Soviet Union), and texts left out from the previous edition. Those were removed with the author in mind, and partially the people he wrote about and they applied to intimate matters. The current edition sees everything back. The publisher skipped only two fragments. I am sure that the reintroduction of those texts, almost exhibitionist in tone, was agreed upon with the family and the editors. Therefore, I see no need for the bureau to interfere. However, I believe that in some cases the publisher unnecessarily provides full text [two illegible words] that does not concern Żeromski directly (p. 93/4).

The information regarding the editors consulting **Żeromski’s family** regarding *Dzienniki* could be found in Stanisław Pigoń’s letters to Monika Żeromska. She wrote:

Dear professor,

I have received your letter in Konstancin, where I came for Christmas. I will provide you with all the required material, if possible. Since I would not entrust anyone with the manuscripts, I will bring them to Krakow myself. I will stay there for a couple of days so that we can discuss the issue of *Dzienniki* in detail (...) ⁵⁸.

The letter was dated 24 December 1956, which meant that it was written after collection 3 of the 1st edition of *Dzienniki* was printed. **The letters be-**

⁵⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 772 (132/11), l. 336.

⁵⁸ Monika Żeromska to Stanisław Pigoń, Konstancin, 24 December 1956, in: S. Pigoń, M. Żeromska, *Korespondencja wzajemna (1952–1968)* [Letters 1952–1968], typesetting, preface and commentary by Z.J. Adamczyk and A. Kowalczykowa, Rzeszów 2004, p. 24.

tween Pigoń and Żeromska did not reveal any details of the promised discussion about *Dzienniki*, or any other in fact. Therefore, we do not know how Anna and Monika Żeromski reacted to the information about the planned 2nd edition of the diary.

The results of the work of the editors and publishing house, also in respect of morality-related omissions, were also evaluated by the readers. One such evaluation could be found in Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa's *O Stefanie Żeromskim. Ze wspomnień i dokumentów* [On Stefan Żeromski. Memories and Documents], published by PIW in 1965. It contained a long paragraph criticizing a number of omissions in the 1st edition of *Dzienniki*:

The abridgments, arising from discretion, did no good to this bold publication. A bizarre, often shocking, collection of confessions and self-analyses was made flat. It lost the balance between reflection (sometimes naïve, and sometimes melancholic) and the male vigor bursting with energy. Those two elements – a reflection of a young, still primitive intellect and erotic, creative and passionate force – led the young life and struggled ceaselessly throughout the pages of the diary with the orphanhood, misery, sickness, Russian school, police repressions, and the narrowness of a Polish provincial town⁵⁹.

The discussion on the prudery of the editors was extensive. Stanisław Pigoń (*Współczesność*) and Jerzy Kądziała (*Życie Warszawy*) also participated in it. Its echoes could be found in letters to the editors. In his letter, Kądziała wrote:

It was only during the Christmas that I read Professor's most accurate reply to J. Łojka's article in *Współczesność*. That buffoon pretends to be from a different planet by saying that in this beautiful country there are only prudish editors frivolling, while censors stopped frivolling or may as well be extinct. Since he touched upon *Dzienniki*, I decided to clarify the issue to J. Stefczyk, who came to me to IBL (the Institute of Literary Research) regarding the issue. The article, partially "inspired" by me (especially in the fragments relating to Żeromski), appeared in *Życie Warszawy* (...). It was the first time when the issue of political omissions, and even the re-issue of *Snobbizm i Postęp*, was raised. (...) the article was difficult to publish (...). Several sentences and adjectives were removed⁶⁰.

The fragment quoted from Kądziała's letter proved that the morality-related censorship could have been used as a disguise for institutionally conducted political

⁵⁹ H. Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, *O Stefanie Żeromskim...*, p. 69.

⁶⁰ A letter by Jerzy Kądziała to Stanisław Pigoń, Warsaw 2 Nov 1965. Stanisław Pigoń – Kądziała Jerzy letters between 1947–1968, manuscript BJ, ref. no. 10778 III, l. 77.

ensorship and could have shifted the discussion towards areas favourable for the repressive (including in the case of freedom of speech) system. The discussion on moral taboo was, therefore, of secondary importance and the will to conduct it could have legitimised all the actions performed by the system. Kamila Budrowska stressed that by writing that:

if we discuss years 1948–1958, the moment of political doubt in 1956 increased freedom of speech on eroticism. What is more, it seems that the ability to discuss the subject became a kind of “safety valve”, which allowed to diffuse social tensions⁶¹.

The analysis of the editing history of Żeromski’s *Dzienniki* shows how many censors worked on the text, which researchers have always believed to be the basis for studying the life and the output of Żeromski. Typesetters and editors responsible for omissions worked with various goals in mind – preservation of the good name of the author, respecting the feelings of his next of kin and friends, discretion, and simply good taste. The evaluations of what was morally just and obscene varied. What is more, such elusive notions as personal beliefs, values and individual taste of editors had a significant influence on the final shape of *Dzienniki*. It was also symptomatic that the perception of certain content as taboo varied amongst editors and censors alike. The 1960 edition, considerably expanded in comparison to the 1st edition to include more moral issues, showed that freedom of speech in terms of eroticism also broadened.

Apart from family, typesetters, editors and GUKPPiW officers, Żeromski’s *Dzienniki* still has the marks of unreferenced censors who have not yet been unearthed. Yet cut out and torn out manuscript pages attest to their existence. The description of the manuscripts of the entire collection of *Dzienniki* mentions the issue several times. *Dziennik z wiosny 1891 r.* [Journal of the Spring of 1891] published in 2000 by Zdzisław Jerzy Adamczyk and Zbigniew Goliński, saw the removal of several sheets. “Who were the censors of the diary,” publishers asked rhetorically, “we do not know”⁶². Did the torn out pages contain some obscene content? We can only speculate.

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Katarzyna Kościewicz

Routine But Ribald. Intimacy in Stefan Żeromski's Journals

(Summary)

Stefan Żeromski's *Journals* concern mostly matters of intellectual (book, theatre, and exhibition reviews, writing techniques) and personal character, with the latter including some very intimate material. Żeromski was an exhibitionist in his writing. He described his autoerotic practices, his visits to brothels, details of sexual relationships with his mistresses, as well as some personal problems of his friends and acquaintances. The present analysis of the writer's *Journals* focuses on how Żeromski tended to write about his intimate life, what matters and to what extent were treated as taboo by the author himself, by people from his closest circle, by readers of the manuscript version of his *Journals*, and finally, by editors and publishers of two 20th-century editions of his work. Taking this perspective, the close reading of Żeromski's *Journals* will thus concentrate on issues such as private life, taboo, censorship and self-censorship.

Keywords: Stefan Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, censorship, self-censorship

Kamila Kamińska-Chełminiak*

Institutional Censorship in Relation to Catholic Press during the Decline of People's Republic of Poland (1989–1990)

Institutional censorship within the territory of Poland was established during the Second World War: in July 1944 and was called the Department of Information and Propaganda. It was a part of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) and its foundations were built by the officers of *Glavlit*, Soviet censors, invited to the country by Jakub Berman, a member of the Political Office of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR). Berman was responsible, as he explained in an interview by Teresa Torańska, for culture, education, higher education, Polish Academy of Sciences, propaganda, foreign policy, ideology and security supervision¹. Berman, loyal to Bolesław Bierut, supported Soviet methods of governing and the unconditional fulfilment of orders coming from Moscow.

After WWII, Russians created censorship institutions that copied the Soviet model in all states of the "People's democracy". In Poland, the process began after the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944. On 3 November 1944, by order of Nikolai Bulganin, a plenipotentiary of the Soviet government at PKWN, two officers of *Glavlit*: Piotr Gladin and Kazimierz Jarmuż, were delegated to Poland and were entrusted with the mission to create censorship in the country that was being liberated². The reports written by *Glavlit* officers indicated the plans Joseph Stalin had in store for Poland. Censors from the USSR did not expect any deviations from the Soviet models of creating the propaganda and indoctrination system. In a report of January 1945, they stated that some officers of the Ministry of Information and Propaganda (on 31 December 1944 the department was converted into a ministry) "are out of their minds" thinking that censorship is not necessary.

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¹ T. Torańska, *Oni* [Them: Stalin's Polish Puppets], London 1985, p. 131.

² Т.М. Горяева, *Блицкриг В Польшу* in: *Исключить всякие упоминания... Очерки истории советской цензуры*, Москва 1995, p. 110. On *Glavlit* vide: А.В. Блюм, *Советская цензура в эпоху тотального террора 1929–1953*, Санкт-петербург 2000; T. Goban-Klas, *Literacki Gulag. Glawlit, czyli najwyższe stadium cenzury*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, J. Kostecki, A. Brodzka (eds.), Warsaw 1992, vol. I, pp. 46–59.

Legal framework of institutional censorship

Censorship received its legal framework with a half-page typescript decree of 5 July 1946 which in very general terms defined the scope of the tasks of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Performances (hereinafter: GUKPPiW)³. It was only the Act on the Control of Publications and Performances, introduced on 1 October 1981, that defined the competences of the censorship institution, also giving the entity under investigation the right to appeal a decision with the Supreme Administration Court. A provision that was the main focus of the opposition was the obligation, should an author request it, to mark in the text the interventions of the control institutions stating the legal basis. The Act also changed the name of the control institution from GUKPPiW to the Main Office for the Control of Publications and Performances (GUKPiW).

It is also worth mentioning that pursuant to Art. 3 of the Act, control authorities included **“regional offices for the control of publications and performances operating as a first instance entities”** while the **Main Office for the Control of Publications and Performances** (the Main Office) was defined as a central entity the task of which was to supervise the work of control offices. Entities, according to the Act, “professionally utilising freedom of speech” could appeal the official decisions with the GUKPiW and in the event of an unsatisfactory decision issued by the Main Office, with the next instance, i.e. the Supreme Administration Court.

The tasks of the regional offices for the control of publications and performances (hereinafter: OUKPiW) included: preliminary and review control of press, non-periodic publications, ephemera, performances, radio and television shows, films, exhibitions and other means of communication (propagated via printing, images or words); providing permits for publishing daily newspapers or magazines (until 6 June 1989, after that date, only registration); providing permits for conducting press publishing or outwork activities (until 6 June 1989); providing permits for the operations of some PA systems; control of printing enterprises (since 6 June 1989 within a limited scope); halting of the publication permits (for a period from one to five years) of foreign magazines.

The decision regarding the lifting of institutional censorship was taken during the Round Table talks. A report on the activities of the Mass Media Unit of the Round Table of 22 March 1989 concluded that a prerequisite for constructing a new information order which would reflect the pluralism of opinions present in the society censorship had to be lifted. As of 6 June 1990, pursuant to the Act of

³ Vide J. of L. of 1946 No. 34 Item 210.

11 April 1990 on the repealing of the act on the control of publications and performances, removing the units of the control and on the change of the Press Law act, GUKPiW and OUKPiW were declared in liquidation.

Article premise and source base

The goal of the article is to present the scope of interventions of the Regional Offices for the Control of Publications and Performances in the Catholic press during the decline of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) and the first months of the Republic of Poland, i.e. between January 1989 and April 1990⁴. Initial censorship was a period which preceded the Round Table talks while final censorship was the abolition of censorship, i.e. the passing of the act (11 April 1990) on the liquidation of the institutions for the control of publications and performances.

The source material for the article constitutes the files of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows stored in the Archives of New Records (hereinafter: AAN).

The Catholic press, which after 1989 constituted a focus of academic study of various researchers, both clergymen⁵ and lay researchers⁶, was selected as the subject of the article. To avoid any terminological disputes regarding the notion of the Catholic press I have used the definition proposed by bishop Adam Lepa in which the Catholic press includes publications authorised by Church authorities for periodic publication and public dissemination for a comprehensive presentation of reality, particularly of current events and issues associated with the Church and its doctrine⁷. Thus, the Catholic press should meet the following criteria: have a Church assistant or cooperate with the local ordinary or have the support of the Church from which it can also receive financial subventions.

⁴ OUKPiW had its offices in the following cities: Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kielce, Krakow, Lublin, Łódź, Olsztyn, Opole, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wrocław, O.G. of the Republic of Poland of 1981 No. 25 Item 217. Vide also J. of L. of 1981 No. 20 Item 99.

⁵ A. Lepa, *Prasa katolicka w Polsce – szanse i zagrożenia in: Pięciolecie transformacji mediów*, A. Słomkowska (ed.), Warsaw 1985; J. Chrapek, *Najważniejsze zadania duszpasterskie Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce wobec środków społecznego przekazu in: Dylematy transformacji prasy polskiej (1989–1993)*, A. Słomkowska (ed.), Warsaw 1995, pp. 19–23.

⁶ J.J. Bojarski, A. Gzella, *Katalog prasy i wydawnictw katolickich*, Lublin 1994; T. Mielczarek, *Między monopolem a pluralizmem. Zarys dziejów środków komunikowania masowego w Polsce w latach 1989–1997*, Kielce, 1998, pp. 255–260; *ibidem*, *Prasa Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w latach 1989–2004 in: Media wyznaniowe w Polsce 1989–2004*, E. Kossewska, J. Adamowski (eds.), Warsaw 2004, pp. 89–96.

⁷ A. Lepa, *Katalog prasy katolickiej w Polsce*, Łódź 1994, p. 4.

Even though academic literature regarding the Catholic press in the PRL and the later period is considerable, the issue of censoring it has not been widely considered by researchers. Though there has been a number of introductory articles on specific titles⁸, mainly „Tygodnik Powszechny”⁹, it is worth mentioning that there are no extensive studies of either preventive censorship institutions or state control of freedom of speech in Catholic periodicals¹⁰.

⁸ Vide, e.g.: F. Szpor. *Cenzura prasowa jako blokada w „dialogu kultur” w latach 1981–1990. Treści i motywacje konfiskat cenzorskich dotyczących ZSRR na łamach katolickiego tygodnika „Gość Niedzielny”* in: *Polska w Rosji – Rosja w Polsce. Dialog kultur*, R. Paradowski, Sz. Ossowski (eds.), Poznań 2003, pp. 161–184.

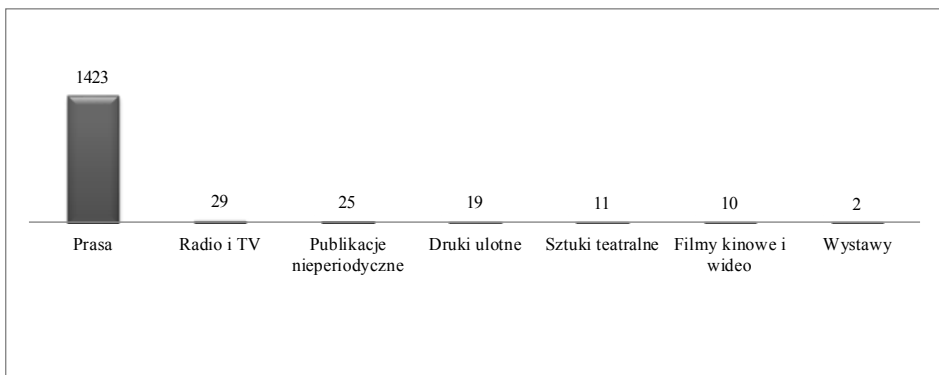
⁹ I. Pietrkiewicz, M. Rogoż, *Prewencyjne ingerencje cenzorskie w „Tygodniku Powszechnym” na przełomie lat 40. i 50.*, „Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej” 2011, issue 1–2, pp. 134–170; M. Rogoż, „Tygodnik Powszechny” w 1949 roku w świetle wtórnych ocen cenzorów Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk, „Rocznik Bibliologiczno-Prasoznawczy” 2011, issue 3, pp. 107–119; K. Kamińska, *Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk wobec Tygodnika Powszechnego na przełomie lat 50. i 60. ub. wieku*, „Studia Medioznawcze” 2013, issue 4, pp. 95–112; M. Strzelecka, *Cztery cenzorskie kreski – o ingerencjach Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk na łamach „Tygodnika Powszechnego” w latach 1945–1989* in: *Obraz, dźwięk i smak w edukacji historycznej*, S. Roszak, M. Strzelecka et al. (eds.), Toruń 2010, pp. 103–119; W. Sonczyk, *Ingerencje cenzorskie w „Gazecie Wyborczej” od 8 V do 4 VI 1989 r. (próba analizy i oceny)* in: *Media a rok 1989. Obraz przemian i nowe zjawiska na rynku*, Ł. Szurmiński (ed.), Warsaw 2010, p. 7–18.

¹⁰ An exception was a small book by M. Łętowska on censorship in relation to the catholic periodical „Ład”, vide M. Łętowski, *Gdy żyliśmy ustrój i godziliśmy w sojusze. Cenzura prasowa w PRL na przykładzie katolickiego tygodnika społecznego „Ład”*, Lublin 2010. On censorship in Poland vide, e.g.: B. Gogol, „Fabryka fałszywych tekstów”. *Z działalności Wojewódzkiego, Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Gdańsku w latach 1945–1958*, Warsaw 2012; Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce 1944–1970*, Warsaw 2010, pp. 21–36; idem, *Nadzieje na demokratyczną cenzurę w latach 1944–1945* in: *Niepiękny wiek XX*, B. Brzostek, J. Eisler, D. Jarosz et al. (eds.), Warsaw 2010, pp. 329–342; *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, Z. Romek (ed.), Warsaw 2000; A. Paczkowski, *Cenzura 1946–1949: statystyka działalności*, „Zeszyty Historyczne” 1996, vol. 116, pp. 22–57; W. Pepliński, *Cenzura jako instrument propagandy PRL*, in: *Propaganda PRL. Wybrane problemy*, P. Semków (ed.), Gdańsk, 2004, pp. 14–21; J. Adamowski, A. Kozieł, *Cenzura w PRL*, in: *Granice wolności słowa*, Kielce–Warsaw 1999, pp. 57–71; J. Drygalski, J. Kwaśniewski, *(Nie) realny socjalizm*, Warsaw 1992, pp. 273–305; K. Kersten, *Pisma rozproszone*, T. Szarota, D. Libionka (eds.), Toruń, 2005, pp. 400–406; J.M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, „Teksty Drugie” 2000, issue 1/2, pp. 95–120; J. Hera, *Cenzura komunistyczna – dokumenty*, „Arcana” 2002, issue 43, pp. 52–58; idem, *Narodziny cenzury*, „Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej” 2007, issue 5–6, pp. 111–118; A. Pawlicki, *Kompletna szarość. Cenzura w latach 1965–1972. Instytucja i ludzie*, Warsaw 2001; K. Kamińska, *Początki cenzury*, in: *Rok 1948. Między polską drogą a projektem uniwersalnym*, M. Jabłonowski, W. Jakubowski, T. Krawczak (eds.), Warsaw 2013, pp. 225–235; P. Swacha, *Cenzura komunistyczna instrumentem walki politycznej ze Stanisławem Mikołajczykiem*, in: *Nie traćcie wiary w lepszą przyszłość: myśl i działalność polityczna Stanisława Mikołajczyka*, J. Gmitruk (ed.), Warsaw 2007, pp. 235–262; M. Woźniak-Łabieniec, *Strategie literackie wobec zapisu cenzury. Czesław Miłosz w krajowej prasie i poezji w latach pięćdziesiątych*, „Napis” 2009, Series XV, pp. 311–326; idem, *w okresie odwilży jako temat tabu*, „Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Litteraria Polonica” 2013, issue 1, pp. 89–97; idem, *Rytuał w zwierciadle cenzury: Urząd Kontroli jako strażnik kultowego obrazu władzy w początkach Polski Ludowej*, „Napis” 2010, Series XVI, pp. 369–384.

Extent of interventions

In 1989–1990, **Regional Officers for the Control of Publications and Performances** intervened in all the mass media outlets of Poland (cf. Diagram 1): in 1989 – 1,519 times and in 1990 – 48 times, which constituted a decrease by 97%. Such a drastic decrease in the number of interventions can be explained, first of all, as a result of an amendment to the Control of Publications and Performances Act in July 1981, which came into force on 6 June 1989 causing an increase in the number of publications exempt from preliminary verification and liberalising the intervention criteria. Secondly, as a result of the death throes of censorship which through political changes in Poland and the decisions made during the Round Table talks regarding abolishing it, intervention began to lose its *raison d'être*. Upon the analysis of reports created during the decline of the PRL by regional level control officers, particularly after the Round Table talks and the Polish United Workers' Union's (PZPR) utter defeat in the elections, one can assume that many censors began to lose faith in the continued existence of censorship and seriously entertain the possibility of their jobs being eliminated. An important factor which must have influenced their working morale was social pressure, exerted on Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, centring around the demand for the prompt abolition of censorship. It was best exemplified by the well-known text by Seweryn Blumsztajn entitled *Po cholere to żyje* [Why, the hell, is it still alive] published in "Gazeta Wyborcza" on the front page calling for the liquidation of the office redundant and unwelcome society¹¹.

Diagram 1. Most commonly censored mass media in 1989

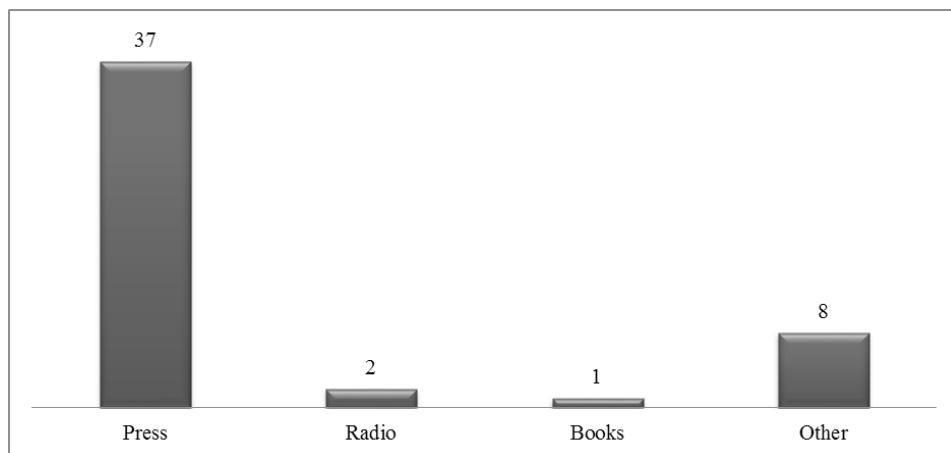


Source: own calculations based on AAN, GUKPPiW, Monthly information on performed interventions in 1989, ref. no. 2176.

¹¹ S. Blumsztajn, *Po cholere to żyje*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 1990, issue 175, 10 I.

The majority of censorship interventions in 1989 occurred in the press: 93.7% (1,423 out of 1,519). Other mass media, such as radio and television, non-periodic publications, ephemera, plays, theatre and home theatre films and exhibitions remained, in terms of the extent of interventions, far behind.

Diagram 2. Most commonly censored mass media in 1990

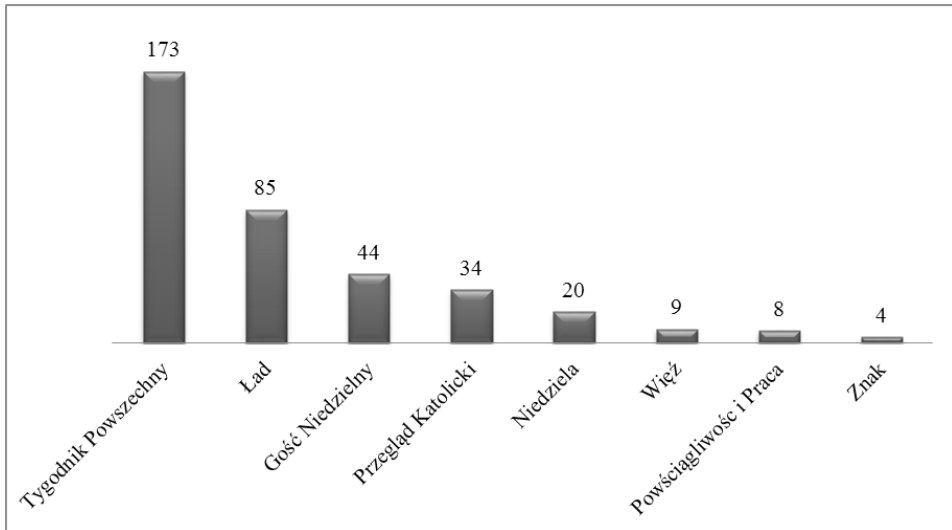


Source: own calculations based on AAN, GUKPiW, Monthly information on performed interventions in 1990, ref. no. 2190.

The majority of censorship interventions in 1990 were made, similarly to the previous period, though to a much lesser extent, in the press. OUKPiW censors expressed their reservations towards radio programs twice (Polish Radio programs) and once towards a brochure (a book) of a pornographic nature. Unfortunately, it was not possible to establish, because of incomplete OUKPiW collective reports, other mass media outlets.

Censored catholic magazines

Diagram 3. Number of interventions made by OUKPiW between January and December 1989 in Catholic magazines¹²



Source: own calculations based on AAN, GUKPPiW, Monthly information on performed interventions in 1989, ref. no. 2176.

The magazine which was censored the most often was “Tygodnik Powszechny”, in which censors within a period of 12 months of 1989 challenged 173 fragments of texts, i.e. an average of just over 3 interventions per issue. It need be stressed that Jerzy Turowicz’s weekly was subjected to the fiercest censoring among all magazines in the PRL, regardless of the changing political context¹³.

¹² Maciej Łętowski in a book on press censorship of the *Ład* weekly indicated a slight change in the extent of interventions stating that “Information on current interventions”, which served as the basis for creating all statistical summaries, were incomplete, vide M. Łętowski, *Gdy łyżyliśmy ustrój i godziliśmy w sojusze. Cenzura prasowa w PRL na przykładzie katolickiego tygodnika społecznego “Ład”*, Lublin, 2010, p. 150.

¹³ In 1949–1952, the number of texts challenged in a single issue would sometimes exceed twenty, in 1957–1961 between two to 7.7, while in 1974, there were 315 interventions into its contents (on average approx. 6 interventions per issue). In the 1980s, each issue received between three to almost twelve interventions (in 1983 – 11.8 interventions, in 1988 – 7.6 interventions, I. Pietrzkiwicz, M. Rogoż. *Prewencyjne ingerencje cenzorskie w “Tygodniku Powszechnym” na przełomie lat 40. i 50.*, “Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej” 2011, issue 1–2, p. 149; M. Rogoż. “Tygodnik Powszechny” w 1949 roku w świetle wtórnych ocen cenzorów Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk, “Rocznik Bibliologiczno-Prasoznawczy” 2011, issue 3, pp. 107–119;

Censors themselves admitted that the work “in the Catholic division” was difficult and time-consuming, requiring extensive knowledge and focus. Thus, officers handling religious press, as one censor during a national briefing instructed, should possess “a complete understanding of the problem and political expertise”¹⁴. The problems with “Tygodnik Powszechny” were caused not only by the very existence of preventive censorship, though it was their primary cause, but also by the attitude of the magazine’s editorial board which battled censorsover every text and paragraph, unwilling to consent to any extensive interventions.

The following places were occupied by: “Ład” (77 interventions per annum)¹⁵, “Gość Niedzielny”¹⁶ (44), “Przegląd Katolicki”¹⁷ (44), “Niedziela” „Niedziela”¹⁸ (20), “Więź”¹⁹ (9), “Powściągliwość i Praca”²⁰ (8), and “Znak”²¹ (4). The above-mentioned periodicals constituted 26% of all censored periodicals.

K. Kamińska, *Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk wobec “Tygodnika Powszechnego” na przełomie lat 50. i 60. ub. wieku*, “Studia Medioznawcze” 2013, issue 4, pp. 95–112.

¹⁴ Ibidem. Annual plans and related fulfilment reports (Quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports of the activities of WUKPPiW) for 1958, ref. no. 814, p. 31.

¹⁵ *Ład*, published since January 1981, initially as a bi-weekly and later as a weekly by Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, editor: Maciej Łętowski. The magazine was licensed by the Primate of Poland card. Stefan Wyszyński used the designation “**Catholic**” in the subtitle; moreover, the editorial board included a Church assistant, fr. Ryszard Śliwiński. “Ład” was published, intermittently, in 1981–1985.

¹⁶ “Gość Niedzielny”, a weekly established by fr. August Hlond, apostolic administrator for Upper Silesia, later the first Katowice bishop and Primate of Poland. The first issue was published on 9 September 1923. During World War II the publication of the weekly was suspended. The activities were restarted after WWII.

¹⁷ “Przegląd Katolicki”, published in Warsaw since 1863 (with interruptions in 1915–1922 and 1938–1983) by the Warsaw Archdiocese.

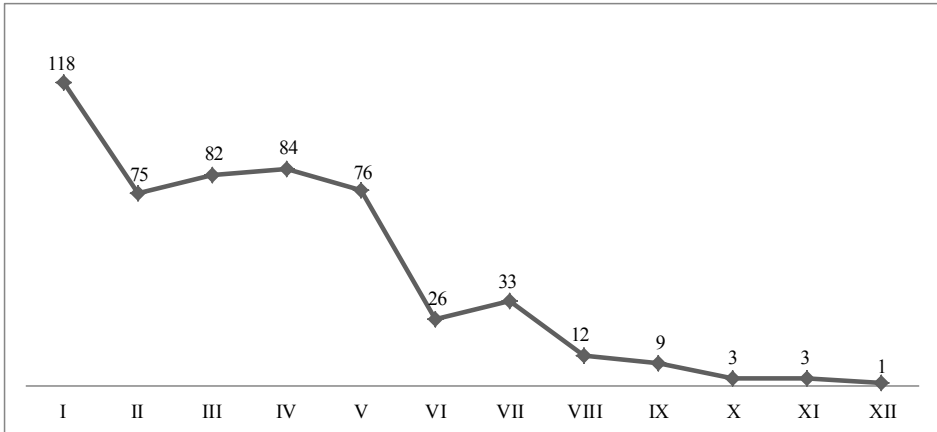
¹⁸ “Niedziela”, a periodical published intermittently since 1926 in Częstochowa, initially as a diocese periodical and as a national weekly after WWII. The issue was published on 4 April 1926.

¹⁹ “Więź”, a monthly established by lay Catholic activists during the thaw period after the October 1956. The first issue was published in February 1958 and its editor-in-chief was Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

²⁰ “Powściągliwość i Praca”, a monthly issued in 1898–2006 (intermittently) by the Congregation of the Saint Michael the Archangel. It was established by blessed fr. Bronisław Markiewicz (died in 1912, blessed in 2005).

²¹ “Znak”, a monthly issued since 1946 in Krakow by the Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak on the initiative o Jerzy Radkowski.

Diagram 4. Number of censorship interventions in Catholic press in 1989



Source: my own calculations based on AAN, GUKPPiW, Monthly information on performed interventions in 1989, ref. no. 2176.

When considering the number of texts challenged by OUKPiW censors in the Catholic press, one can identify a significant drop in the number of interventions between May and June 1989: from 435 (from January to May) to 87 (between June and December). Within just two months (May and June), they dropped by 50 interventions (from 76 to 26). To offer an example, 137 interventions (out of 173) in “Tygodnik Powszechny”, i.e. nearly 80%, occurred within the first five months of 1989 while 81 interventions (out of 85) in the case of *Lad*, which constituted 95% of the number of challenged press material occurring, similarly to “Tygodnik Powszechny”, within the first months of the year.

Such a sudden drop in the number of censorship interventions in the Catholic press, as well as other media outlets, could be explained by two factors.

First, on 8 May 1989, the first issue of “Gazeta Wyborcza”, a banner periodical of the Solidarity movement associated, at least then, with the entire worker’s union community, was published. In May, the parliamentary election campaign began and, in turn, apart from *Gazeta Wyborcza*, other periodicals associated with the opposition, though with low-circulation and ephemeral, emerged. If until May the Catholic press was perceived as the chief opponent endangering the monopoly of the official mass media, then more or less after the middle of the year the tendency started to shift. Opposition press with the banner title “Gazeta Wyborcza”, the “child” of the Round Table, emerged in the publishing market, which by default decreased censors’s interest in the Catholic press. OUKPiW censors shifted their focus to the opposition press which, quite ironically, became the leader in the race for the label of the most disobedient.

The second factor, supplementary and no less important than the first, were the legislative changes within the Control of Publications and Performances Act, which served as the legal basis for the operations of preventive censorship in the PRL. On 6 June the Control of Publications and Performances Act of 31 July 1981 was amended. The amendment decreased the number of publications verified by censors and liberalised intervention criteria. The above-mentioned facts resulted in the decrease of interventions: from 2,528 in 1988 to 1,519 in 1989 and to 48 within the final period of censorship's existence.

Then, in 1990, during the death-throes of censorship, the number of interventions in the press decreased dramatically (see Diagram 2): down to 37 between January and April when GUKPiW ceased to exist (it was under liquidation, a process that lasted until the autumn of the same year). GUKPiW documents indicate that censors did not challenge a single text published in Catholic press. What was the reason behind such a drastic decrease in the number of interventions?

Similar to the interventions in 1989, the drop in the following year was a result of the amendment to the Control of Publications and Performances Act of 31 July 1981, as previously mentioned.

During the decline of censorship (January–April 1990), the structure of censored themes changed, which was related to Poland's geopolitical situation. Almost all challenged texts referred to revealing state secrets (41 out of 48), which undoubtedly was associated with the Soviet troops stationed in Poland.

A that time, even though the constitution was amended changing the official name of the country and the PZPR ceased to exist, there were still Red Army troops stationed in the territory of Poland. When explaining the Cabinet's indolence in eliminating the GUKPiW, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki said that he feared that upon elimination of preventive censorship anti-Soviet press releases would boom, which would impair the sensitive relations with the Soviet Union. He stated:

Communist states surrounded us. There were even Soviet troops stationed in Poland. The forces of the former authorities were weakened by the moral earthquake of the elections but they were nowhere near being disorganised. They had at their disposal the military, milicja [police], the Party mechanism, and secret service. It is not that difficult to imagine what would have happened, something could still had been sparked²².

²² T. Mazowiecki, *Sąd nad grubą kreską*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 2009, issue 214, 12 Sep.

Themes of challenged texts

In 1989, regional offices mainly censored Catholic and Solidarity-related press. Among the periodicals associated with the opposition, censors had the most reservations about press releases published in “Gazeta Wyborcza” (119 interventions) and, to a much lesser extent, in “Tygodnik Solidarność” (29). The number of interventions in “Gazeta Wyborcza” was the highest during the election campaign, e.g. between 8 May and 4 June control officers intervened in its contents 33 times²³. In the following months, the number of challenged materials gradually decreased (in June there were 23 interventions while in December only two)²⁴.

The numbers of interventions made by regional offices between the January and December of 1989 in specific periodicals are presented in Diagram 3.

The thematic scope of interventions in the first six months of 1989 included²⁵: politically improper, from the point of view of control authorities, evaluation of specific current events and social phenomena (basis: 59.9% interventions), content threatening the PRL’s *raison d’etat*, its allies, principles of foreign policy, degrading the constitutional system of the PRL (26.4%), and content revealing state secrets regarding defence matters and armed forces (13.7%). 48.8% of interventions in the press were introduced in Catholic periodicals.

Within the other six months, the extent of interventions mainly included: threatening the constitutional principles of the PRL’s foreign policy and its alliances (Art. 2(3)), which constituted 63% of all interventions (189); revealing state secrets (Art. 2(5)) – 23.7% (71); inciting an overthrowing, insulting, mocking, and degrading the PRL’s system (Art. 2(2)) – 9% (27); promoting morally detrimental content (Art. 2(10)) – 1.6% (5)²⁶.

In 1990, 44 interventions were the result of revealing state secrets (Art. 2(5)) and 4 of promoting pornography (Art. 2(10)). 46 interventions occurred in the

²³ W. Sonczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 7–18.

²⁴ AAN, GUKPiW, Information on current interventions in 1989 (2–31.05), ref. no. 2167.

²⁵ “Monthly information on introduced interventions” of 1989, i.e. reports developed at the Department of Information and Supervision (DIiN) of GUKPiW on the basis of data sent from OUKPiW, did not include legal bases for the implemented interventions, which makes it impossible to develop any detailed index of challenged material. They only included a general summary centring around three categories: “**threatening alliances**”, “**revealing state secrets**”, and “**elimination of harmful current content**”. In 1989, DIiN developed only eight such reports (ref. no. 2176) covering the first eight months of the year. The remaining were abandoned probably because of a radical decrease of the number of interventions. Then in “information on current interventions” legal basis under censored material was only included since 16 June 1989, which is why it was possible to develop a detailed list of interventions. Thus, the above division into the first and the second six months’ period.

²⁶ AAN, GUKPiW, Information on current interventions for 1989, ref. no. 2169–2174.

press, mainly in “Gazeta Wyborcza” (5), “Kurier Poranny” (4) and “Głos Pomorza” (2). There were also two interventions in other media: one in a radio program (Art. 2(5)) and one in a book (Art. 2(10))²⁷.

Conclusions

– The political changes which occurred in Poland in 1989–1990 considerably influenced the functioning of the GUKPiW and the OUKPiW. One of the major legislative changes of that period was the amendment of the Control of Publications and Performances Act of 29 May 1989 which limited the number of censorship interventions by approximately 70%.

– The beginning of the end of institutional censorship in Poland were the Round Table talks, during which a decision was made to eliminate institutional censorship. A report on the activities of the Mass Media Unit of the Round Table of 22 March 1989 concluded that a prerequisite for constructing a new information order which would reflect the pluralism of opinions present in the society was that censorship had to be abolished²⁸. As of 6 June 1990, pursuant to the Act of 11 April 1990 on the repealing of the act on the control of publications and performances, removing the units of the control and on the change of the Press Law act, GUKPiW and OUKPiW were declared in the process of liquidation.

– A periodical which was censored the most often within the discussed period was „Tygodnik Powszechny”, in which censors within a period of 12 months of 1989 challenged 173 fragments of texts, i.e. an average of just over 3 interventions per issue. Jerzy Turowicz’s weekly was subjected to the fiercest censoring among all magazines in the PRL, regardless of the changing political context.

– The most common reason for a censorship intervention in the press in general published during the decline of the PRL were: in 1989 – **threatening the constitutional principles of the PRL’s foreign policy and its alliances** (Art. 2(3)) and in 1990 – revealing state secrets (Art. 2(5)).

²⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, Information on current interventions for 1990, ref. no. 2190, l. 2–16.

²⁸ Vide *Sprawozdanie z Podzespołu ds. Środków Masowego Przekazu (22 marca 1989 r.)*, in: *Materiały pomocnicze do najnowszej historii dziennikarstwa*, A. Słomkowska (ed.), Warsaw 1992, vol. XX, p. 12–25. In January 1990, two legal drafts were submitted. The first one was developed by the Sejm deputies and presented during a session of the Sejm by Barbara Labuda and other one was developed by the government. Vide summary of the discussion about the drafts: J. Sobczak. *Organy kontroli publikacji i widowisk w przededniu ich zniesienia in: Media a rok 1989. Obraz przemian i nowe zjawiska na rynku*, Ł. Szurmiński (ed.), Warsaw 2010, pp. 244–249. Z. Krajewska, M. Urbaniak. *Życie bez cenzury*, “Rzeczpospolita” 1990, issue 28, 2 Feb.

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**Institutional Censorship in Relation to Catholic Press during the Decline
of People's Republic of Poland (1989–1990)**

(Summary)

The goal of the article is to present the scope of interventions by the Regional Offices for the Control of Publications and Performances in the Catholic press during the decline of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) and the first months of the Republic of Poland, i.e. between January 1989 and April 1990. Initial censorship was a period which preceded the Round Table talks while final censorship ended with the abolition of censorship, i.e. the passing of the act (11 April 1990) on the liquidation of the institutions for the control of publications and performances. The source material for the article were the files of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows stored in the Archives of New Records.

Keywords: censorship in the People's Republic of Poland, catholic press, the Round Table

