

Censorship of literature in Poland under communism (1944 - 1990). Summary of research and new perspectives¹

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ABSTRACT: In the article the author addresses the problem of censorship of literature in Poland during the communist years. The introduction describes the basic assumptions of communist censorship and emphasizes Poland's close dependence on the USSR. The state of research on communist censorship in the former Eastern Bloc is briefly outlined in order to provide background for the discussion of the communist censorship in Poland. The methods of Polish censors are also described: preventive censorship, making two reviews, eliminating a part of the text or banning the printing of the whole text. The main part of the article details the methods of censorship in Poland by period (a chronological aspect), characterizes the banned topics (political, moral and ideological censorship) and gives examples of authors who had trouble with publishing. It also discusses the differences between censorship of Polish contemporary literature, classics and translations from foreign languages. It is argued that the existence of state control determined the peculiarity of Polish literature during the communist period. Censorship influenced the formation of the canon and restricted the development of some topics and aspects of poetics. Furthermore, state control destroyed the careers of writers and a broader potential of literature. Finally, the translations of important texts of world literature were not allowed to be printed or were very late, which resulted in the isolation of Polish literature (and readers). In the last part of the article the author presents new perspectives for further research: a transnational, postcolonial and "minority narrative" perspective.

Keywords: censorship, communism, Polish literature, People's Poland

Introduction

The historical period 1944 - 1990 stretches between the end of World War II and the collapse of communism in Poland and all Central and Eastern Europe, and is characterized by political dependence on the USSR. During this period, Polish society, literature and culture were heavily dependent on state policy and served to implement the communist pattern of life. The state exercised strict supervision over all social life (political police) and all cultural institutions and works (censorship). On the other hand, society did not want to submit to the imposed communist mod-

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el, hence the attempts at opposition: strikes, demonstrations, the rise of samizdat [“drugi obiegi”], and, finally, the overthrow of communism. Polish literature reflects both: dependence on communism and social resistance to it.²

Research on communist censorship. Preliminary assumption

Research on communist censorship has been conducted in parallel in many countries and in different approaches. The topic has become trendy and is producing good results. The scholarly intensification is fostered – as with general studies of communism – by the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the opening of archives.³

The contemporary theoretical basis for thinking about censorship is founded on the classic sociological works of Pierre Bourdieu on symbolic violence⁴ and Michael Foucault with his critical analysis of social institutions.⁵ They define censorship as all social control and exclusionary selection. With these concepts, the narrow understanding of censorship is enriched by thinking about its structural and constitutive presence in every form of human communication.

But, as Beate Müller states, the broad understanding of the term “censorship” and the failure to distinguish it from other types of regulation is not conducive to thinking about the control of writing in totalitarian systems: here we need to limit the scope of the term to authoritarian third-party intervention in communication between sender and receiver. Censorship in an authoritarian system: 1. always based on official regulations, 2. has an extensive organizational and administrative structure, and 3. a tendency to bureaucratization (hence so much archival material).⁶ The simplest definition may be the one proposed by Ulla Otto: “censorship is a regulatory intervention of power”.⁷

In this article I leave aside the issues of whether and to what extent the People’s Republic of Poland was a totalitarian state and the terminological question (communism - socialism). In short, the totalitarian system (with terror against citizens) was in force in Poland in the first months after World War II and in the Sta-

² KRAJEWSKI, Andrzej. *Między współpracą a oporem. Twórcy kultury wobec systemu politycznego PRL (1975 – 1980)*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Trio”, 2004; FRISZKE, Andrzej. *Przystosowanie i opór. Studia z dziejów PRL*. Warszawa: Wyd. „Więź”, 2007.

³ MÜLLER, Beate. *Censorship and Cultural Regulations. Mapping of territory*. In MÜLLER, Beate (ed.). *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*. Amsterdam – New York : Rodopi, 2004, pp. 1 – 25. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401200950_001

⁴ BOURDIEU, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. THOMPSON, John B. (ed., introduction), RAYMOND Gino, ADAMSON, Matthew (transl.). Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁵ FOUCAULT, Michael. *Porządek dyskursu*. KOZŁOWSKI, Michał (transl.). Gdańsk : Wyd. słowo/obraz/terytoria, 2002; FAUCAULT, Michael. *Nadzorować i karać. Narodziny więzienia*. KOMENDANT, Tadeusz (transl.). Warszawa : Wyd. Aletheia, 1998; FOUCAULT, Michael. *Historia seksualności*. BANASIAK, Bogdan – KOMENDANT Tadeusz – MATUSZEWSKI, Krzysztof (transl.). Gdańsk : Wyd. słowo/obraz/terytoria, 2010.

⁶ MÜLLER, *Censorship and Cultural Regulations*, p. 13.

⁷ OTTO, Ulla. *Die literarische als Problem der Soziologie der Politik*. Stuttgart : F. Enke, 1968. The concepts of Ulla Otto were intensively discussed in Poland after the publication of the book KAROLAK, Czesław (ed. and transl.). *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX w.: Studia, analizy, dokumenty*. Poznań : Wyd. Poznańskie, 2000.

linist period (1949 – 1956). The entire period 1944 – 1990 can be considered a time of authoritarian rule.⁸

Research on censorship operating in People's Poland

Research on communist censorship in People's Poland has been conducted since the early 1990s.⁹ The phenomenon is interesting for representatives of several research fields. Historians focus on describing: 1. the emergence and organization of control institutions, 2. the course of control processes, and 3. censorship understood as an element in the construction of a non-democratic system.¹⁰ Philologists focus most generally on a description of the role of censorship in the formation and functioning of texts (primarily literature).¹¹ By far the dominant methodology in all research fields so far has been the totalitarian perspective. However, the first works using a *minority narrative* perspective are already appearing, as well as proposals to use transnational and postcolonial perspectives.¹²

Research on communist censorship has been conducted based on archival searches. The papers are based on the study of a wide range of sources from party and government agencies, but for the study of literary censorship, the most important sources proved to be those produced by The Main Office for the Control of Press Publications and Performances [Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowisk].¹³

Documents generated by the Main Office of Control were transferred to the Archives of New Records in Warsaw. Some documents were previously destroyed, probably at the turn of 1990, until the actual liquidation of the office. But still

⁸ EISLER, Jerzy. *Kwestia totalności władzy jest do dziś przedmiotem sporów* [on-line]. Dostępne na internete: <<https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/>> [28.10.2022]

⁹ RADZIKOWSKA, Zofia. *Z historii walki o wolność słowa w Polsce (cenzura PRL w latach 1981 – 1987)*. Kraków : Wyd. Universitas, 1990; BRODZKA, Alina – KOSTECKI, Janusz (eds.). *Piśmiennictwo - systemy kontroli- obiegi alternatywne*. Vol. 1-2. Warszawa : Wyd. Biblioteka Narodowa, 1992; NAŁĘCZ, Daria (ed.). *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL. Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy*, Vol. 6. Warszawa: Wyd. ISP PAN, 1994.

¹⁰ See for example: PAWLICKI, Aleksander. *Kompletna szarość. Cenzura w latach 1965 – 1972*. Instytucja i ludzie. Warszawa : Wyd. „Trio”, 2001; ROMEK, Zbigniew. *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce. 1944 – 1970*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Neriton”, 2010; GOGOL, Bogusław. *„Fabryka fałszywych tekstów”. Z działalności Wojewódzkiego Oddziału Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowisk w Gdańsku. 1945 – 1958*. Gdańsk : Wyd. UG, 2012; PATELSKI, Mariusz. *„Czujni strażnicy demokracji” ludowej. Urząd cenzury w województwie opolskim. 1950 – 1990*. Opole : Wyd. Uniwersytet Opolski, 2019; KAMIŃSKA-CHEŁMINIAK, Kamila. *Cenzura w Polsce 1944 – 1960. Organizacja – kadry metody pracy*. Warszawa : Wyd. UW, 2019.

¹¹ See for example: BUDROWSKA, Kamila. *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*. Białystok : Wyd. UwB, 2009; WOŹNIAK-ŁABIENIEC, Marzena. *Obecny – nieobecny. Krajowa recepcja Czesława Miłosza w krytyce literackiej lat pięćdziesiątych w świetle dokumentów cenzury*. Łódź : Wyd. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2012; DĄBROWICZ, Elżbieta. *Cenzura na gruzach. Szkice o literackich świadectwach życia w PRL-u*. Białystok : Wyd. UwB 2017; WIŚNIEWSKA-GRABARCYK, Anna. *„Czytelnik” ocenzonej literatury. Literatura w kryptotekstach – recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2018; WIŚNIEWSKA-GRABARCYK, Anna. *Książki z „Mysiej”. Literatura w świetle poufnych biuletynów urzędu cenzury z lat 1945 – 1956*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2021.

¹² BUDROWSKA, Kamila. *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej w literaturze polskiej w latach 1944 – 1990. Stan badań i perspektywy badawcze*. In *Teksty Drugie*, 2020, No. 3, pp. 181 – 197. <https://doi.org/10.18318/td.2020.3.12>

¹³ Archive of New Records in Warsaw [Archiwum Akt Nowych], Main Office of Control Press Publications and Performances [Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowisk], signature 1 - 7867.

about 7,000 folders have survived, most of them containing several hundred pages of documents each.

The preservation of archival sources in Poland seems crucial to the flourishing of research: 1. it has contributed to the rapidity with which researchers have taken up the topic, and 2. it has given many opportunities for its diverse development.

An important observation is that all sources produced by agencies of the communist state – including sources of the Main Office of Control – have a different logic. Therefore, the documents cannot be read straightforwardly. It is necessary to use the method of deconstructing of text: looking for the errors and “reading between the lines”.

A brief but necessary historical introduction

The end of World War II was associated in Poland with the gradual expulsion of the Nazis from the occupied territories – from East to West – by the Red Army and the Polish Army organized alongside it.¹⁴ The first communist provisional government was established in Chelm Lubelski, where the PKWN (Polish Committee for National Liberation) Manifesto was proclaimed on July 22, 1944. In fact, the Manifesto was approved and signed by Stalin in Moscow two days earlier and read out in Polish on Radio Moscow on July 22. The Manifesto proclaimed that the only legal authority in Poland was the Communist National Council, and that the Polish government-in-exile was illegal. The government was formed by Polish communists, strongly supported by the Soviet government and military.¹⁵

The Manifesto restored the 1921 Constitution and announced that a new constitution would be promulgated shortly after the end of hostilities. In the end, the new constitution was not adopted until 1952, which was already in the Stalinist period. Interestingly, the Stalinist Constitution, the same as the Constitution of 1921, guaranteed citizens freedom of speech.¹⁶

Censorship in Poland was abolished by a resolution of the Polish parliament, which took effect on June 6, 1990.¹⁷

The rise of the Main Office for the Control of Press Publications and Performances

In People’s Poland the power of control was vested in all state organs and offices: Committees and Departments of the Communist Party, Public Security Offices, ministries, customs offices, and editorial offices of publishing houses or magazines, but the unit specially arranged for this purpose and dealing exclusively with it was the Main Office of Control (central office and provincial representations).¹⁸

The Main Office of Control was organized along the lines of Glavlit (Głównoje Uprawlenie po Dz’elam Litieratury i Isdatiel’stw). At the end of 1944 Soviet cen-

¹⁴ The state of research is very extensive. See, for example: DAVIES, Norman. *Europa walczy 1939 – 1945. Nie takie proste zwycięstwo*. Kraków : Wyd. „Znak”, 2008.

¹⁵ WRONA, Janusz et al. PKWN : próba oceny. In *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 2005, No. 4/2 (8), pp. 13 – 30.

¹⁶ Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej uchwalona przez Sejm Ustawodawczy w dniu 22 lipca 1952 r. Art. 71.1.

¹⁷ KAMIŃSKA, Kamila. Koniec cenzury w PRL (1989 – 1990). In *Studia Medioznawcze*, 2014, No. 3, pp. 113 – 132. <https://doi.org/10.33077/uw.24511617.ms.2014.58.610>

¹⁸ BATES, John M. Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej. In *Teksty Drugie*, 2002, No. 1 – 2, pp. 95 – 120.

sors – the functionaries of Glavlit – came to Poland to establish an institution for controlling the media, modelled on the Soviet agency that would secure the interests of that state.¹⁹ Initially, the censorship office operated within the structures of the security office; its separation from these structures and legal establishment as an independent unit took place on July 5, 1946.²⁰ Throughout the whole period of the duration of The Main Office of Control in Poland, dependence on the USSR was highly visible. One of the most strictly forbidden threads until 1990 was any content that criticized the USSR.²¹

The overriding function of the Main Offices of Control was performed by the Polish Communist Party, which, in turn, was overseen by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Polish Communist Party Committee prepared recommendations and directives in the famous “Books of records and recommendations” [“Książki zapisów i zaleceń”], regulating all censorship work.²²

However, according to the study, the biggest contributor to censoring literature was The Main Office of Control. Why? Firstly, the Party Committee was concerned with the overall operation of the state, so it could not deal with everything in detail. Censors, on the other hand, worked on literary texts for weeks, sometimes years. Secondly, the Party Committee issued only very general directives that covered a wide range of subjects. The censors implemented the regulations on their own, and their interpretation determined the shape of individual texts.²³

The activities of the Main Offices of Control were codified by law, but only at the level of regulation.²⁴ Since the Constitution guaranteed citizens’ freedom of speech, by law the censorship office operated unlawfully for all these years.

In the Main Offices of Control – in the central office in Warsaw and provincial representations – about 350 – 500 people worked (both very poorly educated and those with a PhD).²⁵

Short instruction: how the Polish censors worked

Censors controlled all forms of public media: 1. daily press, 2. school and academic textbooks, 3. scientific works, 4. fiction, 5. theatre, 6. radio, 7. film and television, 8. photographs and art exhibitions.

¹⁹ ROMEK, Zbigniew. Nadzieje na demokratyczną cenzurę w latach 1944 – 1945. In BRZOSTEK, Błażej et al. *Niepiękny wiek XX. Profesorowi Tomaszowi Szarocie w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2010, pp. 329 – 342.; KAMIŃSKA – CHEŁMINIAK, Kamila. Wpływ Związku Radzieckiego na proces tworzenia cenzury państwowej w Polsce (1944 – 1945). In *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 2020, LV (2), pp. 143 – 159.

²⁰ NAŁĘCZ, *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, p. 28.

²¹ GARDOCKI, Wiktor. Cenzurowanie wątków rosyjskich w polskiej poezji lat 80. XX wieku. In *Studia Wschodniosłowiańskie*, 2019, Vol. 19, pp. 21 – 33. <https://doi.org/10.15290/sw.2019.19.02>

²² STRZYŻEWSKI, Tomasz – ROMEK, Zbigniew (ed.). *Wielka księga cenzury PRL w dokumentach*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Prohibita”, 2015.

²³ ROKICKI, Konrad. *Literaci. Relacje między literatami i władzami PRL w latach 1956 – 1970*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2011.

²⁴ NAŁĘCZ, *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, pp. 27 – 28.

²⁵ GARDOCKI, Wiktor. Cenzorzy w latach 1945 – 1990. Wybrane aspekty pracy. In *Piętno władzy. Studia nad cenzurą i zakresem wolności słowa*. Toruń : Wyd. UMK, 2020, pp. 107 – 122.

It should be noted that literature was not – from the authorities' point of view – as important as the press, especially the daily press. The press was published in larger circulations and reached a larger audience. Reading highbrow literature has always been an elite activity and concerned, despite official propaganda, only a small group of citizens.²⁶

Throughout the period 1944 – 1990 in Poland preventive censorship was in force, that is, control before a text was allowed to be published. Restrictive censorship (post-publication control) was treated only as an appendix to the main process (permission for dissemination). An equal part of the system of restrictive censorship came only during the martial law period (1981 – 1983).²⁷

It could be noted, according to the study,²⁸ that preventive censorship is much more dangerous to literature (and other media) than restrictive censorship. Why? 1. Authors censor themselves very deeply (self-censorship), 2. publishing houses (or other editors), fearing difficulties, are much stricter in the preselection of works, 3. the censors can make changes within the text, which restrictive censorship excludes. With preventive censorship, the censor can become a co-author of the text,²⁹ with the reader unaware of this.

Between 1944 and 1990 only the editor contacted the censor and then passed all comments to the author. The author had no formal means of contacting the censor's office.

It should be added that the lack of personal legal responsibility of the author (or editor or translator) for the text submitted for control was the most serious difference between Polish censorship and that of the USSR. A Polish writer, unlike a Soviet writer, did not have to fear restrictions or imprisonment; the only consequence was that the work would not be printed.

This is one of the key findings from the study in its contemporary aspect.³⁰

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, censors in Poland prepared detailed reviews of submitted works (2 independent reviews), following which they had to issue a verdict: whether the work was suitable for publication or not, and whether changes should be made (and what changes).³¹

Censors could amend the text themselves, but they did so only in the case of minor deletions or the addition of small fragments (words, single sentences). Works in which they wanted to make major changes were sent back to the editors, and

²⁶ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 31 – 33.

²⁷ BAGIEŃSKA-MASIOTA, Agnieszka. Prawne podstawy cenzury prasy w okresie stanu wojennego (1981 – 1983). In *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 2014, Vol. LXVI, No. 2, pp. 191 – 193. <https://doi.org/10.14746/cph.2014.46.2.08>

²⁸ FIK, Marta. Cenzor jako współautor. In SARNOWSKA-TEMERIUŚ, Elżbieta (ed.). *Literatura i władza*, Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 1996, pp. 131 – 147.

²⁹ FIK, Cenzor jako współautor, pp. 131 – 147.

³⁰ The state of research is extensive. See, for example: ERMOLAEV, Herman. *Censorship in Soviet Literature. 1917 – 1991*. New York, London : Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 1997; GORIAJEVA, Tatiana M. *Isključiti? wsiakije upominanija... Očerki istorii sovietskoj cenzury*. Moskwa: Rosspen, 1995; BLUM, Arlen. *Russkije pisatieli o cenzurie i cenzorach. Od Radiszczewa do naszych dnjej. Opyt kommentirowanaj antologii*. Sankt Petersburg : Wyd. Poligraf, 2011.

³¹ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 17 – 26.

after that the editors sent them back to the author for proofreading. Decisions on whether to publish a work still had to be approved by the manager. In difficult, contentious situations, more reviews were prepared, even a dozen over 2 - 3 years. In the most difficult cases, the decision was made by the party committee. In the 1970s and 1980s the procedure was simplified - censors did not prepare a separate review for each work, but summary statements every two weeks. Only disputed cases were described separately.

An important category of censorship was full text retention, which applied to many works of contemporary literature, especially works by debut authors. Such books were challenged by the censors in their entirety and never reached publication. Many of them are unknown to this day, and only mentions in sources remain (*inedita*).³²

It is worth mentioning that censors made many mistakes and errors. They resulted from: haste, mess, laziness, misunderstanding of directives, and sometimes lack of education, which resulted in failure to understand the work being read. An interesting example is the admission to print of one of the first "thaw" texts, "Poem for Adults" by Adam Ważyk, in the summer of 1955, a year before the relaxation of censorship rules, but at the height of the holiday season.³³

Censorship towards literature in People's Poland

The main part of present article's findings relate to the censorship of literature in People's Poland, covered in several aspects: chronological, thematic and personal, and problems related to the censorship of Polish contemporary literature, Polish classics (here an important question about establishing the canon) and translations from foreign languages. I leave aside the issue of censorship of children's literature due to limited space.

a. Chronological aspect

Changes in the level of control were strictly related to political fluctuations. It is worth adding that the political transformations in People's Poland described below coincided with those in other Eastern Bloc countries.

The first period of literary censorship (1944 - 1948) was characterized by its mild form, in contrast to censorship of the press, to which censors reacted strongly to attempts at public resistance against the installation of communist power in Poland.³⁴ During this period, the Main Offices of Control were not yet fully prepared to control literature; they were just working out the rules. Moreover, private publishing houses were still operating until 1949, and they submitted literature to the censors deemed unacceptable in communist authorities' point of view. As a result, a number of important works were published in this time, including major reports of

³² BUDROWSKA, Kamila. *Zatrzymane przez cenzurę. Inedita z połowy wieku XX*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2013.

³³ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 - 1958*, pp. 71 - 72.

³⁴ ROMEK, Zbigniew. *Nadzieje na demokratyczną cenzurę w latach 1944 - 1945*. In BRZOSTEK, Błażej et al. *Niepiękny wiek XX. Profesorowi Tomaszowi Szarocie w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2010, pp. 329 - 342.

World War II and the Holocaust (short stories by Nałkowska, Borowski, Rudnicki and Andrzejewski, and poetry by Różewicz and Miłosz).³⁵

The change came at the end of 1948. The Stalinist period (1949 – 1956) saw the greatest devastation in Polish literature due to 1) the strictest censorship, and 2) the socialist realist style imposed by the authorities (socialist realism was modelled on the art of the USSR, where it was promulgated from 1934). During the Stalinist period in Poland the publication of all artistically ambitious literature was halted. Moreover, many previously published works were destroyed (library purges).³⁶ A completely unexpected effect was the banning of literary representations of the Second World War and the Holocaust which were deemed “irrelevant”.³⁷

The next big change came after Stalin’s death and was associated with gradual de-Stalinization in the Eastern Bloc. The “Thaw” started in Poland in the autumn of 1956 with a wave of strikes and demonstrations. During this period there was a spectacular revival and flowering of literature, which was associated with the fact that censorship was extremely lenient. The “Thaw” lasted only two years in Poland, until the end of 1958. The most important literary facts were: the publication of texts previously withheld by the censors (related to the topic of World War II), late debuts (the poetry of Zbigniew Herbert), and the flourishing of Polish avant-garde literature: Miron Białoszewski, Stanisław Grochowiak (poetry), and Sławomir Mrożek (dramas). During this unusual time, several important texts from world literature were translated into Polish and published (e.g. the works of Albert Camus and Ernest Hemingway).³⁸

The period 1958 – 1968 is known as the “little stabilization”, and was characterized by political and economic stability. However, the positive thawing changes were completed, and censorship returned to a harsher version, albeit no longer as harsh as in the Stalinist period. This time coincides with the development of popular culture, which was becoming an increasing problem for the censor’s office due to its apparent fascination with and imitation of Western culture – again viewed unfavourably by the authorities.³⁹

In March 1968, Poland entered another period of political turmoil, which lasted until the end of 1970 – student and worker strikes, factional fights in the Party Committee, and systematic repression of Polish Jewish citizens: revocation of their Polish citizenship and expulsion from the country or work (about 15,000 people left

³⁵ KLOC, Agnieszka. *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej i podziemia powojennego w literaturze polskiej (1956 – 1958)*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2018.

³⁶ BATES, John M. Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce (1948 – 1955). In DĄBROWSKA, Danuta – MICHAŁOWSKI, Piotr (eds.). *Presja i ekspresja. Zjazd szczeciński i socrealizm*. Szczecin, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2002, pp. 79 – 92; BATES, Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej, pp. 95 – 120; KAMIŃSKA – CHEŁMINIAK, Kamila. Polish Censorship during the Late Stalinist Period. In *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*, 2021, Vol. 66, No. 1, pp. 245 – 259. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu02.2021.115>

³⁷ BUDROWSKA, *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej*, pp. 181– 197.

³⁸ MOJSAK, Kajetan. *Cenzura wobec prozy „nowoczesnej”. 1956 – 1965*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2016.

³⁹ BUDROWSKA, Kamila – KOTOWSKA-KACHEL, Maria (eds.). *„Sztuka czytania między wierszami”. Cenzura wobec komunikacji literackiej w Polsce w latach 1965 – 1989*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2016; MOJSAK, *Cenzura wobec prozy „nowoczesnej”. 1956 – 1965*, pp. 187 – 222.

Poland, mostly intellectuals, among them Zygmunt Bauman and other professors from Warsaw University).⁴⁰ As a result, censorship was tightened again, and Jewish subjects joined other strictly controlled topics for several months. The dramatic Prague Spring and the entry of Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia in August 1968 played out in the background.

Interestingly, during this time particularly important books were allowed to be published – testimonies on World War II, taking up themes forbidden for many years. In 1970, Miron Białoszewski's "Pamiętnik z powstania warszawskiego" [A Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising] was published⁴¹, followed in 1971 by Bogdan Wojdowski's novel "Chleb rzucony umarłym" [Bread for the Departed], with pictures of drastic violence.⁴² The authorities felt that enough years had passed after the war that these topics were no longer controversial.

Another important political change that influenced changes in the severity of the censorship of literature was the strikes in 1976 and the formation of the Workers' Defence Committee.⁴³ It was then that the independent press began to be published on a large scale, which marked the beginning of the samizdat ["drugi obieg"]. Independent circulation became a new opening for literary fiction, as a solution could be found when the censors did not grant permission to print.⁴⁴ Many writers who had no chance of official printing decided to publish on the second circuit. Among the most prominent writers associated with the samizdat can be counted Stanisław Barańczak and Tadeusz Konwicki.⁴⁵

The first half of the 1980s saw several instances of tightening and relaxation of state censorship in Poland. This was influenced both by political circumstances and the legal changes they forced. The most important political events of the early 1980s were the rise of the Solidarity trade union, the wave of strikes and the August Agreements, and the introduction of martial law, its suspension and abolition.⁴⁶ The most important legal changes were the enactment of a new censorship law on July 31, 1981⁴⁷ and the promulgation of martial law with extremely strict censorship.⁴⁸ So, the situation completely changed every few months.

⁴⁰ EISLER, Jerzy. *Polski rok 1968*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2006.

⁴¹ SOBOLEWSKI, Tadeusz. *Człowiek – Miron*. Kraków : Wyd. „Znak”, 2012.

⁴² MOLISAK, Alina. *Judaizm jako los. Rzecz o Bogdanie Wojdowskim*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Cyklady”, 2004.

⁴³ FRISZKE, *Przystosowanie i opór. Studia z dziejów PRL*, pp. 258 – 262.

⁴⁴ BŁAŻEJOWSKA, Justyna. *Papierowa rewolucja. Z dziejów drugiego obiegu wydawniczego w Polsce 1976 – 1989/90*. Warszawa : Wyd. IPN, 2010; SOWIŃSKI, Paweł. *Zakazana książka. Uczestnicy drugiego obiegu 1977 – 1989*. Warszawa : Wyd. ISP PAN, 2011; OLASZEK, Jan. *Rewolucja powielaczy. Niezależny ruch wydawniczy w Polsce w latach 1976 – 1989*. Warszawa : Wyd. „trzecia strona”, 2015.

⁴⁵ SZARUGA, Leszek. „Zapis”. Wstęp do opisu. In BRODZKA – KOSTECKI, *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, pp. 297 – 319.

⁴⁶ FRISZKE, Andrzej. *Rewolucja Solidarności. 1980 – 1981*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Znak – Horyzont”, 2014; PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej. *Wojna polsko-jaruzelska. Stan wojenny, czyli kontrrewolucja generałów*, Warszawa : „Wielka Litera”, 2006.

⁴⁷ GARDOCKI, Wiktor. *Cenzura wobec literatury polskiej w latach osiemdziesiątych XX w.* Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2019.

⁴⁸ BAGIEŃSKA-MASIOTA, *Prawne podstawy cenzury prasy w okresie stanu wojennego*, pp. 191 – 193.

The period after the abolition of martial law until the collapse of the communist system (1983 – 1989) is considered weak in literary development.⁴⁹ The system was slowly being eroded, censorship was getting weaker, but it still worked, blocking the printing of many valuable works, including translations. The most important works appeared in the second circulation or in exile, as books, and in periodicals (such as “Zapis” or the Paris-based “Kultura”). In contrast, artistically poor literature (including those with erotic content) appeared in official circulation to satisfy the tastes of unsophisticated readers.⁵⁰

Censorship continued to be active after the opposition won the 1989 June elections and in the first half of 1990, although it no longer had any real influence on the literature published at the time.⁵¹

b. Topics

Most generally, censors suppressed several main elements in literary fiction: criticism of the USSR, criticism of communism, praise of capitalism and the “bourgeois” lifestyle, religious motifs and – as universally understood – immorality of the text. The existence and operation of the censorship office was also an absolutely forbidden topic.

The purpose of censorship was to remove content that threatened the communist system (political censorship)⁵² and to remove difficult moral subjects: pornographic content, drastic violence, but also depictions of homosexuality or poverty (moral censorship).⁵³ Still another type of censorship was that directed against works in which religious attitudes were expressed (ideological censorship), because the communist system assumed programmatic atheism.⁵⁴

Interesting examples of political censorship in literature include: 1. “Hungarian” topics strictly forbidden during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution⁵⁵, 2. the topic of the murder of Polish officers in 1940 by the NKVD at Katyn, which was strictly forbidden for 45 years.⁵⁶ Interesting examples of moral censorship are: 1. stopping the

⁴⁹ NIEWIADOMSKI, Andrzej. „Czarna dziura” czy „międzyepoka”. Tezy o poezji lat 80. In BUDROWSKA, Kamila – GARDOCKI, Wiktor – JURKOWSKA, Elżbieta (eds.). 1984. *Literatura i kultura schyłkowego PRL-u*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2015, pp. 421 – 435.

⁵⁰ ŚWISTAK, Mateusz. Niepolityczne tabu PRL, czyli o cenzurze obyczajowej lat 80. In SKORUPA, Ewa (ed). *Przeskoczyć tę studnię strachu: autor i dzieło a cenzura PRL*. Kraków : Wyd. UJ, 2010, pp. 115 – 131.

⁵¹ KAMIŃSKA-CHEŁMINIAK, Koniec cenzury w PRL (1989 – 1990), pp. 113 – 131.

⁵² PAWLICKI, *Kompletna szarość*, pp. 51 – 68; ROMEK, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna*, pp. 737.

⁵³ ŚWISTAK, Mateusz. Niepolityczne tabu PRL, czyli o cenzurze obyczajowej lat 80., pp. 115 – 131; BUDROWSKA, Kamila. Cenzura, tabu i wstyd. Cenzura obyczajowa w PRL-u (1948 – 1958). In *Napis*, 2012, seria XVIII, pp. 229 – 244. <https://doi.org/10.18318/napis.2012.1.15>

⁵⁴ BUDNIK, Magdalena. Cenzura i religia: Wpływ Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowiska na kształt podręczników do religii i innych tekstów religijnych w latach 1948 – 1955. In *Język – szkoła – religia*, 2011, No. 6, pp. 49 – 57; KAMIŃSKA, Kamila. Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowisk wobec „Tygodnika Powszechnego” na przełomie lat 50. i 60. ub. wieku. In *Studia Medioznawcze*, 2013, nr 4, pp. 95 – 111; SWACHA, Piotr. Cenzura wobec „Głosu Katolickiego” na przełomie lat 40. i 50. XX wieku. In *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, 2017, No. 3 (231), pp. 596 – 611.

⁵⁵ DETKA, Janusz. Wiersze „węgierskie”. In DETKA, Janusz. *Wiersze polskiej „odwilży” (1953 – 1957)*. Kielce : Wyd. Uniwersytetu Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczego w Kielcach, 2010, pp. 181 – 211.

⁵⁶ KLOC, *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej i podziemia powojennego w literaturze polskiej*, pp. 236 – 243.

printing of the novel on homosexual themes "Gates of Paradise" by Jerzy Andrzejewski in 1959 (in this case the censors found it difficult even to write reviews, since they lacked the appropriate vocabulary!),⁵⁷ 2. banning the printing of Mieczysława Buczkówna's poem "In the Queue", on the subject of women's hard domestic work and domestic violence (banning women's literature).⁵⁸ Examples of ideological censorship include several works by Zofia Kossak, which did not gain acceptance because of the religiosity expressed in her texts.⁵⁹

c. Person /Author

A specific form of censorship work was "records", that is, lists of forbidden people and topics that could not appear in the public space. As I stated earlier, such records were prepared by the Party Committee and sent to the censorship office. The famous "Books of Records and Recommendations" regulated the list of people who could appear in the public space as authors or persons whose names could be mentioned. The records changed every two weeks, but some bans remained in force for many years. It should also be noted that the state's restrictive practices were met with diverse responses from writers and artists. They ranged from full engagement with communism and subordination to, at the other extreme, joining the opposition.

An interesting example of long-lasting prohibition is Czesław Miłosz, who fled Poland in 1951, and there was a complete ban on both publishing his works and mentioning his name until he received the Nobel Prize in October 1980.⁶⁰ Generally, writers in exile (e.g. Witold Gombrowicz,⁶¹ Gustaw Herling-Grudziński – a former prisoner of a Soviet gulag)⁶² were banned from being printed, as writers with anti-communist beliefs, including famous oppositionists like Stanisław Barańczak⁶³ or Stefan Kisielewski.⁶⁴

It should be added that the censors treated young unknown writers much more harshly than those who were established. A notable example is the fate of Stanisław Lem's debut realist novel (dealing with themes of war and the Holocaust). In compliance with censorship orders, he revised it for seven years and expanded it from

⁵⁷ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 127 – 133.

⁵⁸ BUDROWSKA, Kamila. Portret rodziny we wczesnych wierszach (publikowanych i niepublikowanych) Mieczysławy Buczkówny. In BUDROWSKA, Kamila. *Studia i szkice o cenzurze w Polsce Ludowej latach 40. i 50. XX wieku*. Białystok : Wyd. Alter Studio, 2014, pp. 59 – 77.

⁵⁹ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 41 – 42 and 80 – 81.

⁶⁰ WOŹNIAK-ŁABIENIEC, *Obecny-nieobecny. Krajowa recepcja*, pp. 14 – 15; GARDOCKI, Wiktor. Rzecz o nieistnieniu Czesława Miłosza. 1979 – 1981. In BUDROWSKA, Kamila – GARDOCKI, Wiktor – JURKOWSKA, Elżbieta (ed.). *1984. Literatura i kultura schyłkowego PRL-u*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2015, pp. 317 – 335.

⁶¹ MOJSAK, *Cenzura wobec prozy „nowoczesnej”. 1956 – 1965*, pp. 187 – 222.

⁶² BOLECKI, Włodzimierz. „Inny świat” Gustawa Herlinga-Grudzińskiego. Kraków : Wyd. „Universitas” 2007.

⁶³ SZARUGA, Leszek. „Zapis”. *Zarys monograficzny. Bibliografia zawartości*. Szczecin : Wyd. US, 1996; HOBOT, Joanna. *Gra z cenzurą w poezji Nowej Fali (1968 – 1976)*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000; STRZYŻEWSKI – ROMEK, *Wielka księga cenzury PRL w dokumentach*, p. 95.

⁶⁴ HEJMEJ, Andrzej – HAWRYSZKÓW, Kama – CUDZICH-BUDNIAK, Katarzyna (eds.). *Dysonanse. Twórczość Stefana Kisielewskiego (1911 – 1991)*. Kraków : Wyd. UJ, 2012.

one volume to three. It was finally published in 1955 as “Czas nieutracony” [Time not Lost].⁶⁵ Never after that, already an established writer, did he agree to republish it.

In general, the ban on printing deprived writers of their livelihood, and condemned them to oblivion or non-existence in the minds of readers. This was a serious form of censorship that stopped the development of many talented writers.

d. Polish contemporary literature

Contemporary literature was censored very carefully. This is because of its peculiarity as a literary representation – especially in prose – of current historical and social events, and as a reflection of experiences important to a community. A society subjected to communist pressure did not have many other peaceful ways to articulate traumatic experiences. Literature – and culture more broadly – remained an outlet for social tensions, preventing open conflicts.⁶⁶

Contemporary literature was also very intensively “programmed” and “promoted” by the communist government. Authors were persuaded to choose certain topics, and bans were imposed on others. This peculiarity also resulted in a method of censorship: contemporary texts were rarely total deleted (the Stalinist years were an exception), but many minor changes were made to them to suit the party’s current guidelines.⁶⁷ What changes? Words were transformed, chapters and sentences were cut, fragments were inserted, and accents of meaning were distributed differently. For example: 1. changes in the place of the action – instead of Borysław, which became part of the USSR after 1944, Wisła [Vistula river] had to appear,⁶⁸ 2. eliminated words, such as: “stalinist”,⁶⁹ 3. An interesting example is Tadeusz Konwicki’s first novel “Rojsty” [The Bush], about his experiences in the Vilnius Home Army during the war, where censors made more than one hundred changes, including deleting the last chapter.⁷⁰

It is worth mentioning that almost all censors used Polish as their native language, which helped them to work in so detailed a way (the exceptions may have been Glavlit officers).⁷¹

In such a situation of detailed and long-term control, poetry, which is inherently less literal, thrived better than prose. In poetry, it was easier to express true views without risking censors’ deletions. Aesop’s speech, whose model for Polish literature

⁶⁵ BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 161 – 169.

⁶⁶ ROKICKI, *Literaci. Relacje między literatami i władzami PRL w latach 1956 – 1970*, pp. 41 – 69.

⁶⁷ BATES, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, pp. 95 – 120; SMULSKI Jerzy. *Trzy redakcje „Władzy” Konwickiego*. In SMULSKI, Jerzy (ed.). *Od Szczecina do „Października”: studia o polskiej prozie lat pięćdziesiątych*. Toruń : Wyd. UMK, 2002, pp. 111 – 115; BUDROWSKA, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury w PRL. 1948 – 1958*, pp. 39 – 65.

⁶⁸ LICHODZIEJEWSKA, Feliksa. *Broniewski bez cenzury. 1939 – 1945*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Kos”, 1992.

⁶⁹ KRASIŃSKI. Janusz. *Krzak gorejący*. In ZWINOGRODZKA, Wanda – KRAMKOWSKA – DĄBROWSKA, Agnieszka (eds.). *Dramaty*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2013, pp. 144.

⁷⁰ PERKOWSKI, Piotr. *Pół wieku z cenzurą. Przypadek Tadeusza Konwickiego*. In *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 2006, Vol. 2, pp. 75 – 95; DĄBROWICZ, Elżbieta. „Rojsty” 1956/2010. Kilka uwag o piętnie sprawczym cenzury. In DĄBROWICZ, Elżbieta. *Cenzura na gruzach. Szkice o literackich świadectwach życia w PRL-u*. Białystok : Wyd. UwB, 2017, pp. 95 – 116.

⁷¹ GARDOCKI, *Cenzorzy w latach 1945 – 1990*, pp. 107 – 122.

was already established in the 19th century, during the period of national captivity, was often used in poetry.⁷² Aesop's speech used a set of symbols so distant and ambiguous that censors had no grounds to question the works. Example: winter, snow as a symbol of the strikes of December 1970, later also a symbol of martial law.⁷³

e. Polish classics

The Main Offices of Control also controlled the re-edition of Polish literary classics. Because readers were familiar with these works from earlier editions, no cuts were made in them. The strategy of action here was different: 1. the most problematic texts were not allowed to be republished, 2. while others, less "harmful", were supplied with specially prepared Marxist introductions and footnotes.⁷⁴ Their circulation was also limited. Such actions contributed to the gradual remodelling of the canon: many texts were hidden from readers; many authors were not restored to their rightful position: an example is the work of one of the most outstanding avant-garde Polish artists of the first half of the XX century, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), which did not gain acceptance because of the "immorality" and "incomprehensibility" of his dramas and novels.⁷⁵

The fundamental problem for the communist censors was the fact that the most important Polish literary tradition, Romanticism (which flourished in the first half of the 19th century during the partition period), was extremely anti-Russian. This problem was never satisfactorily resolved.⁷⁶

⁷² MAZAN, Bogdan. Język ezopowy przywódcy młodych. In *Prace Polonistyczne*, 1987, No. 43, pp. 169 – 196; DZIUGIEŁ-ŁAGUNA, Magdalena. Ezop opowiada „Lalkę”. O werbalnych i niewerbalnych sposobach komunikacji z czytelnikiem w powieści Bolesława Prusa. In *Napis. Pismo poświęcone literaturze okolicznościowej i użytkowej*. XV, 2009, pp. 175 – 192. <https://doi.org/10.18318/napis.2009.1.15>; SZPAK, Rafał. Język ezopowy- interpretacje i redefinicje. Postawienie problemu. In CZURKO, Julian – WRÓBLEWSKI, Michał (eds.). *Prze(d)sądy. O czytaniu kultury*. Łódź : Wyd. UŁ, 2014, pp. 21 – 30. <https://doi.org/10.18778/7969-233-0.03>

⁷³ NY CZ, Ryszard. Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury (wykład). In *Teksty Drugie*, 1998, No. 3, pp. 5 – 27; SMULSKI, Jerzy. Jak niewyraźalne staje się wyraźalne? O języku ezopowym w prozie polskiej lat pięćdziesiątych. In BOLECKI, Włodzimierz, KUŹMA, Erazm (eds.). *Literatura wobec niewyraźalnego*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 1998, pp. 145 – 164; HOBOT-MARCINEK, Joanna. Imperatyw młodości, czyli „z pokolenia na pokolenie na barykadach”. Romantyczna „mitologia” generacji Nowej Fali w świetle materiałów GUKPPIw na przełomie lat 60. i 70. In *Białostockie Studia Literaturoznawcze*, 2019, No. 14, pp. 37 – 49. <https://doi.org/10.15290/bsl.2019.14.03>

⁷⁴ KOŚCIEWICZ, Katarzyna. *Preparowanie dziedzictwa. Pisma Kraszewskiego, Sienkiewicza, Żeromskiego i innych autorów pod cenzorskim nadzorem (1945 – 1955)*. Białystok : Wyd. UwB, 2019.

⁷⁵ DEGLER, Janusz. „Ostatni podryg” cenzury w PRL. O niedosłej prapremierze „Nienasyceńca” Witkacego. In NAPIONTKOWSKA, Maria – KRAKOWSKA-NAROŹNIAK, Joanna (eds.). *Pośród spraw publicznych i teatralnych. Marcie Fik przyjaciele i uczniowie*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Errata”, 1998, pp. 241 – 258; MOJSAK, Kajetan. Cenzorskie perypetie „Dramatów” Witkacego. In *Sztuka Edukacji. Studia Tekstologiczne i Edytorskie*, 2015, No. 1, pp. 113 – 123. <https://doi.org/10.12775/SE.2015.012>

⁷⁶ BATES, John M. Projection and Denial: The Party's Attitudes Towards Mickiewicz in the Stalinism Era, 1948–1955. In *Blok*, 2004, No. 3, pp. 163 – 178. ARTWIŃSKA, Anna. *Poeta w służbie polityki. O Mickiewiczu w PRL i Goethem w NRD*. Poznań : Wyd. Poznańskie, 2009.

f. Translations

In principle, the censorship methods applied by the Main Office of Control to translations of foreign literary fiction did not differ much from those used for local literature written in Polish.⁷⁷ The rules of control process organization were the same, and so were the instructions regarding the substance, which were published in documents drafted by the party. The control covered both the main text and the paratexts: the introduction, the translator's note, the editor's note, the footnotes. While censoring translations, censors suppressed the same elements that were forbidden in local literature. What is interesting is that the "excessive attractiveness" of the story was also not allowed, which was a major blow to adventure fiction and romance novels. It was believed that absorbing plots could distract readers' attention from important problems of the contemporary world.

A specific form of translation censorship was not commissioning translations from given languages or states (for example American literature in the Stalinist period)⁷⁸ or not commissioning new translations of specific texts, which, due to the length of the translation procedure, discouraged translators from making such an effort. In the case of a text that had already been translated and published no permission for re-editing was given. So, a complete rejection of the whole literary text by the Main Office of Control was, in this category, the most frequent type of interference.⁷⁹

In general, Russian and Soviet literature (censored very mildly) had a special place.⁸⁰ The issue of censorship of German literature is also interesting, due to its dramatic wartime past (deep resentment of German culture and language in Polish society) and the division recognized by the censorship office between literature from the DDR and West Germany (after 1949).⁸¹

Conclusions

Several general conclusions emerge from long-term research.

First, the existence of state control determined the peculiarity of Polish literature during the communist period: the existence of three literary circuits, all in the Polish language. 1. legal in the country, subject to censorship, 2. samizdat ["drugi obieg"] (since 1976), published illegally in the country, and therefore without cen-

⁷⁷ BATES, John M. Cenzura literatury angielskiej w Polsce. 1948 – 1967. In BUDROWSKA, Kamila – DĄBROWICZ, Elżbieta – LUL, Marcin (eds.). *Literatura w granicach prawa (XIX-XX w.)*. Warszawa : Wyd. IBL PAN, 2014, pp. 225 – 242; MOJSAK, Cenzura wobec prozy „nowoczesnej”. 1956 – 1965, pp. 187 – 222; LOOBY, Robert. *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland*. Lublin: Wyd. Brill – Rodopi, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004293069>

⁷⁸ BATES, Cenzura literatury angielskiej w Polsce. 1948 – 1967, pp. 225 – 242; LOOBY, Robert. *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland*. Lublin : Wyd. Brill - Rodopi, 2015.

⁷⁹ BUDROWSKA, Kamila – PIECYCHNA, Beata. *Institutional Censorship and Literary Translation in Communist Poland in 1948 – 1958*, in review.

⁸⁰ BUDROWSKA, Kamila. Cenzurowanie tematyki rosyjskiej w literaturze pięknej w Polsce w latach 1948 – 1960. Rekonosans archiwalny. In *Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny*, 2014, No. X, pp. 91 – 101; GARDOCKI, Wiktor. *Cenzurowanie wątków rosyjskich w polskiej poezji lat 80*. In *Studia Wschodniostowiańskie*, 2019, No. 19, pp. 21 – 33. <https://doi.org/10.15290/sw.2019.19.02>

⁸¹ BATES, *Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce*, pp. 79 – 92; RAJCH, Marek. „Unsere andersartige Kulturpolitik”. *Zensur und Literatur in der DDR und in der Volksrepublik Polen*. Poznań : Wyd. UAM., 2015.

sorship control, and 3. in exile. These three circuits were united after the fall of communism, fully only around 1992.

Secondly, censorship influenced the formation of the canon: it was deeply manipulated to prevent anti-Russian classical texts from circulating, and eliminated a large number of works.⁸² Many contemporary works were never published, so are still unknown.⁸³

Thirdly, censorship restricted the development of some subject matter and some aspects of poetics. This was the case both for more obvious options, such as contemporary political novels, and for avant-garde poetics or more unexpected themes, such as “women’s novels”⁸⁴ and specific themes and topics in literary representations of the Second World War and the Holocaust.⁸⁵

Fourthly, state control destroyed writers’ careers and the broader potential of literature. This situation contributed directly to the fact that between 1944 and 1990 few outstanding works of Polish literature were published relative to what would have been expected.

Lastly, translations of important texts of world literature were not allowed to be printed or were very late, which resulted in the isolation of Polish literature (and readers) and its lagging behind world trends, for example, the weak presence of modernism or existentialism.

New perspectives of investigation

The most important challenge facing research of Polish censorship today is to open up to international cooperation and create comparative studies. The most relevant comparisons can be made with the censorship system in other state-socialist countries. The system in the USSR would be, in this point of view, an implementation model, a matrix, and it would be possible to see how far censorship in each country approached or departed from this model.⁸⁶

⁸² NYCZ, *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury (wykład)*, pp. 5 – 27; ARTWIŃSKA, Anna. *Poeta w służbie polityki. O Mickiewiczu w PRL i Goethem w NRD*. Poznań : Wyd. Poznańskie, 2009; KOŚCIEWICZ, *Preparowanie dziedzictwa. Pisma Kraszewskiego, Sienkiewicza*, pp. 240 – 248.

⁸³ BUDROWSKA, *Zatrzymane przez cenzurę*, pp. 341 – 344; GARDOCKI, Wiktor. Trzy inedita. Errata do tomu *** Antoniego Pawłaka. In *Pismo poświęcone literaturze okolicznościowej i użytkowej*, 2020, No. 26, p. 235 – 247. <https://doi.org/10.18318/napis.2020.1.12>; GARDOCKI, Wiktor. „O honor” (1950) Jakuba Herziga, (nie)znany dramat na temat powstania w getcie warszawskim. In *Archiwum Emigracji*, 2022, No. 29, pp. 323 – 336.

⁸⁴ PACZOSKA, Ewa. Na strychu i po kątach. Pisarki międzywojenne w cieniu PRL-u. (Rekonesans). In GOSK, Hanna (ed.). *(Nie)ciekawa epoka? Literatura i PRL*. Warszawa : Wyd. „Elipsa”, 2008, pp. 198 – 220.

⁸⁵ GOSK, Hanna. Co wi(e)działa proza polska lat 40. XX wieku? Literacka wersja realiów tamtego czasu. In CZYŻAK, Agnieszka – GALANT, Jan – JAWORSKI, Marcin. (eds.). *PRL. Świat (nie)przedstawiony*. Poznań : Wyd. UAM, 2010, pp. 233 – 248; BURYŁA, Sławomir. Portret „dobrego Niemca”. In BURYŁA Sławomir. *Tematy (nie)opisane*. Kraków : Wyd. Literackie, 2013, pp. 324 – 333.

⁸⁶ The state of research is extensive. See, for example: HARASZTI, Miklos. *The velvet prison: artist under state socialism*. LANDELSMANN, Katalin and Stephen (ed., transl.). New York : Basic Book, 1987; COTZEE, John M. *Giving Offence. Essay on Censorship*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1997; DE BAETS, Antoon. *Censorship of Historical Thought. A World Guide, 1945 – 2000*. SMITH, John D. (foreword). Westport – London : ed. Greenwood press, 2000; DARNTON, Robert. *Censors at work. How States Shaped Literature*. New York : The Norton Company, 2015; ORLICH, Ileana Alexandra (ed.). *Subversive stage. Theater in Pre- and Post-Communist Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria*. Buda-

We could discuss the censorship system in all former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe using the same methodological perspective. Particularly useful could be the transnational perspective, which, freeing the researcher from the national perspective of political history, creates the possibility of tracing the “flows” of ideas, people, and cultural texts between the Eastern Bloc countries.⁸⁷

Certainly, an interesting, detailed topic to be addressed from a transnational aspect would be literary representations of World War II and the Holocaust in the People’s Republic of Poland and East Germany.

Postcolonial perspective. Poland in its historical development was a colonizing country (for Belarussia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia) and a colonized country (during the partitions period, German and Soviet occupation in World War II, and in the time of dependence on USSR as the Polish People’s Republic).⁸⁸ Incorporating a postcolonial perspective into the study of censorship will allow us to raise a number of questions related to the general issue: whose interests were, in fact, guarded by the communist government in Poland? The Main Office of Control, which was organized along the lines of Glavlit, ensured that Soviet terror against Polish society had been removed from sight. Here, a remarkably interesting, detailed topic for research would be: 1. the censorship of literary representations of the Soviet occupation of Polish lands during World War II, and 2. censorship of translations of Russian and Soviet literature into Polish (ruled and ruler’s position).

Less obvious when it comes to censorship studies seems to be the perspective of minority narratives. “Minority” – described as a socially, ethnically or gender non-dominant group – has less power of articulation and difficulties in making its presence felt in public space. Thus, the “minority” discourse is not the main interpretation, but fills in the gaps, the margins, supplementing or contesting the dominant narrative.⁸⁹ Through the perspective of minority narratives, it is possible to look at those texts or passages that have been permanently or temporarily eliminated from circulation by the censors, and thus reach unspoken content (e.g. women’s wartime experiences).

peszt : Central Europe University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789633861189>; BLAIVE, Muriel (ed.). *Perception of Society in Communist Europe. Regime Archives and Popular Opinion*. London : Bloomsbury Academic, 2019; OATES-INDRUCHOVA, Libora. *Censorship in Czech and Hungarian Academic Publishing, 1969 – 1989. Snakes and Ladders*. London : Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350106673>

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SUMMARY

Censorship of literature in Poland under communism (1944 – 1990). Summary of research and new perspectives

In the article the author addresses the problem of censorship of literature in Poland during the communist years (1944 - 1990). article also offers an overview of the extensive state of research and points to the possibility of new research perspectives.

The introduction describes the basic assumptions of communist censorship, emphasizes Poland's close dependence on the USSR and demonstrates that the censorship system emerging in the Eastern Bloc countries was modeled on Glavlit. The state of research on communist censorship in the former Eastern Bloc is briefly outlined in order to provide background for the discussion of the communist censorship in Poland. A historical outline of the communists' seizure of power in Poland and the establishment of the Main Office for the Control of Press Publications and Spectacles (July 1946) is also presented. Finally, the methods of Polish censors are described: 1. the overriding function of the Main Offices of Control performed by the Polish Communist Party; 2. the system of preventive and restrictive censorship (from 1944 to 1990 preventive censorship was in force in Poland); 3. the system of making reviews by censors; 4. the methods of changing the texts: eliminating a part of the text or banning the printing of the whole text; 5. the lack of personal legal responsibility of the author (editor, translator) for the text submitted for control.

The main part of the article details the methods of censoring literature in Poland by period (a chronological aspect). Particular attention is paid to the very specific Stalinist period (1949-1955), the period of post-Stalinism referred to as the "Thaw" (1956 - 1958), the rise of Solidarity (1980-1981) and martial law (December 13, 1981 - July 22, 1983). It also characterizes the censoring of literature by banned topics: 1. political censorship with the most uncensored topics related to the criticism of the USSR; 2. moral censorship with the uncensored topics related to pornographic content, drastic violence and depictions of homosexuality; 3. ideological censorship with the uncensored topics related to religion. This part of the article gives examples of authors who had trouble with publishing (Czesław Miłosz, Stanisław Lem, Tadeusz Borowski, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Zofia Nałkowska).

In addition, the differences between censorship of Polish contemporary literature, Polish classics and translations from foreign languages are discussed. Polish contemporary literature was very intensively "programmed" and "promoted" by the communist government, so contemporary texts were rarely totally deleted (the Stalinist years were an exception). However, many minor changes were made to them to suit the party's current guidelines. The strategy of censoring Polish classics was different: the most problematic texts were not allowed to be republished, while other, less "harmful" ones, were supplied with specially prepared Marxist introductions and footnotes. The fundamental problem for the communist censors was the fact that the most

important Polish literary tradition, Romanticism (which flourished in the first half of the 19th century during the partition period), was extremely anti-Russian. A specific form of translation censorship was developed and relied on either commissioning no translations from given languages or states or commissioning no new translations of specific texts. In the case of a text that had already been translated and published, no permission for re-editing it was given.

The argumentation leads to the following conclusions: 1. the existence of state control determined the peculiarity of Polish literature during the communist period; 2. censorship influenced the formation of the canon: it was deeply manipulated to prevent anti-Russian classical texts from circulating, and a large number of works was removed from it; 3. censorship restricted the development of some topics and aspects of poetics (contemporary political novels, avant-garde poetics, “women’s novels” and specific themes and topics in literary representations of the Second World War and the Holocaust); 4. state control destroyed writers’ careers and a broader potential of literature; 5. translations of important texts of world literature were not allowed to be printed or were very late, which resulted in the isolation of Polish literature (and readers) and its lagging behind world-wide trends, manifested by, for example, the weak presence of modernism or existentialism.

In the last part of the article the author presents new perspectives for further investigation: 1. transnational perspective, 2. postcolonial perspective and 3. “minority narrative” perspective.

The most important challenge facing the research on Polish censorship today is to open up to international cooperation and create comparative studies. The most relevant comparisons can be made with the censorship systems in other state-socialist countries.

The author believes that it is possible to discuss censorship systems in all former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe using the same methodological perspective. Particularly useful could be the transnational perspective, which, freeing the researcher from the national perspective of political history, creates the possibility of tracing the “flows” of ideas, people, and cultural texts between the Eastern Bloc countries.

Poland in its historical development was both a colonizing country (for Belarussia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia) and a colonized country (during the partitions period, throughout German and Soviet occupation in the World War II, and at the time of dependence on USSR as the Polish People’s Republic). Incorporating a postcolonial perspective into the study of censorship will allow to raise a number of questions related to the general issue: whose interests were, in fact, guarded by the communist government in Poland?

Less obvious when it comes to censorship studies seems to be the perspective of “minority narratives”. The article argues that through this perspective it is possible to look at those texts or passages that have been permanently or temporarily eliminated from circulation by censors, and thus reach unspoken content (e.g. women’s wartime experiences).

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