

Censorship in People's Poland

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Abstract. *The range and power of how media is transferred – since the time when printing machines were invented in the fifteenth century – has been quite a challenge for specific environments, institutions, ideas and beliefs; for both, the clerical and secular authorities wanted to influence the distribution of content. The actions of the Catholic Church, in this respect, were to exclude the promotion of heretical ideas, whereas the political power cared about shaping the attitudes of obedience and loyalty (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2002). Attempts made to restrict the freedom of the printed word had failed because not all of the authors, publishers and printers conformed to the Church and its rulers; instead, they spread opinions in accordance with their convictions. Reformation can be considered as the first ideological revolution, the success of which was closely related with media coverage (in this case – with the use of print) (Łęcicki, 2013).*

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1. Censorship in Old Poland

In old Poland, the scholars of Krakow Academy, i.e., the Jagiellonian University, were engaged in censorship of religious printing (Szyndler, 1993). The first informative paper was *Merkuriusz Polski*; the newspaper issued in 1661 was to gain supporters for the royal politics of the House of Vasa (Myśliński, 2008).

The strong influence of ecclesiastical censorship, together with the interference in the secular content in old Poland, that is, until the fall of the First Republic (1795), resulted from the fact that a vast majority of printing houses belonged to the Church (Szyndler, 1993). During the partitions (1795-1918), when the Polish state did not

exist and its lands were divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria, the main subject of censorship and restricting freedom of expression by the partitioning powers was the natural attack on Polish ideas and aspirations for independence. The special offices that had existed across Russia, Prussia and Austria controlled all forms of print, namely, newspapers, periodicals and books. The most severe was the Russian censorship, and it served as one of the main tools of Russification and enslavement. Despite the extreme and ruthless repressions, certain independent environments within the state issued underground press, which propagated the fight against the aggressors. The most popular illegal paper was *Robotnik*, the body of the Polish Socialist Party, had been published since 1894 and edited by Jozef Pilsudski and printed first in Lipnisk, in the Oszmianski district, then (1895-1899) in Vilnius and later (1899-1900) in Lodz (Jędrzejewicz, 2002). The struggle for the freedom of speech was manifested in smuggling printed materials across Polish and Lithuanian lands that remained under Russian rule, and the smuggled materials – newspapers and books – were printed in other partitions, where censorship was more liberal. The Polish authors, publishers and printers were trying to outwit or bribe the tsarist censors by using their demoralization and prevailing corruption (Szyndler, 1993). An example of how one could escape the ban imposed by the tsarist censorship was a stratagem applied by the future first laureate of the Polish Nobel Prize in Literature, Henry Sienkiewicz, who – in the mid-eighties of the nineteenth century – being unable to directly write in his *Trylogia* that the Muscovites occupied Vilnius during the war with the Republic of Poland in the seventeenth century, referred to them as “Septentrions” (Łęcicki, 2007). The breath of freedom from the tsarist censorship was a short period after the Tolerance Act of 1905 – many Polish publishers used this moment of confusion of the tsarist officials and established Polish-language press titles; for instance, the Blessed Ignatius Kłopotowski opened in Lublin his journal under the very, from the tsarist perspective, disloyal title of the *Pole-Catholic* (Adamski, 2008).

2. Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press vs. Censorship in the Second Republic of Poland

After regaining independence in 1918, in the reborn Polish state, the Constitution of 1921 guaranteed the freedom of expression and freedom of the press and also excluded the imposition of censorship; it stressed, however, that the responsibility for the misuse of freedom of the press would be defined in a separate act. The proclamation of freedom of the press did not signify, however, the abandonment of administrative actions against the authors, editors and publishers disseminating any anarchist or anti-state content. The authorities were also engaged in activities aimed at limiting Communist propaganda, which undermined the value of the existence of independent Poland. During the war with Bolshevik Russia in 1920, a range of preventive censorship measures on contents concerning military matters was imposed. In 1925, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered province governors to record press titles and journalists. After the May Coup of 1926, carried out by J. Pilsudski, to avoid criticism leveled against the government, political authorities endeavored to limit the influence of the opposition press through passing proper administrative decrees. As an instrument of the fight between the government and the opposition press, the Government Commissariat confiscated the newspapers, periodicals and other printings, for example, posters, leaflets, dailies and even obituaries, the content of which inflicted upon state policy. Consequently, this triggered strong protests in journalistic circles. A significant, but fortunately only an individual example of administrative actions directed against specific editors was the detaining of Stanislaw “the Cat” Mackiewicz, editor and publisher of the Vilnius journal *Slowo*, to the *Bereza Kartuska* detention camp in the spring of 1939 for a total of 18 days. A peculiar manifestation of the ideological fight was expressed through the attacks on editorial offices and printing houses with the intention of demolishing them and also through the cases of beatings of journalists by various political and military activists (Habielski, 2009). A meaningful sign of state policy toward the media

was formulating the record, which, in the new Polish Constitution of 1935, disregarded press freedom and guaranteed only freedom of expression.

During the existence of the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939), the new media, cinema and radio in particular, had already developed. Primarily considered as tools for disseminating almost exclusively entertaining contents, they somehow remained on the periphery of political interest. The exception was the use of a film as a propagandist instrument, more precisely, a patriotic medium in the war with Bolshevik Russia and plebiscites meant to settle the territorial dispute with Germany. Artists were indeed free, however, in terms of distributed contents – we can speak of specific self-censorship of artists and filmmakers who controlled the observance of conventions and traditional moral standards; for instance, the only acceptable erotic element on screen was a passionate kiss, yet it encountered harsh criticism anyway (Janicki, 1985).

The Polish Telegraphic Agency, which had been developing and gaining importance in Polish radiophony, in 1935 became an official state institution and affected the shape of informational services, edited in accordance with the current politics and government propaganda. The worker of the regional Polish Radio in Vilnius was Czesław Miłosz, the future laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature, who was removed from the Vilnius editorial board (most likely for manifesting antigovernmental beliefs), but was later admitted to work in the central radio station in Warsaw (Kwiatkowski, 1980). One of the phenomena of the Polish Radio were broadcasts given by the famous doctor-pedagogue, Henry Goldszmit – Janusz Korczak, who, as the Old Doctor, talked about education and upbringing; despite their enormous popularity, his programs were not transmitted between 1936-1938 due to considerable pressure exerted by some national and anti-Semitic groups (Olczak-Ronikier, 2012). Censorship in interwar Poland concerned mainly political issues; in fact, the officials tried to limit the dissemination of contents undermining the authority of the state, its institutions and a sense of the prevailing policy. Such a stance should not be surprising

in case of a young country, which began to organize its structures after more than a hundred years of slavery and existed between two hostile powers, i.e., the Soviet Union and Germany; the essential element of propaganda of both totalitarian countries (as well as their secret policy) was lay in its anti-Polish character. Paradoxically, the actions of the government in restricting press freedom illustrate its great pluralism and multiplicity, its activity and independence of various opinion-forming environments.

Despite the previously mentioned examples of how censorship operated, the Second Republic of Poland appeared as a country with strong traditions of fighting for freedom of speech and freedom in the sphere of media content. It was confirmed in the vast pluralism of the underground press, by the promotion of a variety of views, ideologies and political concepts, which were also put in print during the occupation, after the Soviet and Nazi German invasion of Poland in 1939 (Lewandowska, 1982). The phenomenon of the Polish Underground State resulted, inter alia, from a great number of papers issued in the basement and targeted at various social groups (Korboński, 2008). The *Home Army*, the largest armed organization of the Polish conspiracy, had a specialized distribution system and an underground editorial concern – the Secret Military Publishing House (Wojewódzki, 1978; Mazur, 1987).

3. Media Coverage Control in the People's Republic of Poland

Besides the occupation of the Polish lands by the Red Army, the seizure of power by the Communists dependent on Moscow and the inclusion of the Republic of Poland in the Soviet dominance zone, there was also a complete change of the political system (Roszkowski, 2006). As for the media, it was manifested in monitoring all kinds of contents designed to be spread via social communications. It should be stressed, however, that censorship was one of the most important elements of a broader phenomenon, which can be defined as a total system of propaganda and manipulation, affecting almost all dimensions of social

life and also profoundly influencing the existence, consciousness and mentality of individual citizens. In this system, resulting naturally from totalitarian nature of the Communist regime, nearly all artistic and creative activities became tools of propaganda and transfers of the Communist ideas. The new architecture, the monumental buildings of social realism, e.g., the huge Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, which was formerly named after Joseph Stalin, the imposition of social realism as an obligatory movement in all aspects of artistic creation, such as art, architecture, literature, theatre, cinema and even music, were aimed at the complete transformation of Polish customs, as well as mentality and awareness, both historical and social (Łapiński, Tomasiak, 2004). The materialistic and atheistic Communist ideology, as the rulers intended, was to displace traditional Polish patriotism and the Christian, especially Catholic heritage. Certainly, the major role in this field was given to the mass media, first and foremost to the press, books, radio and cinema, then television – naturally, a medium totally controlled by the communist state, which had a monopoly over all media coverage.

4. The Central Office for Control of the Press, Publications and Entertainment

The political correctness of distributed content was ensured by constant control and supervision, kept by a particular, separate state institution – the Central Office for Control of the Press, Publications and Entertainment, frequently called and abbreviated to *censorship*. It was established on January 19, 1945, as the Central Bureau for Control of the Press, Publications and Entertainment operating by the Ministry of Public Safety; however, since November 15, 1945, it became a separate body, which was the Central Office (Myśliński, 2012). Its headquarters were located in the center of Warsaw, by Mysia Street, near the buildings of the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party and the Polish Press Agency. The provincial branches – named differently throughout the years – the number of which corresponded to the current administrative division of the country, were subject to the Central Office. In

1952, the scope of censorship was widened to monitor notifications, posters and announcements, as well as to register and supervise printing plants and even workshops that had produced stamps. Breaking the regulations of censorship was under the threat of severe penalties, either imprisonment or heavy fines (Habielski, 2009). In 1980, *Solidarity*, as a great anti-Communist social movement, demanded amendment regarding the law on censorship, which was in fact liberalized for a short period of time, yet quickly – after the introduction of the marital law in December 13, 1980 – it was suspended and then modified in accordance with the intentions of authorities (Habielski, 2009).

It should be stressed that at the very beginning of censorship in the People's Poland, there was its strong, structural link with the apparatus of terror, i.e., the Ministry of Public Safety, established for the Soviet model and closely cooperating with the Soviet equivalent (Błażyński, 1986). The institution of censorship was also organized with the assistance of the Soviet officers (Habielski, 2009). The date when censorship was liquidated should be also emphasized: despite constitutional, political and economic changes, which were taking place in Poland since 1989, censorship was not abolished until June 5, 1990, that is already after the dissolution of the Communist Party; the new law guaranteed freedom of the press and introduced the sole obligation to register press titles in provincial courts (Myśliński, 2012).

The essence of totalitarianism was expressed in filling significant positions with trustworthy, flexible people, most frequently belonging to the Communist Party, who – in the case of the media institutions – in various editorial offices, book publishing houses, theater, stage and film groups, radio and television offices, already assured loyalty to the current party's policy and, in fact, were the ones who served as the first internal censors (so to speak), who had protected ideological correctness. A precise control of every publication was based on the introduction of a peculiar mechanism consisting of four stages, which was aimed at preventing the dissemination of contents opposed to the ideology and politics of totalitarian state. The four-stage mechanism of censor-

ship included a prior check of particular materials and a permission for storage, then the actual control of the collected contents and next, an additional inspection (e.g., due to changes resulting from the interference of censorship) and, finally, the secondary control, focused on the analysis of the published information, which was the subject of censors' work assessment (Habielski, 2009).

The existence of censorship was to be hidden from the public; the citizens of the People's Republic, however, were perfectly aware of its presence; in the editorial footers of newspapers, magazines and books, there was no mention of censors' real names, yet just their cryptonyms were given; next to the name and localization of the publishing house, the number of circulation, the printing house and type of the used paper, there also appeared a mysterious record, incomprehensible to the average reader (e.g., O-129, U-5, P-34), which indicated a censor controlling a particular publication. In one of the capital editorial offices, in the second half of the eighties, general amusement was provoked by the code of a new censor, namely J-23, which was identical to the cryptonym of Hans Kloss, the hero of a popular television series *Stawka większa niż życie* ("A Stake Higher Than Life"). It seems that a permanent change of censors was also a common practice, so that too-frequent business meetings with editors would not transform into social gatherings, which could influence decisions and the interference of censorship.

The scope of censorship in the People's Poland was not limited to monitoring contents designed for distribution, since it also constituted a tool for the Sovietization of culture and the inspiration of specific propagandist campaigns, directed against both actual and alleged enemies of the communist state and policy, the Catholic Church, Polishness and religion. The media politics of the communist state was also based on educating the new generation of journalists; journalism was taught at Warsaw University and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow; party press staff and, at the same time, the management staff for the media studies was composed of journalism graduates of the Central Party School by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. It should be

noted that until the mid-fifties, 75 percent of students of journalism had working-class backgrounds (Habielski, 2009). Thus, these were people whose social status has advanced, who have educated themselves in the first generation, without any relevant, earlier formation and intellectual traditions within their families, so they were more prone to accept any kind of propaganda and manipulatory treatments rather than willing to exercise independent, critical thinking.

Besides the complete control of the printed word, specifically the press, books and job prints, radio and film transmissions were also subject to the same strict level of censorship. In the central Polish Radio station in Warsaw, there was a special unit – a separate editorial office – which dealt with the preliminary censorship of prepared materials (Myśliński, 1990).

Film, defined by Lenin, the creator of Communism, as the most important of the arts, had a special place in the system of Communist propaganda and manipulation; naturally, as well as other media outlets, it was subject to thorough censorship in the People's Poland. A tool of the visual propaganda was, inter alia, *The Polish Film Chronicle*, a specific film weekly, released in cinemas before every feature film screening. The subsequent transmissions of *The Polish Film Chronicle* consisted of short documentaries with attractive visual material, including an eloquent, powerful and straightforward commentary; the propagandist meaning of this broadcast was concealed by a relevant form, related to a documentary film (Cieśliński, 2006).

Detailed information on censorship in the People's Poland of the 1970s was provided by a former censor, Tomasz Strzyzewski, who emigrated to Sweden in 1977. He published documents: recommendations, notes and instructions for censors, illustrating the scope of media coverage in the People's Republic of Poland. The collection of these materials, titled *Czarna księga cenzury PRL* ("The Black Book of Censorship"), was first issued – in 1977 and 1978 – by the emigration publishing house in London and later published by two underground printing companies in 1981, during the demonstration of *Solidarity* in Poland;

an English translation was released twice in 1984, in the US. The content of the confidential instructions of censorship was also the subject of broadcasts, transmitted by emigration radio stations and secretly listened to in the People's Poland. Disclosed documents clearly showed the specific mechanisms of censorship (Habielski, 2009). On the basis of such information and other materials revealed after 1989, this paper presents certain characteristic examples of its destructive functioning.

5. Examples of the Functioning of Censorship in the People's Republic of Poland

A general description of the media control systems during the communist regime in Poland requires the support of specific examples of the interference of censorship in different kinds of media coverage. Therefore, we present examples of how censorship operated in regard to the press, book, radio, stage, cinema and television outlets. Additionally, we recall various attempts to avoid censorship, or contents, which were indeed spread, yet previously constituted the subjects of fierce disputes between publishers and censors.

5.1. The Press

During the particular periods Poland's history when the state was under communist regime, there prevailed various detailed instructions that determined the range and theme of media contents, which were constrained by censorship. Some restrictive records tended to be cancelled over time. Apart from eliminating specific content, censorship applied another procedure – it allowed the publication of some controversial materials, yet only in certain specialist magazines or select scientific journals. Below we will present the scope of these substantive issues, which were subject to censorship in the mid-seventies. It was not permitted to publish the exact statistics illustrating the growth of alcoholism, data regarding how much meat is sold to the Soviet Union, the acquisition of Western licenses by Poland (except for those that served

propaganda, for example, Fiat cars, Berliet buses, or Grundig tape recorders); certainly, it eliminated all contents which could suggest any critique of the prevailing social politics. It did not allow any polemics with the central documents of the Communist Party, especially with *Trybuna Ludu* ("People's Tribune"), i.e., the daily of the Central Committee; conducting a deliberate policy on the Church and religion, it forbade the publishing of critical materials on religious relations in the socialist states, it eliminated positive messages concerning the Polish Episcopate and the favorable assessments of speeches delivered by all the Polish bishops during Synods; moreover, it protected the organizations of Catholics collaborating with the Communists from any criticism. It excluded any information referring to the Warsaw Uprising and the tradition of the Red Army as well as other right-wing underground organizations operating during the war and occupation. A separate record proposed constant control of all texts by the popular publicist, Stefan Kisielewski. The list of persons, who were effectively the creators of culture, whose names could not be mentioned in the daily press, radio and television, included, inter alia: Marian Kukiel, Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, Czesław Miłosz, Zygmunt Nowakowski, Aleksander Ford, Leopold Tyrmand. Censorship endeavored to ensure that the citizens of the People's Republic of Poland had no information on intellectual activities in emigration environments, hence it banned the dissemination of names of artists and scientists remaining in the West and publishing in the emigration papers (Strzyżewski, 1981). As for the history and the Polish-Soviet relations, censorship definitely sustained the Katyn lie, so not even a chance was given to try and accuse the Soviet Union of murdering Polish officers in 1940 (Łęcicki, 2012).

Regarding ideological issues, censorship excluded any criticism of Marxism; polemical accents were allowed only in specialized, low-cost scientific journals published by the Academy of Catholic Theology, the Academy of Christian Theology in Warsaw and the Catholic University of Lublin; it forbade to publicize the postulate of the ideological neutrality of the state; with particular zeal, it ordered the elimination

of transfers identifying Polishness with Catholicism; it also removed all information regarding the involvement of lay Catholics in various forms of pastoral and religious movements as well as the news about building new churches and chapels. In the publications on foreign policy, censorship advocated the use of the proper, i.e., the adopted within socialist countries, naming of countries and institutions. A ban on using the phrase “Polish-German border” was a peculiar absurdity; instead, it was mandatory to write and talk about the border on Oder and Neisse rivers, or the border between Poland and the German Democratic Republic. Some records concerned specific events, the international situation and mainly various struggles, such as frontier disputes between India and China, the Arab and African countries, as well as the conflicting interests of the Jews and the Palestinians. Censorship also prohibited the dissemination of any publications that could undermine the unity of the socialist states and the economic cooperation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; a ban on printing tables of currency exchange rates of those states was another absurdity. A different prohibition was concerned with the elimination of information on environmental pollution; the detailed instructions determined the manner and the extent of publishing news about the economy, industry, new investments, trade and other areas of social life. Censorship excluded the administration of collective statistics regarding car crashes, fires, drownings and breakdowns of Polish aircrafts, as well as some accidents in coal mines; it also removed messages about the Polish hippies. It did not allow the distribution of materials ridiculing the secular rites of giving a name, civil marriages and secular funerals, which were introduced by the atheist state. The ban on dissemination also applied to state award ceremonies in the Main Board of the Polish–Soviet Friendship Society. Besides, photographic materials, especially photos of the most prominent state and party activists, were subject to strict control, too. Censorship also restricted any negative assessment of Stalinism.

The abovementioned examples certainly do not exhaust all issues, which, during the various periods of the People’s Poland, attracted the particu-

lar interest of censorship. They only illustrate a phenomenon whereby a permanent control of any media coverage in the People's Poland takes place, and although they were classified for the purpose of this study and appeared in the section about the press, they naturally concerned also other media, namely radio and television.

Despite the restrictive policy and absolute control, every now and then, certain texts did occur in the press, more frequently by chance rather than intentionally, which were inconsistent with the regulations of censorship. It happened in one of the articles about the history of the Church in Poland, published in *Tygodnik Polski* (Polish Weekly, No. 5/273, January 31, 1988), where, probably due to a typesetter's negligence, two subtitles were joined together; hence, they carried an extremely striking meaning: "Yesterday and today under occupation."

5.2. Books

Censorship supervised all publications designed for distribution, including books. Withholding some publications by banning the polemics, or the publication of reviews, was not only a tool of control, but also a specific form of propaganda. Further examples will illustrate a peculiar editorial policy that was prevalent in the People's Poland. Censorship had required that all publications about Melchior Wankowicz be suspended; it allowed only meagre materials concerning his literary workshop. Wankowicz was, among others, the author of an excellent and monumental war reportage, devoted to the great victory of the Polish soldiers in the battle of Monte Cassino, Italy, in May, 1944. This three-volume work, which was first published in the West, could not be published in the People's Poland; therefore, Wankowicz was offered to write a specific summary – a tiny book, titled *Sketches of Monte Cassino*, was reprinted many times, but critics and more educated readers accused the author of complete conformity, involving the total omission of the victorious leader, General Wladyslaw Anders. The consistent actions of censorship in this field were visible until the very end of its existence, because even in the edition of the PAX Publishing Institute,

when printing the full text of the reportage in 1989, there was a marked interference of censorship that removed the name of the heroic general. Further examples show actions aimed at supporting a false propagandist vision of both the most recent and ancient Polish history.

Thus, censorship figures criticized the book by Krystyna Kersten, issued at the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, depicting the repatriation of the Polish population after World War II and found it incompatible with the tasks of propaganda work; hence, it tried to eliminate comments or reviews referring to this monograph. This was a kind of a model approach to the authors and publications, which, despite being already published, suffered censorship attempts that endeavored to reduce the influence of these publications to a minimum. Similar actions were taken in regard to the work by Władysław Bartoszewski, titled *1859 dni Warszawy* (“1859 Days of Warsaw”), representing a specific timeline of the history of the occupied capital city; the message about the symposium on this publication could be released only in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (“General Weekly”). Reviews and commentaries on *Encyklopedia Warszawy* (“Warsaw Encyclopedia”) were also the subjects of particular interest for censors. A critical biography of Józef Piłsudski could not be issued as a separate monograph; hence, it was gradually printed under quite misleading titles (*U źródeł obozu belwederskiego, Od maja do Brześcia, Od Brześcia do maja*) (“Origins of the Belvedere Camp”, “From May to Brzesc, From Brzesc to May”) by various publishing houses; it was not published as a one-volume biography of the Marshal, under the unambiguous title *Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935*, until 1988.

The PAX Publishing Institute, which distributed historical works about the Home Army, planned the edition of monographs on particular districts of the HA, a practice that, in fact, was unacceptable to communist censorship in supporting a propagandist myth of the leftist guerrillas. Within the expected series, there appeared only two volumes concerning the conspiracy of the Home Army in the Radom-Kielce and Novogrodek districts. Recollecting the heroic commanders of guerril-

las and the merits of the Home Army during fights with the Nazi Germany was almost forbidden; a perfect illustration of this, as well as a confirmation of the ancient proverb *Habent sua fata libelli*, is a book by Cezary Chlebowski, titled *Pozdrówcie Góry Świętokrzyskie* (“The Great Świętokrzyskie Mountains”), describing the life of Mayor Jan Piwnik, the full edition of which was released in 1993. Another work by the same author, *Wachlarz* (“Fan”), a book about the intelligence and sabotage organization of the Home Army that had operated in the German-Soviet front, was anticipating its release for 10 years; it was already finished in 1973, yet first published only in 1983. The censorship efforts limited the redistribution and the available number of copies of the book *Powstanie Warszawskie* (“Warsaw Uprising”), written by Colonel Adam Borkiewicz. This first monograph on the uprising was juxtaposed with numerous works by a different military historian, General Jerzy Kirchmayer, who, in his book about the Warsaw Uprising, strongly criticized the leadership of the Home Army and justified the lack of Soviet support for the fighting capital, which naturally satisfied communist propaganda. Additionally, it is worth noting that the communist government did not give the right to launch a new project of building a monument in memory of the Warsaw Uprising; however, in case of the already accepted statue, they eliminated emblems and symbols of the insurgent troops. This is another example of censorship not only within media coverage, but also within the architectural field, too.

A peculiar game with censorship was undertaken by a different historian, Colonel Apoloniusz Zawilski, who, in his book *Bitwy polskiego września* (“The Battles of Polish September”), describes a defensive war in Poland, 1939. Since he could not openly refer to the Soviet aggressors, he found a perfect solution: when he wrote about battles with the Germans, then he obviously used the term “German army.” However, when he mentioned the Red Army, he applied the word “enemy.” In other scientific books on the defensive war that took place in Poland, 1939, the topic of Soviet aggression was completely eliminated.

Communist censorship also protected the dark legend of St. Stanislaus, the bishop killed in 1079 by the impetuous king Boleslaus the Bold. Thus, it did not allow the publication of results gathered from specialist forensic investigations, which confirmed the authenticity of the Church tradition. Fr. Stanislaus Belch – who had stayed in England as an emigrant and who was also wrote the monumental biography of St. Stanislaus (published in 1976 by the VERITAS Catholic Printing Centre in London) – was found on the list of people whose names could not be mentioned in the media. Censorship cuts occurring in the fifth volume of the Polish translation of *Historia Kościoła* (“Church History”), released by the PAX Publishing Institute during 1984-1988 and constituting a collective work of an international team of scholars, are another example of how historical falsehood was spread. In the section of the work devoted to modern times, the passage devoted to Pope Pius XII was removed due to censorship.

Censorship did not permit the publication of the biography of the Polish primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who was highly respected and honored by the Polish society. His first biographies were issued in emigration offices in the West: in London, in Orchard Lake, US, and in Paris; also, collections of sermons and homilies delivered by the Primate of the Millennium could appear only beyond the reach of censorship; they were smuggled to Poland from the West, from Rome as well as other places, and disseminated naturally, apart from the legal networks of distribution. Secularization was also expressed in defining historical periods in accordance with newspeak and the Communist ideology: the former way of writing dates in accordance with “before Christ” or “after Christ” (an equivalent to BC and AD) was replaced with “before our era” or “in our era.”

It should be stressed that until the late seventies and early eighties, the full edition of the Bible was a great editorial bestseller in Poland. Censorship restricted the publication rate of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; despite the tremendous public demand,

it authorized a new translation, the so-called Millennium Bible, to be printed, yet only in 1965 and 1971. After 1979, that is, after the first pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to his homeland, the Bible was more accessible primarily due to, among other factors, the pocket editions of the Millennium Bible that were getting to Poland from the West. A full market saturation with religious literature, especially the Bible, was accomplished in Poland after 1989.

Even papal texts were subject to censorship; in 1978, censorship modified the papal message that John Paul II directed for the Krakow Church in 1979, delivered in memory of the 900th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Stanislaus the Bishop (Frizske, Zaremba, 2005).

Apart from scientific and religious works, memoirs, also other literary compositions were constrained by strict censorship. A characteristic example in this regard is the situation of the Polish translation of Mikhail Bulgakov's masterpiece, *Mistrz i Małgorzata* ("Master and Margarita"). It was first released in print in 1973, yet in a much shortened version, where almost two whole chapters and many other parts were removed. The removed chapters were published in the specialist journal *Literatura na świecie* ("Literature in the World") in 1974, whereas the full edition of Bulgakov's book was issued in 1980, with no interference of censorship. A special edition of *Mistrz i Małgorzata* was published in Poland in 2009, wherein the text passages, previously deleted by the Soviet censors, were marked in red.

The oppressive censorship sentenced to silence not only the contemporary writers in exile and in the country, contesting the reality of the Communist People's Poland, but also the older ones, such as Ferdynand Ossendowski, author of an extremely striking biography of Lenin.

The restoration of freedom of the printed word began in Poland in the second half of the seventies, along with the emergence of underground publishing houses, which broke the communist monopoly on the media. A remarkable phenomenon of the Polish conspiratorial printing industry was the commercial activity of newspapers, as well as book and job printing houses (for instance, leaflets, envelopes, patriotic

and religious stamps), operating even during the period of martial law. After the collapse of Communism in Poland, a process began whence not only history started to be reinterpreted, but certain truths were restored and works, previously banned under the communist regime, were begun to be publicized.

5.3. Radio

As for the dissemination of information, censorship regulated the press and, to the same extent, radio and television. A clear symbol of the total control over radio broadcasts was the emission of materials that were already recorded. The first “live” auditions transmitted on the radio station one appeared in the early seventies; these were released during the summer months of 1971 by the *Lato z radiem* (“Summer with Radio”) and *Sygnaty dnia* (“Signals of the Day”), broadcasted from 1973; both programs are in broadcast up to now. They quickly gained sympathy and popularity among listeners, who appreciated their spontaneous nature, entirely distinct from the rigid forms of radio that were existing up to that time. Since 1962, the Polish Radio transmitted the nationwide program *Three*; its target audience were young listeners; hence, it ought to be mainly of entertaining nature. Thus, on air at station *Three*, there appeared cabarets, in which their creators, in a satirical manner and with increasing boldness, ridiculed the absurdities of the reality of the People’s Poland. One of the most famous mockeries of the early seventies was *Ilustrowany Tygodnik Rozrywkowy* (“The Illustrated Weekly of Entertainment”), later changed to *Ilustrowany Magazyn Autorów* (“The Illustrated Magazine of Authors”); the greatest popularity was received by another amusing audition, the *60 minut na godzinę* (“60 Minutes per Hour”), a broadcast that had operated between 1973-1981, that is, until the imposition of martial law. *Ilustrowany Tygodnik Rozrywkowy* was liquidated most likely due to the emission of a witty, cyclic radio play by Maciej Zembaty, the *Rodzina Poszepszynskich* (“The Polepszynski Family”), a radio program the very existence of which completely contradicted the requirements of the Communist propa-

ganda of success and hypothetical prosperity, and which ridiculed a different, solemn radio saga, the *Matysiakowie*.

In a totalitarian state that fully controls radio and television coverage, any attempt to break this absolute monopoly is a dangerous precedent; as an example, we can refer to a postulate of a radio transmission of the Holy Masses for the sick, formulated by the striking workers at the beginning of the *Solidarity* movement in 1980, which referred to a noble, prewar tradition of the Polish radiophony. Communists endeavored to resist this demand by trying to enforce the approval for broadcasting the Holy Mass on station *Two*, as it had a shorter reception range than station *One*. Additionally, they presented a desideratum for permission to censor the content of radio sermons and announcements, traditionally made at the end of the Mass. The Church did not allow such actions; the Holy Mass from the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw has been aired every Sunday at 9AM on *Channel One* of the Polish Radio, since September 21, 1980, Warszawie (Zieliński, 2003).

During martial law and in the twilight of the People's Poland, broadcasts on *Radio Solidarity* constituted the attempt to break the communist monopoly on radio; they were aired irregularly, due to conspiratorial reasons, between 1982-1989 in several Polish cities; however, they had a short reception range and represented a symbol of resistance rather than mass media coverage.

5.4. Film

Censorship was particularly interested in audiovisual film coverage, which strongly affected human emotions; already the film production companies, classifying filmmakers and screenwriters, were under strict means of control that decided whether a specific screenplay conforms to the general standards; subsequently, it was the manner of deciding whether a screenplay may be submitted to filming or not. After a screening, the commission for film appreciation either accepted or rejected the evaluated sequence, or ordered the director to modify or remove some of the scenes. The final version and the future of a film were contingent on censorship.

The intrusion of censorship into the production of feature films also concerned comedies, depicting the absurdities of everyday life in Communist Poland and dramas, dealing with the essential social, political and moral problems. The example of the destructive interference of censorship is *Rejs* (“The Cruise,” 1970), currently a cult classic by Marek Piwowski, which has been deprived not only of its final scene, showing how a ship was stuck on a sandbank during a cruise down the Vistula River, but also many other funny scenes and humorous dialogues (Łuczak, 2002). Censorship constantly intruded into the works of the grandmaster of Polish comedy, Stanislaw Bareja; among his movies, the most cut by censorship is *Co mi zrobisz, jak mnie złapiesz* (“What Will You Do When You Catch Me?” 1978). The director was forced to remove a scene presenting, among other things, the painting of an absurd propagandist slogan “The Pole Can Do Everything.” In general, over 300 meters out of a total of 2745 meters of film stock were cut; thus, the movie was deprived of more than 10 minutes containing seven scenes. In addition, twelve scenes were shortened, whereas five got modified so much that they had lost their original meaning (Replewicz, 2009). In the most popular film by Bareja, *Miś* (“Teddy Bear,” 1981), also holding the rank of a cult classic, censorship did not permit the name of the title character to be associated with the flagship investment of Polish Stalinism, namely, Nowa Huta, the working district with a huge metallurgical manufacture, built near Krakow; it also postulated the removal of several sequences and dialogues ridiculing the atheistic ideology and absurdities of the day-to-day existence in the grey reality of Polish Communism (Łuczak, 2007). Censorship sought to severely limit any irony and satire on Communism and treated the fight with mockery extremely seriously. It was fortunate for Bareja and *Miś* that its appreciation took place on late September, 1980; thus, it occurred in the atmosphere of changes resulting from the emergence of *Solidarity*, the destabilization of Communism and a particular thawing in the field of censorship. A film prophecy about the fall of Communism, symbolized by a straw teddy bear, was fulfilled in less than a decade later.

Among drama films, depicting the present and the past of People's Poland, there were scenes that censorship did not allow to be released for many years; for example, *Wielki bieg* ("The Great Run") by Jerzy Domaradzki, which reveals instances of terror that took place during the Stalinist period; although produced in 1981, the film was not premiered until the end of 1987. The authorities defined it as a historical falsehood (Bugajski, 2010), whereas the most anti-Communist film in the history of the People's Poland, i.e., *Przesłuchanie* ("The Interrogation") by Ryszard Bugajski, showing the brutal interrogation of an innocent, young woman, produced in 1982, was not released until 1989; some people, however, had seen it earlier as it was recorded on videocassettes and made accessible by underground distribution; the government, as part of the sanction and revenge for the admission of this and many other films that were considered as anti-Communist, dissolved *Zespół Filmowy X*, a Polish film production studio, directed by Andrzej Wajda (Wajda, 2013). Another film about Stalinism, *Matka Królów* ("The Mother of Kings") by Janusz Zaorski, was produced in 1982 and released in 1987. Krzysztof Tchorzewski's 1983 film, *Stan wewnętrzný* ("The Internal State"), was not premiered until the second half of 1989. The 1982 film by Agnieszka Holland, *Kobieta samotna* ("A Lonely Woman"), was released in 1987. In the popular films by Andrzej Wajda, *Człowiek z marmuru* ("Man of Marble," 1976) and *Człowiek z żelaza* ("Man of Iron," 1981), censorship proposed various modifications, mainly related to the representation of Communism as an oppressive and criminal system, which compels and demands absolute obedience from the citizens.

In addition to films that would refer to the political situation of those times as well as the more or less recent history of the People's Poland, censorship also withheld the distribution of some historical films. The screening of *Wierna rzeka* ("The Faithful River") by Stefan Żeromski, filmed by Tadeusz Chmielewski in 1983, was premiered only in mid-1987; the story about the time of the January Uprising (1863), which portrayed the cruelty of tsarist soldiers and the struggle between the

Poles and the Muscovites, was viewed by censorship as a dangerous allegory of the current Polish-Soviet relations (Chmielewski, 2012). Already in the seventies, the topic of the January Uprising was so liable for censorship that in the screening of Maria Dabrowska's novel *Noce i dnie* ("Nights and Days"), filmed by Jerzy Antczak in 1975, one of the components of the scene dramaturgy was removed: a choral performance of patriotic hymns was intended to be the soundtrack of an image of an insurgent battlefield, covered with dozens of dead bodies; such artistic vision, however, turned out to be unacceptable, because a censor associated it with the Katyn massacre (Antczak, 2009). In the screening of another masterpiece of the Polish literature, *Potop* (The Deluge) by Henryk Sienkiewicz, directed by Jerzy Hoffman, censorship proposed to cut the scene of adoration of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Czestochowa, wherein, after its exposition, the faithful that had gathered in the Jasna Gora chapel fell on their faces.

Censorship did not allow the production of films that openly contradicted the prevalent ideology; thus, Stanislaw Jedryka did not receive permission to release a criminal film based on facts, because they disproved the Communist dogma on the origins of evil that is rooted exclusively in social relations and not human nature (Jędryka, 2012). Among the unrealized film projects, there was an idea of screening the story *Morze Sargassa* ("The Saragasso Sea") by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, describing the postwar life of the Home Army soldiers, who were persecuted, marginalized, forced to denunciation and collaboration with the Communist secret police; the project of the spy-action comedy by S. Bareja, *Nasz człowiek w Warszawie* ("Our Man in Warsaw"), was also rejected (Lubelski, 2012). The ban on showing officers of the secret police caused the rejection of the screenplay for Janusz Majewski's film *Głuchy telefon* ("Chinese Whispers"); another project of the same director, referring to the struggle of the Poles with the tsarist regime in the nineteenth century, was also stopped (Majewski, 2006).

A film that holds the record in terms of the length of the period of censorship detention was the screening of Marek Hlaska's story *Ósmy*

dzień tygodnia (“The Eighth Day of a Week”); being brought to the screen by Aleksander Ford in 1958, it could only be released in the mid-1983. The war movie *Długa noc* (“A Long Night”), produced in 1976 by Janusz Nasfeter, was not premiered until 1989. The costume drama *Diabeł* (“The Devil”) by Andrzej Żuławski was produced in 1972 and approved for distribution only in 1988.

Apart from controlling films, censorship was also a tool of specific politics toward the film community; thus, it banned the publication of any information on the popular actress, Anna Prucnal, who stayed in the West and achieved artistic success. It also eliminated any reviews, comments and, most importantly, postulates of the universal dissemination of Andrzej Wajda’s film *Piłat i inni* (“Pilate and Others”), produced in Germany, 1972, and those reflecting the original adaptation of the brilliant novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, *Mistrz i Małgorzata*; interestingly, afterward, censorship prohibited the publication of any negative opinions on another film by Wajda, titled *Ziemia obiecana* (“The Promised Land”) (Strzyżewski, 1981). Additionally, it limited the number of materials related to film activity of Roman Polanski and also forbade informing on a premiere of Krzysztof Zanussi’s film *Barwy ochronne* (“Camouflage”) and withheld publication of all his reviews and overviews; a similar method was applied in the case of Andrzej Wajda’s movie *Człowiek z marmuru* (Strzyżewski, 1981).

In analyzing the problems of cinematographic censorship in the People’s Poland, its characteristic evolution in terms of moral issues, more precisely, the presentation of nudity on screen, should also be observed. Polish films have not shown any torrid erotic scenes until the seventies; nevertheless, by the eighties, they became commonplace in the movie industry. The presentation of sex and of the naked bosom of attractive actresses resulted not only from artistic, but also marketing reasons, which increased the number of viewers in theaters. Such liberalization of censorship toward sex and eroticism can be interpreted as a conscious, manipulative and propagandist action – the loosening of moral censorship was accompanied by the tightening of political censorship.

The filmmakers, as well as other artistic and cultural communities, were under constant surveillance by agents, who secretly collaborated with the Communist security services (Gańczak, 2011).

5.5. Television

Obviously, a strict control of television was not limited to informational and publicist programs, but concerned all other forms of communication, including cultural and entertainment broadcasts, too. The popular *Television Theatre*, which showed classic Polish and foreign productions, also had to deal with censorship attempts, which, for example, sought to remove a passage of monologue that had referred to the martyrdom of the Poles deported to Siberia or murdered by the tsarist myrmidons, taken from Juliusz Slowacki's romantic drama *Kordian*, written in 1833 (Antczak, 2009). One of the most renowned television cabarets was no longer transmitted after showing a joke that had alluded to the well-known humorous saying, which stated that nobody invited the Russians to Poland, yet they had come by themselves.

Television, which since the seventies has become the main tool of propaganda in Poland, promoted a secular lifestyle and did not allow for transmitting any religious content. The election of the Polish Cardinal, the Archbishop of Krakow Karol Wojtyła, to the papacy, held on October 16, 1978, was as if forced to be broadcasted by the media upon the ministry and service of John Paul II. Thus, the first broadcast of the Holy Mass in the Polish history was the emitted from the Vatican Eucharist, constituting a solemn inauguration of the pontificate of the Polish Pope on October 22, 1978. The unprofessional commentary revealed the ignorance of television reporters in terms of liturgy and Christianity.

The numerous pilgrimages of the Pope to his homeland during the period of Communism were extremely challenging for the Polish Communist authorities and, in this way, for the media as well. Every time, the same method of restricting the range of papal teaching was applied: only select liturgies were aired on the national television, whereas the

remaining ones were broadcasted across regional centers. In this way, for example, on his first pilgrimage (in 1979), only the Eucharists celebrated by the Pope in Warszawa, Oswiecim and Krakow were broadcasted on the national scale. The Holy Mass, concelebrated by the Pope on Victory Square (previously and now named after Marshall Pilsudski) in Warsaw on June 2, 1979, was a watershed in the modern history of Poland and Europe. The papal homily became the strong manifesto of the truth in opposition to propagandist lies, concealments, insincere and deceitful interpretations, and, most of all, the insane ideology that was detrimental to Polish traditions, identity and spirituality. Apparently, some representatives of the Communist regime, frightened by the power of the Pope's words, considered the possibility of stopping the transmission from Victory Square even before the homily ended, so the nation could not hear such a powerful message of freedom, fearlessly proclaimed by Pope John Paul II. A typically manipulative action was the ban on showing the crowds of the faithful who participated in papal pilgrimages and also the application of a propagandist manner of reportage, using newspeak as a means to present a false image of reality (Łęcicki, 2008). During the next papal pilgrimages – undertaken in 1983 and 1987 – as well as in broadcasts of sport competitions taking place in the Western countries, television eliminated all scenes of banners bearing slogans of the illegal *Solidarity* that were visible in the stands.

5.6. The stage

Censorship intruded into the content of the seemingly trivial coverages, such as songs. In the lyrics of Agnieszka Osiecka's song *Okularnicy* from 1963, it ordered that the amount of earnings of the intellectuals be higher than in reality. As for a comical piece by Andrzej Rosiewicz *Życie to interes* ("Life Is Business") from 1980, referring to Jewish folklore, the words about a Rabbi from Poronin (which was clearly associated with Lenin, who hid in Podhale between 1913-1914) had to be replaced by a passage about a Rabbi from Konstancin. Disseminations of songs,

previously authorized for release, yet afterward estimated to be harmful, were the reasons for impeding the careers of artists and performers. This happened in the case of popular singer Slawa Przybylska; in her song from 1964, being the translation of the Russian *Murka*, there appeared a statement about her betrayal and work in the Cheka, which was, naturally, a positive institution from the perspective of official propaganda. When, with the wave of the conciliar renewal and the popularity of big beat, Katarzyna Gärtner composed *Msza Beatowa* (“The Beat Mass”) in 1968, famous singers were not allowed to participate in its performance; such a song, in fact, contradicted the ideology of the authorities that attempted to discourage the youth from the Church and not make the liturgy attractive by implementing the modern form of music (Kydryński, 1995). Wojciech Młynarski, presumably the most prominent author of lyrics, played a continuous game with censorship, which has been documented and recorded on a CD (Młynarski, 2003).

Comedians combined a large dose of excellent humor with intelligent remarks, which were full of allusions intelligible to the audience. Censorship sought to limit the popularity of cabarets, as their witty, ironic and satirical activity was clearly viewed as criticism and mockery of the government and the political system; for example, it banned the dissemination of information on the award that was granted to Jan Pietrzak’s Warsaw cabaret *Pod Egidą* (Strzyżewski, 1981). The song *Żeby Polska była Polską* (“Let Poland Be Poland”), performed at the cabaret, could not be distributed until the period of *Solidarity*, when, during the Festival of the Polish Song in Opole in 1981, it could be presented to a broader public; arousing immense enthusiasm, it became a typical national anthem of the anti-Communist movement. Previously, censorship applied the method of concealment to other Polish patriotic songs: it was banned to sing *Czerwone maki na Monte Cassino* (“Red Poppies on Monte Cassino”) until 1956. The subsequent national versions had to implement a significant change, namely, to replace the name of one of the battles with the name of town Lenino, which served as an opening battle of a combat route of the Communist Polish People’s Army. *Marsz*

Pierwszej Brygady (“The March of the First Brigade”), i.e., the anthem of Marshal Pilsudski’s Legions, was a forbidden and not performed song nearly throughout the whole period of the People’s Poland.

6. Conclusion

The presentation of mechanisms of media control and manipulation in feature films is a specific phenomenon and a paradox of cinematography in Communist Poland. Agnieszka, a character from *Człowiek z marmuru* (“Man of Marble”), struggles with a television director, who seeks to block the production of a movie about Stalinist times. Playing in *Człowiek z żelaza* (“Man of Marble”) is a radio journalist Winkel, who is to become the obedient tool of propaganda and manipulation as already planned by his superiors. In a different film by Andrzej Wajda, titled *Bez znieczulenia* (“Without Anesthesia”), released in 1978, the mechanism of how censors change was shown. The perfect illustration of a thorough investigation of the functioning of censorship, its destructive nature, as well as the clash between the true and false, is offered in Wojciech Marczewski’s film *Ucieczka z kina ‘Wolność’* (“Escape from the ‘Liberty’ Cinema”) from 1990, in which a character – a censor – rejects falsehood and hence experiences liberation; sequences stressing the Communist authorities’ fear of the truth are also extremely remarkable and meaningful (Lubelski, 2009).

Censorship in the system of communist totalitarianism in the People’s Poland was a political instrument of control of any media outlets and their coverages, a tool of manipulation and a guardian of propaganda, for which the truth had no significance; therefore, censorship was a particular ministry of a lie, one that distorted the true meaning of words and images in order to maintain a fictitious reality.

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