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# Institutional Censorship of Academic Humanities Publishing in Communist Poland. Preliminary Findings and Research Perspectives

## Abstract

This article discusses the censorship of scholarly publications in the humanities in Poland in the years 1944–1990, with a particular focus on literary studies. It explores the censorship of scientific texts in the field of literary studies, mainly academic textbooks, dissertations and studies devoted to Polish literature.

The first part reconstructs the model of censorship of academic publishing by the Main Office for the Control Press Publications and Performances, taking into account the chronology and the division according to the person of the author of the scientific publication, the subject, the reporting institution and the intended audience.

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The second part of the article presents case studies that provide a detailed discussion of several instances of censorship reconstructed on the basis of archival documents not only from the censorship office, but also from authors (egodocuments) and from scientific institutions.

Building on the author's previous research into censorship of literary fiction the article also compares the ways in which fiction and scientific literature were censored. The article concludes with suggestions for further research, including a comparative perspective.

**Keywords:** *institutional censorship, People's Poland, censorship of scientific publications, censorship of literature, humanities, literary studies*

## **Cenzurowanie publikacji naukowych z dziedziny humanistyki w Polsce Ludowej. Wstępne ustalenia i perspektywy dalszych badań**

### **Abstrakt**

Przedmiotem artykułu jest omówienie cenzurowania publikacji naukowych z dziedziny humanistyki w Polsce w latach 1944–1990. Szczególnym zainteresowaniem objęte zostały teksty naukowe z literaturoznawstwa, przede wszystkim podręczniki akademickie, rozprawy i opracowania poświęcone literaturze polskiej.

W pierwszej części artykułu odtworzony został model cenzurowania tekstów naukowych przez GUKPPiW, uwzględniający chronologię oraz podział ze względu na: osobę autora publikacji naukowej, temat, zgłaszającą instytucję oraz projektowanego odbiorcę.

W części drugiej zaprezentowane zostały *case studies*: szczegółowe omówienie kilku przypadków, zrekonstruowanych na podstawie dokumentów archiwalnych nie tylko urzędu cenzury, lecz także dokumentów autorskich (egodokumenty) oraz dokumentów instytucji naukowych.

Jako że artykuł wyrasta z wcześniejszych prac badawczych autorki związanych z cenzurowaniem literatury pięknej, przynosi także porównanie sposobów cenzurowania literatury pięknej i naukowej. Artykuł kończy przedstawienie dalszych potencjalnych kierunków badań, z uwzględnieniem perspektywy porównawczej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *cenzura instytucjonalna, Polska Ludowa, cenzurowanie publikacji naukowych, cenzurowanie literatury, humanistyka, literaturoznawstwo*

## 1. Introduction

The study of censorship of academic publishing in communist Poland seems important because, according to the state of research,<sup>1</sup> 1. a large group of Polish scientists published regularly, providing a large number of cases for to study, 2. publishing was constitutive for the career of every scientist and for the development of the discipline, and 3. obstacles to publishing led to stagnation in research and to the isolation and backwardness of Polish science. Research on the censorship of academic texts therefore provides an opportunity to trace not only the fate of individual scientists and their careers, but, above all, the history of disciplines and the history of institutions.<sup>2</sup>

My research on the censorship of academic publishing grew out of years of research on the censorship of literary texts.<sup>3</sup> In addition to my main work, I conducted some preliminary research on the issue of censorship of academic publishing in the humanities in Poland in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>4</sup> In the present article I would like to revisit these findings in order to verify and expand on them and to extend the chronological scope of the research.

I am aware that it is much more difficult to study the censorship of academic texts than the censorship of literary texts. There are two reasons for this. First, it is necessary to learn not only about the mechanisms of communist censorship in general, but also about the nuances of the functioning of academic institutions: university faculties, scientific institutes, opinion-forming bodies, scientific societies, editorial boards of journals and publishing houses. In the complex structure of the functioning of science in a non-democratic system, all of them can have an influence on the final form of the published text, in many cases far beyond the typical

<sup>1</sup> See Romek 2000, 2010; Pawlicki 2001; Kloc 2018; Kamińska-Chełminiak 2019.

<sup>2</sup> A small part of the academic works was also published in the samizdat (“second circulation”), an illegal publishing circuit that was not subject to censorship.

<sup>3</sup> Budrowska 2009; 2020; 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Budrowska 2009; 2020; 2023a; 2023b; 2024.

influence inherent in science. It is therefore necessary to analyse a wider range of sources.

Second, there is the fundamental difficulty of distinguishing between what is institutional control and what is a critical review of a scholarly text, typical of the academic publishing process. Such a question must always be answered clearly, and egodocuments such as letters, diaries and, memoirs of authors of academic texts and other participants in academic life can help with this.

The research presented in the first part of the article is based on an analysis of the documents of the Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk [Main Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Performances].<sup>5</sup> I describe the ways in which academic texts were censored by the censorship office and try to answer the general question: what was the impact of official control on academic publications in Poland between 1944 and 1990. In the case studies, however, I use a wider range of sources: censorship office documents and Party files, personal documents of the authors of the publications, and documents from academic institutions. In this way, I describe not only how the text was examined at the censorship office, but also the process of its creation and – where possible – the influence of academic institutions on the final form of the text.

I believe that such a method is practical: it is possible to start with an analysis of the sources of the Main Office for the Control, building knowledge about the general mechanisms of control of academic texts, in parallel with detailed case studies that can illustrate and verify the general theses. Given the number of scientific texts published in Poland between 1944 and 1990, such a solution also seems the most effective.

What kinds of texts have been considered in this paper? Monographs (including an important category of doctoral and habilitation dissertations), journal articles, introductions to editions of sources, introductions to literary texts, academic and school textbooks, studies written for a popular audience, published lectures and readings, and research reports.

Due to the length of time and the resulting large number of published academic texts, my research is of a preliminary nature. Furthermore, as the humanities are more susceptible to political manipulation than other

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<sup>5</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW (Archiwum Akt Nowych, Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk).

fields,<sup>6</sup> I focus on works in the humanities, with a particular emphasis on literary studies.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. State of research

The state of research on communist censorship in Poland is advanced and has intensified – as in all former Eastern Bloc countries – with the collapse of the system and the opening of archives.<sup>8</sup> However, while researchers have devoted much attention to the issue of censorship of literature<sup>9</sup> and press,<sup>10</sup> the topic of censorship of academic texts is much less developed.<sup>11</sup> Research on the censorship of academic texts is also use of knowledge from the state of research on the general history of science in communist Poland,<sup>12</sup> and use of knowledge from the state of research on the functioning of academia in Eastern Block.<sup>13</sup>

The most important work on the subject of institutional censorship of academia in communist Poland is the monograph of Zbigniew Romek *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce. 1944–1970*.<sup>14</sup> Its publication was preceded by a volume of interviews with historians conducted by the same researcher.<sup>15</sup> The book *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce* examines the impact of institutional censorship on the historian community and makes extensive use of archival material from the Main Office for the Control, as well as material from academic institutions and, to a lesser extent, ego-documents. It is worth noting that the researcher also carried out research in Soviet archives and read Party materials as well as materials produced

<sup>6</sup> Hübner 1992; Romek 2000; Dybiec 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Works from other scientific disciplines, such as mathematics or biology, were also censored and forced to change. This subject requires a separate study.

<sup>8</sup> Müller 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Bates 2000; Hobot, 2000; Gardocki 2015; 2019; Dąbrowicz 2017; Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk 2018; Kościewicz 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Gogol 2012; Degen, Żynda 2012; G. Gzella, J. Gzella 2013; Kamińska-Chełminiak 2013; 2016; Degen, G. Gzella, J. Gzella 2015; Patelski 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Żak 1996; Romek 2000; 2010; Kloc 2018; Kamińska-Chełminiak 2019; Kościewicz 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Kieniewicz 1989; Hübner 1992; 2013; Pleskot 2008; Pleskot, Rutkowski 2009; Dybiec 2015; Stobiecki 2020; Olaszek 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Connely 2014; Oates-Indruchova 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Romek 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Romek 2000.

by Glavlit,<sup>16</sup> thus allowing conclusions to be drawn beyond the exclusively Polish perspective.

The main themes of Romek's work are the gradual Stalinisation of historical science, initiated by the 1st Congress of Polish Science in 1951, the censorship of Marxist historical works in 1952–1955, and the changes that occurred in 1956 (de-Stalinisation). According to the research, the most important historical topics deemed unacceptable by the censorship office were a positive evaluation of the history of the Second Polish Republic and some topics related to the Second World War, such as the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising. As an example of a historian included in the censorship index, the researcher points to the censorship of the scientific works of the prominent oppositionist, and author of works on the crimes of communism – professor Krystyna Kersten. The general conclusion of Zbigniew Romek's research is that, in the years 1944–1970, censorship of publications in the humanities was imposed both on the authors of the works and on the management of scientific institutions. The heads of the institutions were responsible for the choice of research topics and did not allow topics that were considered unacceptable by the authorities. The censorship office therefore dealt with texts that had already been vetted, intervening only when the mechanism failed.

In contrast, a study that presents the system of academic censorship in the Eastern Bloc in a comparative and holistic manner is the monograph by Libora Oates-Indruchova *Censorship in Czech and Hungarian Academic Publishing 1969–89. Snakes and Ladders*.<sup>17</sup> The book examines in detail the actions of institutional censorship against the academic community in Czechoslovakia and Hungary and is accompanied by findings on censorship practices in the GDR, Romania and Poland and, as an introduction pattern, in the USSR. The author describes the system and practice of censorship of academic publications in these countries, and the ways in which the academic community responded to state repression. The primary

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<sup>16</sup> Glavnoe Upravlenie po Dielam Literatury i Izdatiel'stv – Soviet censorship office, established in 1922.

A characteristic feature of the Soviet system was its ramified nature, and thus a diffusion of responsibility. Control was exercised in a number of Party and state institutions and, in parallel, in the editorial offices of magazines and publications. Glavlit, on the other hand, was an institution created specifically for this purpose. See: Ermolaev 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Oates-Indruchova 2020.

material consists of interviews with Czech and Hungarian academics who were professionally active during the last two decades of so-called “real socialism”. The interviewees represent the humanities, which are much more vulnerable to manipulation and external pressure than the natural or technical sciences. In addition to the interviews, the author used documents relating to state science policy (ministry documents) and minutes of meetings of the editorial board of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

The main findings on scientific censorship in Czechoslovakia and Hungary are: 1. the position of the scientist and the chances of his work being printed increased if he was a member of the communist Party; 2. differences in the systems of control in Czechoslovakia and Hungary: in Czechoslovakia, supervision by the Academy of Sciences was stricter, more meticulous, while in Hungary; 3. parallel publishing: official and in the samizdat; and 4. moral dilemmas arising from the sense of legitimacy of an oppressive political system.

In contrast, the main findings on the comparative censorship of science are as follows: 1. similarities between the countries of the bloc – the intensification of repression after independence uprisings (e.g. the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 or the Prague Spring); 2. the existence of intellectual opposition circles centered on the second circulation and samizdat. The main difference is that, between 1969 and 1989, Czechoslovakia and Hungary had no formal censorship offices, unlike Poland, the USSR and the GDR.

The general conclusion of the comparative study is that in each of these countries academic publications were censored to a lesser extent by formal controlling instances (if they existed) than by scientific bodies such as: department or faculty heads and journal or book editors and reviewers. Self-censorship also had a profound impact on the choice of research topics and the final form of the publications.

### **3. Institutional censorship in communist Poland**

As the state of research on censorship in communist Poland is well advanced, here I report only the basic findings. Such a brief reminder will allow us to reflect further in this article on the differences between the censorship of literary texts and academic texts.

### **3.1. General principles of institutional censorship in communist Poland**

From July 1944 to June 1990, there was an institutional control of publications in Poland. All published documents were subject to it: the press, fiction, plays and other performances, textbooks, books and scientific articles, art exhibitions, photographs, even labels, maps or obituaries.<sup>18</sup> The role of the censors was to eliminate content that was broadly considered a threat to the political system and social order, and their detailed catalogue of censored material often changed according to the political situation. The 1981 Censorship Act abolished censorship of academic texts, but as it was only in force for two months, from the beginning of October until the imposition of martial law, it changed little in practice.<sup>19</sup>

In People's Republic of Poland, censorship was carried out by many state bodies and offices: committees and divisions of the Polish United Workers' Party, public security offices, ministries, customs offices, and also by the editors of publishing houses and magazines.<sup>20</sup> However, the only body set up specifically for this purpose was the Main Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Performances (central and regional offices) – an executive body under strict Party supervision and operating according to Party guidelines. The control office received all publications prior to printing.

The period 1944–1990 can be divided into several historical sub-periods, taking into account the political changes and the consequent changes in the severity of censorship: 1944–1948 (initial period and mild censorship); 1949–1955 (Stalinisation and strict censorship); 1956–1958 (de-Stalinisation and very light censorship); 1958–1968 (“little stabilization” with political and economic stability, harsher censorship); 1968–1970 (political turmoil: student and worker strikes, and systematic repression of Polish Jewish citizens, censorship was tightened); 1976–1979 (strikes in 1976, censorship reaction to the appearance of the second circulation (“drugi obieg”)); the first half of the 1980s (several instances of tightening and relaxation of state censorship in Poland, the rise of the “Solidarity” trade union, the wave of strikes and the August Agreements, and the introduction

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<sup>18</sup> Bates 2002; Kamińska-Chełminiak 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Radzikowska 1990; Gardocki 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Romek 2010.

of martial law, its suspension and abolition); 1983–1989 (the abolition of martial law until the collapse of the communist system, system and censorship gradually eroded).

### 3.2. Institutional censorship of literary texts<sup>21</sup>

Literary texts for review were sent to the Main Office for the Control of the Press, Publications and Performances by publishers or magazine editors acting on its behalf. The author was neither officially contacted nor given the opportunity to formally appeal against the decision (which was also changed by the 1981 Act). The office normally issued two opinions, but more could be issued in more difficult cases. The opinions took the form of a substantive review, ending with a decision to: 1. allow the text to be published without amendment, 2. allow it to be printed with amendment, 3. not allow it to be printed. In the case of proposed changes, a list of the changes or the pages on which they are to be found was provided, and in the case of a refusal to print, a brief justification of the decision was given.

The censorship office's decision to change or completely stop a literary text could be related to the author (authors considered good or bad by the authorities), the subject of the text (desirable and forbidden subjects), the intended audience (uneducated audience versus elite audience, children's audience), and the publishing house or editorial board submitting the text for publication (private, religious, "unruly" magazine editors considered bad by the authorities). It should be emphasised that the censors took into account all the elements of the text, but in the final verdict, one of them came to the fore.

The study of censorship of literature also allowed some general conclusions to be drawn. The existence of state control of literature determined the existence of three literary circuits, all in the Polish language: legal in the country, subject to censorship, samizdat ("drugi obieg"), and literature published in exile. These three circuits were unified after the fall of communism, but not completely until around 1992. Censorship influenced the formation of the canon and eliminated a large number of works. Censorship limited the development of certain themes (e.g. literary representations of the Second World War and the Holocaust) and aspects of poetics (e.g. the avant-garde). State control destroyed writers' careers and the potential of literature. This situation directly contributed to the fact

<sup>21</sup> See more on this topic: Budrowska 2023b.

that between 1944 and 1990 fewer outstanding works of Polish literature were published than might have been expected. Translations of important texts of world literature were not allowed to be printed or were printed very late, which resulted in the isolation of Polish literature (and readers).

### **3.3. Institutional censorship of academic humanities publishing**

An analysis of the sources shows that the censorship office used the same criteria for censoring scientific texts as for censoring literature: chronological changes (tighten or loosen controls), the author of the text, the matter of the text, the institution publishing the text, and the intended audience. It should be added that in the case of academic texts, the distinction between modern (new) and classical texts is less important: academic texts are usually new (the exception being revivals of the main texts in the discipline).

#### **3.3.1. Censorship based on the author (researcher)**

For the censorship office, one of the most important elements in assessing a academic text was the person of the author. Two groups of researchers could be distinguished: 1. those who were favoured by the authorities, i.e. who were published in large numbers without any obstacles, and 2. those who were perceived negatively, were fought against, unpublished, forced to make changes to their texts, up to a total publishing ban and a “zapis na nazwisko” [“ban for the name”]. It should be noted that the position of the researcher within this informal hierarchy may have been subject to change in response to shifts in political circumstances or alterations in the individual’s perspectives and actions.

In the first group there will be mainly scientists with communist views, and Party members. Promoting and supporting their publications was intended to create a situation in which it would be possible to replace the old elites with new ones of worker or peasant origin.

An example of a work that was positively assessed by the censors because of the author’s views is Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski’s dissertation *Z zagadnieniami literatury polskiej epoki imperializmu* [The Polish Literature of the Imperialist Era], which was reviewed by the censors on 10 September 1951. The author had presented it in the form of a lecture at a conference organised by the University of Łódź in June, and it was published in a large edition three months later. The censor states:

Autor omawia stan badań nad literaturą epoki imperializmu. [...] W oparciu o marksistowską teorię rozwoju społecznego autor przedstawia pewne własne dociekania nad fragmentem omawianej epoki. [Author discusses the state of research into the literature of the imperialist era. [...] Based on the Marxist theory of social development, the author presents some of his own investigations into the fragment of the epoch under discussion.]<sup>22</sup>

It is worth noting that the term “Imperialist era”, which Jakubowski had just introduced into Polish literary studies, replaced in the early 1950s the well-established term “Młoda Polska” [The Young Poland].<sup>23</sup>

The second group are researchers who were perceived negatively by the authorities. This group included many representatives of the pre-war scientific elite and the most disadvantaged, such as those clearly holding non-Marxist views and those who decided to emigrate (war emigration, emigration of March 1968, emigration of the 1970s. and the 1980s.). The 1970 annual report of the Main Office for the Control states that Polish citizen in exile:

[...] tak w publikacjach książkowych, jak i przez środki masowego przekazu dają wyraz nieprzyjaznego stosunku do naszego kraju. [...] both in book publications and through the mass media express an unfriendly attitude towards our country].<sup>24</sup>

The case of the eminent philosopher professor Władysław Tatarkiewicz exemplifies the consequences of severe censorship based on the author's non-Marxist views. In 1950, Tatarkiewicz was removed from his position as a professor at the Jagiellonian University and was prohibited from publishing between 1952 and 1954. During this period, he did not publish any academic work, with the exception of a translation of the second volume of Thomas Mann's novel *Czarodziejska góra* [The Magic Mountain], which he published in 1953 under the pseudonym of Jan Łukowski, without being recognised by the censors.

<sup>22</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 159, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> See: Markiewicz 1987.

<sup>24</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 2962, p. 26.

Among the most prominent émigré academics against whom the censorship office took decisive action were: 1. Wartime and postwar emigration: e.g. prof. Stanisław Kot, prof. Oskar Halecki, prof. Kazimierz Bulas, prof. Wiktor Weintraub;<sup>25</sup> 2. March 1968 emigration: e.g. prof. Zygmunt Bauman, prof. Leszek Kołakowski, prof. Bronisław Baczko, prof. Krzysztof Pomian, [Stola 2000];<sup>26</sup> 3. 1970s. and 1980 emigration: e.g. prof. Stanisław Barańczak, prof. Andrzej Walicki.<sup>27</sup> Considering that this section is of a reviewing nature, it seems pertinent to limit the scope of this discussion to the situation of prof. Wiktor Weintraub.

Wiktor Weintraub was a historian of Polish literature. During the Second World War, he and his wife were forced to flee Poland due to their Jewish heritage. From 1943 to 1945, he was employed in Palestine as an editor for the journal and publishing house "W Drodze" [On the Way]. In 1945, he relocated to London, where he continued his scholarly work, teaching a course in Polish literature at London University. From 1950 onwards, Weintraub resided in the USA, where he held the position of professor of Slavic Studies at Harvard University until 1978 [Draus, 2015]. Prof Weintraub died in the USA in 1988.

In the early post-war period and throughout the Stalinist era, the publication of his texts in Poland was prohibited. In 1950, the censor's report offered a disparaging description of the professor, characterising him as: "[...] **Były** polski historyk literatury, obecnie na emigracji [A **former** Polish literary historian, now in exile]."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See: Fitowa 2001 (Stanisław Kot); Dąbrowska 2012 (Oskar Halecki); Śliwa 2000 (Kazimierz Bulas); Pietrzyk 2014 (Wiktor Weintraub).

<sup>26</sup> As Dariusz Stola states, by the autumn of 1969, nearly 500 lecturers and scientist-researchers, including prominent and well-known scientific figures, had applied for permission to leave. See: Stola 2000. Zygmunt Bauman emigrated from Poland in June 1968, first to Israel, then to the UK, in connection with the campaign against people of Jewish descent, see: Wagner 2021. Leszek Kołakowski emigrated from Poland to Canada via Paris in November 1968, after being expelled from the ranks of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and dismissed from his job at the University of Warsaw, a form of repression due to Kołakowski's involvement in student protests, see: Chudoba 2014; Borzym 2015. Bronisław Baczko, expelled from the PZPR, emigrated from Poland in 1968, first to France, then to Switzerland, see: Borzym 2015. Krzysztof Pomian, who was expelled from the PZPR in 1966 and dismissed from his university position after the March events, emigrated to France in 1972, see: Borzym 2015.

<sup>27</sup> See: Rogulska-Kołodziejska 2014 (Stanisław Barańczak); Kornat 2021 (Andrzej Walicki).

<sup>28</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 307, p. 904. My emphasis.

The first changes in the perception of Weintraub's person and his academic work by the censorship office occurred during the period of de-Stalinisation. His first visit to Poland took place in 1958, after which he published articles regularly in Polish periodicals such as "Pamiętnik Literacki" and "Tygodnik Powszechny". In the 1970s., after the lifting of censorship restrictions on researchers who had emigrated from Poland during the war, prof. Wiktor Weintraub was also able to publish more extensive works in Poland: *Od Reja do Boya. Studia i szkice literackie* (1977), *Rzecz czarnoleska* (1977), *Poeta i prorok. Rzecz o profetyzmie Mickiewicza* (1982). The publications were released without censorship changes.

### 3.3.2. Censorship based on the content of the text

The subject of the controlled publication was a major reason for the censor's intervention in the text. Three groups of subjects can be distinguished: 1. those which were promoted by the authorities and therefore received a positive or even enthusiastic response from the censors, 2. those which were neutral and to which the censors rarely objected, and 3. those which were undesirable or forbidden and therefore censored very strictly. The specific qualification of topics was done in Party circles, not in the censorship office. It reached the censorship office in the form of guidelines in "the books of records and recommendations". It should be added that the qualification of the themes changed according to the rhythm of political change.

The topics encouraged were, broadly speaking, those related to the communist movement, revolutionary themes and peasant issues. Some methodological approaches, such as structuralism or Marxism, and strong criticism of views and attitudes with which the authorities disagreed could also be positively evaluated.

Specialised topics were also considered neutral because of their expected low social impact. They were referred to in the reports with a specific formula: "czorsko obojętne" [censor-indifferent]. Examples include works in mathematics, physics, and the humanities, such as historical grammar or lexicography.

On the other hand, texts dealing with politically inconvenient or forbidden subjects were censored very strictly. In the case of inconvenient topics, the control office ordered a number of changes to be made; in the case of forbidden topics, prevented the text from being printed altogether. In general, subjects related to the Second Polish Republic (with the exception

of profound criticism), information about Poland's conflicts with Soviet Russia, certain topics of the Second World War (the Home Army, the Warsaw Uprising), as well as aesthetics: decadence, psychologism, mysticism and worldviews (religious worldviews) were all stopped.

An example of a text assessed positively by the censorship office due to its subject is the literary study written for a general audience *O "Lalce" Bolesława Prusa* [On 'The Doll' by Bolesław Prus] by Jan Kott. The choice of subject, i.e. a realistic novel, as well as the choice of methodology, was considered of value. The work was published as many as three times in three years (1948, 1949, 1950), in large editions and without any interference from the censors. On 20 October 1950, the censor writes, vastly overestimating the scientific importance of the work:

Praca Jana Kotta „O «Lalce» Bolesława Prusa” jest pierwszą z powojennych prac, która w kwietyście atmosferę tradycyjnej polonistyki wniosła elementy „burzy i naporu”, stanowiąc ważny punkt w historii naszej krytyki literackiej i odsłaniając perspektywy marksistowskiej metody badawczej dla badań nad naszą literaturą [Jan Kott's work "On 'The Doll' by Bolesław Prus" is the first of the post-war works to bring elements of 'sturm und drang' into the florid atmosphere of traditional Polish studies, marking an important point in the history of our literary criticism and revealing the perspectives of the Marxist research method for the study of our literature].<sup>29</sup>

An example of a "neutral" book is *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera* [An assessment of the possibility of building a Christian ethics on the assumptions of the system of Max Scheler] by Karol Wojtyła, sent for inspection on 9 May 1958. The opinion, written by the censor of the Lublin branch, reads as follows:

Jest to praca habilitacyjna,<sup>30</sup> złożona na Wydziale Teologicznym UJ w 1953 r. Tytuł dostatecznie ujawnia treść rozprawy –

<sup>29</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 146, f. 31/47, pp. 190–193.

<sup>30</sup> Karol Wojtyła's habilitation thesis was positively evaluated by the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University on 12 December 1953, but the habilitation was not granted due to a change in a law on academic degrees. The new law came into force on February 1952. See: part about work of prof. Śląwińska in this article.

należy więc tylko dodać, iż autor nie widzi takiej możliwości. [...] **Cenzorsko najzupełniej obojętna**, tym bardziej, iż nie zawiera jakichkolwiek elementów aluzyjnych czy „aktualizacji”, których można by się spodziewać przy rozprawach o etyce katolickiej [This is a habilitation thesis, submitted to the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University in 1953. The title sufficiently reveals the content of the thesis – so it is only necessary to add that the author does not see such a possibility. [...] It is **censoriously indifferent**, all the more so because it does not contain any allusive or ‘updating’ elements that one might expect from treatises on Catholic ethics].<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, the editorial footnote shows that the book was submitted for typesetting on 15 June 1958, while the permission to print was signed almost a year later, on 5 May 1959. The dissertation, although deemed ‘censor-indifferent’ by the first censor, must have been judged negatively in the another authority. The issue is very interesting and requires further research. The book was finally published by the Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL [Scientific Society of the Catholic University of Lublin] in an extremely small edition of 125 copies.

An interesting example of the censorship of a text on a forbidden subject is the doctoral thesis of professor Krystyna Jakowska. The dissertation, written under the supervision of professor Artur Hutnikiewicz at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, was presented by the author in 1968. The subject of the dissertation was the work of the post-war emigrant writer Józef Wittlin.

The annual report of the Main Office for the Control for 1970–1972 states that in 1970 the book by Krystyna Jakowska *“Sól ziemi” Józefa Wittlina. Z dziejów ekspresjonizmu w Polsce* [“The Salt of the Earth” by Józef Wittlin. From the history of expressionism in Poland], submitted for publication by the Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe [Polish Scientific Publishing House], was not allowed to be published. The monograph was sent to censorship in June 1970, and the examination and suspension of printing took place at the censorship office in Toruń. The summary report, which had already been prepared at the Main Office for the Control in

<sup>31</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 391, p. 430. My emphasis.

Warsaw, cited “Regulation No. IX”, concerning the ban on writing about people in exile, as the reason for the prohibition. In the report, the censor summarises the dissertation thesis and takes a negative view of the author’s flattering attitude towards Wittlin:

Z lektury wyżej wymienionej pozycji, odnosiło się wrażenie, że Wittlin był jednym z najwybitniejszych przedstawicieli ekspresjonizmu już nie tylko polskiego, ale i światowego. [Reading the aforementioned position, one had the impression that Wittlin was one of the most outstanding representatives of Expressionism, not only in Poland, but also in the world].<sup>32</sup>

It was only in 1977 that a book about Wittlin was published by the Ossolineum publishing house in the series “Z piórkiem” [With a feather], edited by prof. Michał Głowiński.<sup>33</sup> The publication took place after Wittlin’s death in New York in February 1976, which also lifted the censorship’s “ban for the name” imposed on the émigré. In the 1977 edition, however, the title was changed to *Z dziejów ekspresjonizmu w Polsce. “Sól ziemi”* [“The Salt of the Earth”]. From the history of expressionism in Poland], removing the name of the author of the novel being analysed, which was undoubtedly a sign of a censorship intervention.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.3.3. Censorship based on the institution submitting the text for control

The publisher (or academic institution) submitting the text for censorship was also an important element in determining the opinion of the censorship office. Institutions supported by the authorities were subject to more lenient censorship. On the other hand, when the authorities had to comment on the institution, publications were subject to strict control,

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<sup>32</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 2962, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> An interview with prof. Krystyna Jakowska reveals that both, she and her supervisor, prof. Artur Hutnikiewicz, were aware that choosing a controversial topic could lead to difficulties with future publication, but they were unaware of the existence of the ban on Wittlin’s name. They were driven by research curiosity in choosing the topic, and the serious printing difficulties that delayed the book for seven years came as a surprise to the author and the supervisor. Prof. Jakowska was interviewed by the author of this article in November 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Dybiec, p. 254.

regardless of the worldviews of individual researchers or the topic of the controlled work. The first group includes institutions, publishing houses and periodicals representing the communist and atheist worldview, including those newly established in People's Poland; the second group includes institutions representing pre-war science, private publishing houses (until their liquidation in the early 1950s) and religious publishing houses.

An example of a publishing house that rarely got into trouble with the censorship office was the Party-owned *Książka i Wiedza* publishing house, founded in 1949. It printed scholarly works that shed light on issues from a Marxist perspective and promoted leftist researchers, often of the younger generation. A good example of this is the series *1918–1939. Problemy dwudziestolecia* [1918–1939. Problems of the interwar period], that focused on the negative ratings of the history of the Second Polish Republic, and within it – the work of Party historian Aleksy Deruga: *Polityka wschodnia Polski wobec ziem Litwy, Białorusi i Ukrainy, 1918–1919* [Policy of the Second Polish Republic towards the countries of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. 1918–1919], published in 1969.

An example of an institutions that became a serious problem for the control office were two bodies with pre-war origins: the Warsaw Scientific Society, founded in since 1907, and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU), which had existed since 1873. It should be added that the censorship office actively assisted the authorities in the liquidation of both institutions, which is well illustrated by the failed attempts to publish a yearbook of the Warsaw Society's scientific activities.

In September 1949, the censorship office refused to authorise the printing of the 1948 yearbook. In July 1950, the office issued its opinion on the 1949 yearbook, and even against the background of other very harsh criticisms, this one stands out for its extraordinary verbal aggression and threatening conclusions:

Proponowany do druku rocznik jest jednym z większych skandalów politycznych, jakie zdarzyło mi się dostać do oceny. [...] Jest to świadome szkodnictwo, otwarta wroga robota polityczna. Należy nie tylko nie dopuścić do druku rocznika, ale zainteresować tą sprawą władze bezpieczeństwa i Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkół Wyższych. [...] Czas najwyższy, aby towarzystwo utrzymujące się z budżetu państwowego zdecydowało się, czy idzie z Polską Ludową, czy przeciw [The

yearbook proposed for publication is one of the biggest political scandals I happened to get to assess. [...] It is deliberate damage, an open hostile political job. Not only should the yearbook be prevented from being printed, but the matter should also be brought to the attention of the security authorities and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education should be interested in the matter. [...] It is high time for a society supported by the state budget to decide whether it goes with or against People's Poland].<sup>35</sup>

In the end, both yearbooks (1948; 1949) were published in a very abbreviated form, with numerous changes enforced by the censors.

The Warsaw Scientific Society, as the intellectual heir to pre-war science, could not hold its own in the changing political situation. Pressure from the Main Office for the Control and denial of permission to print were the prelude to the liquidation of the institution in December 1952. The 1952 issue of the yearbook was the last to be published until the resumption of the Society's activities in 1981 and the first "new" yearbook published after the lifting of martial law in 1983.

The second major institution representing pre-war scholarship to be suppressed by institutional censorship was the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Interventions by the Censorship Office – it should be added that the Krakow branch was responsible for censoring works submitted by the PAU – contributed to the gradual restriction of freedom of expression and the suspension of the institution's activities in 1952. As the researchers write,<sup>36</sup> the PAU was never formally dissolved, but the authorities established the rival Polish Academy of Sciences, which took over the PAU's property and assets. Consent for such a solution was forced upon the General Assembly of the PAU, and one of the vice-presidents of the Polish Academy of Science was Kazimierz Nitsch, who had served as president of the acquired institution from 1946 to 1952.<sup>37</sup>

The report from a national meeting of the heads of censorship offices, held on 13–14 December 1952, states that the head of the Krakow office complained to the members of the PAU that in their scientific dissertations

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<sup>35</sup> AAN, GUKKPiW, 176, pp. 340–341.

<sup>36</sup> Hübner 1992.

<sup>37</sup> Hübner 1992; Grodziski 2005.

they mainly cited Western science, isolated themselves from Soviet science and included abstracts only in English:

Prace te charakteryzuje zasklepianie się w rozważaniach czysto teoretycznych, w oderwaniu od życia codziennego. [...] Nie widać też dążenia w pracy PAU do powiązania nauki z codzienną praktyką [These works are characterised by a wallowing in purely theoretical considerations, isolated from everyday life. [...] Nor is there any desire in the work of the PAU to link science to everyday practice].<sup>38</sup>

The Warsaw head office agreed the problems but advised:

Problematyka, którą ma przed sobą Kraków, jest niezmiernie trudna. Pozycje na terenie Krakowa są przeważnie pozycjami towarzystw naukowych. Oczywiście, że to się wiąże ze specyficznymi trudnościami, bo nie jest rzeczą prostą mówić o tych rzeczach z zespołami profesorów z **nie naszymi** przekonaniami. [...] Tym niemniej musimy sobie przypomnieć jeszcze raz, że jeżeli mamy do czynienia z tego rodzaju instytucjami jak PAU, gdzie skupia się oprócz KUL-u całą reakcyjną profesura polska, musimy pozwolić im trochę mówić, bo niektórzy z nich mogą się jeszcze przydać Polsce Ludowej swoim doświadczeniem, umiejętnością i dla tego musimy w stosunku do tych ludzi stosować pewną taktykę [The issues standing before Krakow are extremely difficult. The publications within the Krakow area are mostly works of scientific societies. Of course, there are specific difficulties with this, because it is not easy to talk about these things with teams of professors who do **not share our convictions**. [...] Nevertheless, we must to remind ourselves once again that when we are dealing with such institutions as the PAU, where, alongside KUL, all the reactionary Polish professors are concentrated, we have to let them talk a little, because some of them can still be useful to the People's Poland with their experience, abilities, and therefore we have to use certain tactics towards these people].<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, f. 197/6, pp. 171–172.

<sup>39</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, f. 197/6, pp. 293–240. My emphasis.

An interesting example of the difficulties in publishing a book signed by the PAU is the monograph *Akademia Umiejętności w Krakowie. 1873–1918. Zarys dziejów* [Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. 1873–1918. A Historical Overview] In fact, it seems that all three censoring criteria may have converged here: a “reactionary” author (professor Jan Hulewicz), subject matter, as well as a problematic publisher. The monograph was prepared by the author for the 75th anniversary of the PAU, but “for reasons beyond the author’s control”, as we read in the author’s *Preface*, it could not be published in time for the anniversary, which fell in 1949.<sup>40</sup> Such a formula was used to camouflage the censorship ban on the publication, which had already been stopped; so it is very likely that the censorship ban stood in the way of a publication that recalled the merits of an institution that had just been subjected to repression. Jan Hulewicz’s work was not published in its entirety until 1956, the time of the thaw.

### 3.3.4. Censorship based on the expected audience

Thinking about the issue of censorship based on audience forces us to divide scholarly works into two groups: 1. specialist works, aimed at a narrow group of professionals, and 2. popular science and textbooks, aimed at non-professional readers. These two groups of texts were treated differently by the censors.

Strictly professional publications such as: monographs and journal articles, were published in small editions, which ensured a limited audience. The censors therefore argued that the small number of printed copies of a work would compensate for the incompatibility of the views expressed with the prevailing political line. In order to minimise the impact of the text, the censors often ordered a reduction in the already small print run.

In December 1950, the censorship office refused permission to print *Z dziejów jednej legendy. W sprawie genezy kultu św. Stanisława Biskupa* [The story of a legend. The origins of the cult of Saint Stanislaus the Bishop], by the medievalist Danuta Borawska. The accusations relate not only to the religious subject chosen by author, but also to the person supervising the work. A characteristic passage from the censor’s review of 28 December 1950 reads as follows:

Nie jest winą autorki, że takie prace pisze. Można mieć o to pretensję do prof. Tadeusza Manteuffla, w którego semina-

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<sup>40</sup> In 1948, a small section of it was published in brochure form.

rium praca taka była pisana. [It is not the author's fault that she writes such works. One may hold a grudge against Professor Tadeusz Manteuffel, in whose seminar such a work was written].<sup>41</sup>

After a month, however, permission was granted to print the text in a small edition of 600 copies as volume five of the series "Prace Instytutu Historycznego Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego" [Works of the Historical Institute of the University of Warsaw]. Symptomatically, the edition is dated 1950, but the files of Main Office for the Control show that permission was not granted until January 1951.

On the other hand, popular science literature and textbooks for schools and universities faced much heavier censorship. The controls took a long time, and numerous changes and corrections were ordered in order to meet the demand for the proper education of young minds. It should be added that books for school use had to be approved in advance by the Ministry of Education, so only after an initial selection were they sent to the censorship office.

An example of such a work is the popular science book *Wit Stwosz w Polsce* [Wit Stwosz in Poland] by professor Adam Bochnak, intended for teachers. It reached the censorship office in February 1950 and was censored because of its non-Marxist treatment of the problem.<sup>42</sup> The work was returned for rewriting, with instructions to make some changes, and was published later that year. There are four changes that have been made to the published version.

Professor Juliusz Kleiner's textbook for secondary school and university students, *Zarys dziejów literatury polskiej* [The Outline of the History of Polish Literature], volume II, published first time before the Second World War, was controlled by the communist censors for three years (1949–1951). The volume, which covers the history of literature from 1830 (The November Uprising) to 1918, had to be revised three times following a series of extremely negative reviews, one of which was written by Stefan Żółkiewski, a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, a member of Parliament, and the founder and director of the newly established Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 254.

<sup>42</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 144, f. 31/14, p. 158.

<sup>43</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 163, p. 10.

The book was finally published in 1958, after prof. Kleiner's death, with additions (also indoctrinating) by other researchers. It was reprinted several times: in 1959, 1960, 1963, 1965, and 1990.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. Case studies

The criteria for selecting examples for case studies section were, on the one hand, the prominence of the researcher and the importance of the texts and, on the other hand, the desire to illustrate the different cases of censorship of text and the attitude of the censorship office towards the text, the researcher, and the scientific community as a whole.

##### 4.1. *O komediach Norwida* [On the comedies by Norwid] by Irena Śląwińska<sup>45</sup>

In order to research the censorship of a single text by professor Irena Śląwińska, it was necessary to use sources from a number of different archival collections: the Main Office for the Control, the author's archive, the archive of professor Manfred Kridl – Irena Śląwińska's supervisor and mentor, and the archive the Catholic University of Lublin, the university where she had worked since 1949.

A native of Vilnius, a scholar of Polish literature and drama, an outstanding expert on the work of Cyprian Kamil Norwid, with a distinctly Christian worldview, Śląwińska settled in Toruń after the Second World War, where she took up a post and completed her doctorate at the Nicolaus Copernicus University. During the Stalinist campaign against scholars with non-communist views, she was dismissed from her job and the only university she could be employed at was the Catholic University of Lublin, where she worked until the end of her career. Between 1952 and 1954 she published only small reviews and, after great difficulties in getting it printed, a habilitation thesis – *O komediach Norwida*.

The book on Norwid was completed by the author after several years of intensive work, as documented in her letters to Manfred Kridl. On 6 October 1951, at a meeting of the Commission for the History of Polish Literature of the PAU, she presented a summary of the book and announced that it would form the basis of her application for habilitation.

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<sup>44</sup> Szałagan 1996.

<sup>45</sup> See more broadly on this topic: Budrowska 2023b.

Sławińska's plans were thwarted in February 1952 when a new law on academic degrees came into force, abolishing the habilitation. According to sources documenting the work of the Catholic University of Lublin, the scientific community did not fully believe in the legal changes that were to take place, so the appointed reviewers prepared reviews of Sławińska's habilitation thesis.<sup>46</sup>

After a year, in March 1953, however, the author submitted the book to a Catholic publishing house at the university, which sent it to the provincial censorship office in Lublin for control. It was held there for nine months on four grounds: the author's anti-communist views, the subject matter – Norwid's work, which was disliked by the authorities, the Catholic publishing house, and the time the book was handed over to the censors, March 1953 – the time of Stalin's death.

*O komediach Norwida* was published in the autumn of 1953, thanks to the intervention of professor Andrzej Wojtkowski, a member of parliament and professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, to whom the author turned for help. This is an indication of the dependence of the censorship office on informal action and informal hierarchy. In the end, Irena Sławińska did not receive a formal habilitation, but was awarded the title of professor in 1956 on the basis of her achievements.

#### 4.2. Censorship of Tadeusz Zieliński's works

In order to study the censorship of professor Tadeusz Zieliński's texts, it was necessary to use sources from the archives of the Main Office for the Control, and – in addition – published egodocuments: the author's diary from 1939–1944, the autobiography, covering his early years, found in Russian archives by Hanna Geremek<sup>47</sup> and letters.<sup>48</sup>

Tadeusz Stefan Zieliński (1859–1944) studied at the Universities of Leipzig, Munich and Vienna, received his doctorate at the University of Leipzig in 1880, habilitated at the University of St. Petersburg in 1884 and became associate professor, and, then professor in the Department of Greek Culture at this university. In 1920 he moved to the University of Warsaw, in 1935 he was appointed honorary professor of this university, but he continued lecturing in classical philology, ancient culture

<sup>46</sup> Kaczmarek 2010.

<sup>47</sup> See: Zieliński 2005. Hanna Geremek was unable to complete the edition herself due to her death in 2004.

<sup>48</sup> See: Zieliński 1997.

and religious studies until the outbreak of the Second World War. He was a member of many scientific societies in Poland, Russia, Germany, Great Britain, the Czech Republic and Greece. He was one of the most important and comprehensive scholars of antiquity of his time, author of over 900 works. However, after the Second World War, he was accused of treason in Poland and was banned by censorship altogether [“ban for the name”].

What could the controversy be about in the busy and successful life of a scientist? In a chronological order: 1. in 1928, during the rise of fascism, Tadeusz Zieliński published his academic work *Hellenizm i judaizm* [Hellenism and Judaism] in which he discredited the moral values of Judaism; 2. in June 1934, at the head of the official delegation that received the Third Reich’s Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, on a visit to Warsaw, he gave an introduction in Polish and German before his speech,<sup>49</sup> which was commented on in a decidedly negative manner by, among others, Antoni Słonimski in the *Kronika Tygodniowa*, published in April in “Wiadomości Literackie”.<sup>50</sup> In November 1939, with the consent of the German authorities, Professor Zieliński left occupied Warsaw and went to Germany to take up permanent residence. He stayed in Bavaria, and lived and worked in the last years of his life.

The emerges from the egodocuments is a picture of a cosmopolitan scientist with a philo-Germanic attitude, had excellent knowledge of German language and culture. Prof. Zieliński left for Bavaria in November of 1939, at the invitation of his son, realising that this was a chance to survive and complete on the *opus magnum* that was the six-volume work *Religie świata starożytnego* [Religions of the Ancient World]. During his stay in Germany, he reconstructed the manuscript of vol. V. *Religie Cesarstwa Rzymskiego* [Religions of the Roman Empire], and wrote vol. VI *Chrześcijaństwo antyczne* [Ancient Christianity].<sup>51</sup>

In communist Poland, these motivations and actions were not understood and Professor Zieliński’s work was condemned to oblivion in the 1950s. Due to the lack of sources of Main Office for the Control it is

<sup>49</sup> The visit was official, at the invitation of the state authorities. In addition to professor Zieliński, the delegation included the minister Bronisław Pieracki. During the two-day visit, Goebbels also met with Józef Piłsudski, minister Józef Beck and others.

<sup>50</sup> See: Starnawski 2009.

<sup>51</sup> See: Zieliński 2005, p. 208.

difficult to determine the exact date of the ban, but time of resumption of scientific work can be clearly dated to the end of the “thaw” period. For example, *Starożytność bajeczna* [Fairytale Antiquity] was edited by Jan Parandowski in 1957, *Grecja niepodległa* [Independent Greece] in 1958, and *Rzeczpospolita rzymska* [The Roman Republic] in 1958. Tadeusz Zieliński’s symbolic return to the Polish academic community came with the publication of the autumn 1959 double issue (8/9) of the journal “Meander”, devoted entirely to Zieliński’s work.<sup>52</sup>

It was his students who became involved in his rehabilitation, and it was only through their efforts that he was restored to his rightful place in science. But written in Germany, the last volumes of the study *Religions of the Ancient World* were not published until 1999, through the efforts of prof. Marian Plezia. The unfortunate vol. III, *Hellenizm i judaizm*, has not been reissued to this day.

#### 4.3. Censorship of the “Pamiętnik Literacki” in 1981<sup>53</sup>

The choice of “Pamiętnik Literacki” as an example can be explained by the academic level of the journal and the professional position of the authors and the editorial board. The year 1981, on the other hand, marked a breakthrough in state policy and, consequently, a breakthrough and change in censorship activities. The material basis of this section is the archive of the Main Offices for Control, published issues of “Pamiętnik Literacki” from 1981, and egodocuments: memoirs and statements of the editors and authors of published articles. “Pamiętnik Literacki” was founded in 1902, the four issues from 1980 are labelled “Yearbook 71 (LXXI)”, as the war years are included in the calculations. In the 1980s, “Pamiętnik Literacki” had the status of an opinion-forming journal, with an important publishing institution – the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences – and an excellent editorial board behind it. The editor-in-chief was Professor Bogdan Zakrzewski, who held the post for 38 years,<sup>54</sup> with prof. Henryk Markiewicz and prof. Teresa

52 „Meander” 1959, no. 8/9 (August–September).

53 See more broadly of this topic: Budrowska 2024.

54 G. Borkowska writes: “prof. Zakrzewski był w rozsądny sposób człowiekiem pragmatycznym i pokornym, [...] umiał dogadywać się z cenzurą [Professor Zakrzewski was a sensible, pragmatic and modest man [...] he knew how to deal with the censorship].” See: Borkowska 2016, p. 461.

Kostkiewicz as his deputies.<sup>55</sup> The print run was 1800 copies, a lot for a scientific journal.

For the purposes of the present discussion, two “turning points” in 1981 are most important: the entry into force of the new Censorship Act (1 October 1981), which excluded many types of publication from the censors’ jurisdiction, including:

[...] scientific and didactic publications of universities, institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences, independent scientific and didactic institutions, scientific and research institutes and institutions of a scientific and research nature established in accordance with the regulations in force, ecclesiastical training institutions and registered scientific associations, as well as the printed matter of these institutions used for collecting data for research purposes [...]<sup>56</sup>

and the imposition of martial law (13 December 1981), with Decree 17, which suspended the publication of the vast majority of periodicals in Poland.<sup>57</sup>

Given that these major events took place in the last quarter of the year, I will focus on the censorship of issue 4/1981 of “Pamiętnik Literacki”, whose leading theme is the work of the Nobel laureate Czesław Miłosz, banned for 30 years in People’s Poland.

The state of research on the censorship of Miłosz’s work and person is advanced.<sup>58</sup> The poet was covered from 1951 by a “ban for the name”, which was maintained in subsequent years. According to documents taken out of the country by Tomasz Strzyżewski, the prohibition was relaxed in 1976 at the latest,<sup>59</sup> while academic publication on the work of Czesław Miłosz may have begun to appear from the late 1970s.<sup>60</sup>

The issue 4/1981 of “Pamiętnik Literacki” was submitted for typesetting on 14 August 1981, a few weeks before the new law on censorship came into force, and was therefore subject to censorship (censor’s code

<sup>55</sup> The editorial board also included: prof. prof. Kazimierz Bartoszyński, Michał Główński, Mieczysław Klimowicz, Zdzisława Kopczyńska, Zofia Stefanowska.

<sup>56</sup> See: Bagieńska-Masiota 2014, pp. 191–193.

<sup>57</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 1624, pp. 18–19.

<sup>58</sup> Woźniak-Łabieniec 2012; Gardocki 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Strzyżewski 2015, p. 86.

<sup>60</sup> Borkowska 2014, p. 14.

H-3). However, the censors had already read it in accordance with the new guidelines, which made it possible not just to write about Miłosz, but to write about him in a positive way. The texts included in the issue were taken from an academic conference held at the Jagiellonian University on 9–12 June 1981. However, an analysis of the Main Office for the Control archives shows that “Pamiętnik Literacki” left out some of the papers from the Krakow conference and those that did show characteristic cuts – fragments relating to the novel *Zniewolony umyst* [The Captive Mind] were removed from two articles.<sup>61</sup>

In the end, the magazine’s last issue of 1981 was published in February 1982, during the first months of martial law and the total suspension of all publications. Why such an exception? After December 13, 1981, the staff of the censorship office re-examined the material that had already been censored and approved. They called this procedure “verification,” but in fact it was a much stricter control, in accordance with the new instructions.<sup>62</sup> In practice, verification stopped the publication of those texts that had previously been approved for publication, but had not yet been physically printed. This procedure explains the fact of publication of “Pamiętnik Literacki” 4/1981 during martial law: when the journal could not be printed before 13 December 1981, it was placed in the group of texts to be re-read, i.e. “verified”. It is very likely that during this re-checking the articles on *Zniewolony umyst* were manipulated.

The key to understanding the nuances of the censorship of the magazine in 1981 seems to be the low frequency of its issues: the long editorial process (frequent delays) and the long censorship process, which indicates the level of complexity of the work and the importance attached to it. It happened that the censorship office was unable to apply the correct rules in time, because they were changing faster than the censors were reading successive issues of the quarterly! Such a bizarre situation arose at least twice. During the brief period when the new censorship law was in force, the Main Office for the Control “failed” to apply it to the magazine and did not exempt it from control. In turn, immediately after the imposition of martial law, when all publications were to be suspended, the publication process of “Pamiętnik Literacki” once again failed to respond to the sudden political event and the last issue of 1981 went ahead regardless.

<sup>61</sup> AAN, GUKPPiW, 3810, pp. 81–82.

<sup>62</sup> AAN, GUKKPiW, 3810, p. 3.

## 5. Findings

The most important problem discussed in the first part of the article is how the academic text was examined at the censorship office. The second part, the section with case studies, also discusses the creation process and – where possible – the influence of academic institutions on the final shape of the text. On the other hand, I would like to confirm or challenge the opinion prevalent among researcher, which is that many academic publications were censored less by formal control bodies than by academic institutions. Some of these questions have been answered, but others are still in need of further research.

### 5.1. Findings on official censorship's interference in academic publishing:

- a) The most common form of interference was the refusal to print the whole text; transformations were less common. There is even a certain reticence on the part of the censors, perhaps due to a sense of incompetence. As a result, few alterations were made, and these consisted of cutting out sensitive passages without replacing them with a different narrative.
- b) Intra-textual interference: censors rarely made personal changes to academic texts: texts were sent back to the publisher or journal editors for improvement; editors could send them back to the author. The effect was to revise the text several times over several years.
- c) Intra-textual interference: pressure from the censorship office on the choice of literature cited (an order to cite the achievements of Russian and Soviet science, and a ban on mentioning the achievements of Western researchers). The result was the backwardness of Polish science.
- d) External interference with the text: delaying or prohibiting publication of the text. The effect was rendering the text obsolete.
- e) External interference with the text: to reducing circulation, sending to niche publishers, blocking reception (lack of press reviews). The effect was to rendering access to the work in question.

### 5.2. Findings related to the author of the academic publication:

- a) The importance of formal and informal scientific hierarchies for the fate of a scientific text was fundamental; researchers representing communist views had a better chance of being printed.

- b) The most “resistant” researchers were subject to a temporary or permanent prohibition [“zapis na nazwisko”] on publication, regardless of the subject and type of text: the prohibition was linked to their views and activities as a person.
- c) The academics were familiar with the system and knew how to navigate it: they chose topics that had a chance of being published. The author of any academic text published in the official circuit, and therefore accepted by the censors, had to apply some form of self-censorship and sometimes some intra-textual strategies.

### 5.3. Findings: similarities and differences between censoring literary and academic texts

The most important similarity is the mechanism of censoring both types of texts at the censorship office, which is subject to the same legal regulations. The censorship of literary and academic texts developed in the same way, following the same legal and political changes (tightening and loosening of censorship). It was also linked to the attitude of the author of the text, the subject matter and the intended audience. The intra-textual and extra-textual interference in which both types of texts were censored by the censorship office were also similar.

The significant difference, however, is the smaller number of controlling bodies for a literary text. A scientific text was additionally subject to factual control by members of scientific institutions before it went to the censorship office. In a non-democratic system, this too could take on the character of political censorship. Secondly, the author of a literary text may have been less attached to a text, making it easier for him/her to agree to changes or withdraw their text. This is because he or she could more easily replace it with another (a quicker creative process, for example, with a short poem) or change passages without damaging the logic of the argument. In the case of a scholarly text, it was more difficult for the author to agree to the changes requested by the censors because of the length of time it had taken to produce it. There was also a risk that the changes made would disqualify the text in the opinion of other professional readers.

To sum up, the similarities can be found in the attitude of the censorship office towards both types of texts, the differences – in the reactions of the controlled entities.

## 6. Conclusions

The humanities and social sciences were most affected by censorship, and my research confirms the findings of other studies. However, at this stage of my research it is not possible to judge who had more influence on the control of scholarly texts in Poland: the environment or the censorship office. It is nonetheless possible to confirm the decisive influence of the censorship office on the form of published texts and the influence of scientific bodies on the choice of research topics. In order to clarify the issue, it would be necessary to conduct more systematic research in the archives of scientific institutions.

## 7. Research perspectives

Describing the system of censorship of scientific publications in Poland during the communist period is a complex task due to the wide chronological span, the large number of texts, the specificity of many scientific disciplines represented by the censored texts, and the number of scientific institutions and authors of the controlled works. It is also a challenge to take into account the large number of sources and the peculiarities of the functioning of the academic system. Similarly, it is also difficult to make a clear distinction between what can be considered as institutional control and what can only be considered as a process of scientific verification of a text. All these difficulties do not hide the fact that such research can significantly broaden the state of knowledge about the functioning of science in Poland: the fate of institutions, researchers and individual, often scientifically groundbreaking publications. The subject can be treated as a scientific challenge for researchers from various disciplines, especially historians, historians of science and sociologists.

General requests for further research are: to examine the entire collection of the Main Office for the Control; to compare the knowledge gained from materials from various archives, including those of the communist Party, ministries, scientific institutions and the author's own materials; interviewing academics about their experiences of communist censorship to explore the ways in which the academic community responded to state repression.<sup>63</sup> A separate demand is to continue comparative (transnational)

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with members of the PAU, in which threads related to the conduct of research during the communist period also appear, were conducted by the Andrzej M. Kobos. See: Kobos 2007–2017 (vol. 1–6); e.g. vol. 1 – interview with

research on censorship of science in Poland and other Eastern bloc countries. For example, one could examine how the same historical subjects of importance to the entire bloc were censored (such as the Second World War and 20th-century history).

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