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Bulletins of the Polish censorship office from 1945 to 1956. A reconnaissance study¹

The aim of the article is to discuss selected research perspectives offered by the bulletins of the censorship office created in Poland from 1945 to 1956. Due to the chiefly confidential nature of the analysed documents I defined them as classified papers, ordered by the state and directed mainly to censors. These documents were internally circulated in the Main and Voivodship Offices of Control of Press, Publications and Shows². Bulletins are a type of cryptotexts (i.e. classified texts of intentionally limited distribution) with an information, tutorial or training nature, constituting a type of a guide for censorship practices³.

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2 In post-war Poland existed the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk, referred to as GUKPPIW) and several Voivodship Offices of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk, referred to as WUKPPIW).

3 I discussed cryptotexts in articles: *The censorship review in the Polish People's Republic as cryptotext*, "The Polish Review" 2019, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 31–49; *Recenzja cenzorska Polski Ludowej*, "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich" 2016, issue 59(117), vol. 1, pp. 97–103; *Segment streszczający*

Bulletins of the censorship office. State of research and new findings

Internal censorship documents are referenced by researchers of various fields⁴. Studies regarding the initial years of the operations of the prevention and repression apparatus after WWII referred to mainly materials from 1945⁵, and from 1952 to 1955⁶, also mentioning publications which were published on a regular basis since 1949⁷. In 2018 selected documents from the 1952 bulletins were published. However, there has been no holistic study of the classified serial publications con-

recenzji cenzorskiej (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950), "Socjolingwistyka" 2016, issue 1(30), pp. 277–288.

- 4 The following works have proved the most interesting in the context of this discussion: "Biuletyn Informacyjno-Instrukcyjny". Wybór dokumentów z 1955 r., K. Budrowska, M. Budnik, W. Gardocki (eds.), Wyd. UwB, Białystok 2018, series: Cenzura w PRL. Archiwalia, t. 3; K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Wyd. UwB, Białystok 2009; eadem, *Wewnętrzne pismo cenzury. "Biuletyn Informacyjno-Instrukcyjny" w latach 1952–1955*, in: eadem, *Studia i szkice o cenzurze w Polsce Ludowej w latach 40. i 50. XX wieku*, Wyd. UwB, Białystok 2014, pp. 95–106; eadem, *O niestosownych zastosowaniach literatury w cenzorskich materiałach instruktażowych*, "Litteraria Copernicana" 2013, issue 2, pp. 8–17; A. Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, "Czytelnik" ocenowany. *Literatura w kryptotekstach – recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950)*, Wyd. IPN, Warsaw 2018; B. Gogol, "Fabryka fałszywych tekstów". Z działalności Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Gdańsku w latach 1945–1958, Neriton, Warsaw 2012; D. Nałęcz, *Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy 1945–1949*, ISP PAN, Warsaw 1994, series: Dokumenty do Dziejów PRL, issue 6; P. Nowak, *Cenzura wobec rynku książki. Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Poznaniu w latach 1946–1955*, Wyd. UAM, Poznań 2012; idem, *Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w okresie nacjonalizacji rynku książki w Poznaniu (1946–1955)*, "Biblioteka" 2011, issue 15(24), pp. 163–193; Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce. 1944–1970*, Neriton, Warsaw 2010. A paper entitled *Instrukcje cenzury instytucjonalnej. Casus "Biuletynu Informacyjno-Instrukcyjnego"* was presented by K. Kamińska-Chełminiak during the conference *Poradnictwo w PRL* organised by the Faculty of History, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, held from 30 Nov 2016 to 2 Dec 2016.
- 5 Vide, e.g.: D. Nałęcz, *op. cit.*, p. 10. The author discussed two issues of the "Instruction Bulletin" of 1945 stored "in the files of the Voivodship Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows at the Voivodship State Archive in Poznań" (*ibidem*). Unfortunately, she did not provide their reference numbers nor any overview of the contents of either issue, which would enable a clear identification of the material. During a survey of the State Archive in Poznań I also found only two issues of the "Instruction Bulletin" of 1945, which makes it highly probable that those were the same issues as the ones indicated by Nałęcz.
- 6 K. Budrowska indicated "four hefty folders of 1952–1955" stored at the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows unit under the reference number 420 (eadem, *Wewnętrzne pismo cenzury...*, p. 95). They are called "Information and Instruction Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Informacyjno-Instrukcyjne").
- 7 Z. Romek, *op. cit.*

stituting instructions and commentary to censors' practices⁸. One reason for that might be the fact that we still possess only a portion of the material intended for censors:

neither other issues of the "Information and Instruction Bulletin" nor issues from before 1952 have been found; it is unclear whether it was no longer being developed or it did not survive in the collections⁹.

During my surveys of the State Archive in Gdańsk and of the State Archive in Poznań I found bulletins from before 1952¹⁰, and folders with bulletins from 1956¹¹, which indicates that they were also published before 1952 and after 1955¹². The collections of the State Archive in Gdańsk also include issues from the "Library of the Information and Instruction Bulletins" ("Biblioteczki Biuletynów Informacyjno-Instrukcyjnych") of 1955¹³, which supplemented the main title.

8 Except of the study *"Biuletyn Informacyjno-Instrukcyjny". Wybór dokumentów z 1955 r...*, there are also no studies of a smaller chronological scope, limited to a selected period, or problem-specific studies (in regard to the bulletins of 1952–1955 the issue was also raised by K. Budrowska, *Studia i szkice o cenzurze...*, p. 95).

9 K. Budrowska, *Studia i szkice o cenzurze...*, p. 96.

10 Mind that the State Archive in Gdańsk (Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku) is referred to as APG, the State Archive in Poznań (Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu) is referred to as APP. In the State Archive in Gdańsk, I found the following material from 1945: "Instruction Bulletin" (in inventory no. 37; APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 210, pp. 19; cf. note 5), of 1949. "Information and Training Bulletin" no. 1 (in inventory no. 38; APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 196, pp. 47), of 1950. "Training Bulletin" no. 1 (in inventory no. 189; APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 328, pp. 82). The archives also include annexes to the bulletins from the following period (yet from before 1956), vide, e.g. annex to bulletin no. 1 of 1952. In the State Archive in Poznań under ref. no. 4, there is a collection of 291 sheets of *Instruction and Training Bulletins 1945–1951 (Biuletyny Instrukcyjno-Szkoleniowe 1945–1951)*.

11 The State Archive in Gdańsk holds the following cryptotexts from 1956: "Information and Instruction Bulletins" no. 1 (in inventory no. 170; APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 4, pp. 53), "Information and Instruction Bulletins" no. 2 (in inventory no. 172, APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 6, pp. 54).

12 Bulletins from the following periods were discussed by Barbara Tyszkiewicz, *Sztuka czytania między wierszami. Z problematyki cenzorskich instruktaży drugiej połowy lat 70.*, in: *"Sztuka czytania między wierszami". Cenzura w komunikacji literackiej w Polsce w latach 1965–1989*, K. Budrowska, M. Kotowska-Kachel (eds.), IBL PAN, Warsaw 2016, series: *Badania Filologiczne nad Cenzurą PRL*, vol. 6, pp. 127–158.

13 The archive collections include five issues of the "Library..." from 1955: issues 18, 19, 20, 21, and 24. Additionally, two undated copies with numbers 22 and 24. It seems those might be the missing issues 22 and 23 from 1955. A detailed analysis of the contents of both issues and the opening of the collections of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows at the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych, referred to as AAN) should

The aim of the article is not to offer a holistic discussion of the referenced bulletins, however, because I am using obscure documents, I must provide a few remarks to better organise the material¹⁴. The collections of the State Archive in Gdańsk and in Poznań include: "Instruction Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Instrukcyjne"), "Training Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Szkoleniowe"), "Information and Instruction Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Informacyjno-Instrukcyjne"), "Information and Training Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Informacyjno-Szkoleniowe") and "Instruction and Training Bulletins" ("Biuletyny Instrukcyjno-Szkoleniowe"). Despite minor changes in the titling I consider the documents as the same type of classified publications of the Office, "internal periodicals – «Bulletins»"¹⁵. I shall discuss the conditions of the identity of the bulletins in the following part of the article.

There are no formal or content-based indications which would justify the changes in the titling – fixed sections raise similar issues, and the objectives fulfilled by the publications are also comparable. It seems that the modifications were usually cosmetic, or sometimes pragmatic, reflecting the consecutive stages of the reorganisations of the Office¹⁶, or existed as indicators of a "refresh" of the idea for the periodical, yet had no significant impact on the shape¹⁷. Therefore, that which enables one to consider the indicated bulletins as issues of the same periodic publication, as a continuum of one title, are their contents¹⁸. That is proven by the data used for identifying the publication included in the title page, i.e. the so-called titling; in all of the analysed cases, there exists the core of the title (i.e. bulletin), the

help complete the date references; for now, one can only speculate. This article was submitted for a review before opening the collections of GUKPPIW in AAN.

¹⁴ Most of the ideas presented in this article I elaborate in my PhD thesis *Powojenna literatura polska i inne teksty kultury w świetle biuletynów Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk z lat 1945–1956*.

¹⁵ B. Gogol, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

¹⁶ As I said earlier, "Instruction Bulletin" was published in 1945, "Information and Training Bulletin" in 1949, and "Training Bulletin" in 1950. The changes in the title sheet were only roughly related to the changes of the Office's name: Centralne Biuro Kontroli Prasy (the Central Office of Control of Press, referred to as CBKP) existed until 5 July 1946, when the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows was established.

¹⁷ In that context, some exceptions were the special issues of the bulletin, e.g. the June 1945 issue completely devoted to the third day of the Conference of the Managers and Delegates of the Voivodship Offices of Control (I discuss it in more detail further in the article).

¹⁸ The content "in bibliographical terms is the set of all the meaning-forming components of a work, including its shape, organisation and form. In editorial and bibliographical terms, the content of a book consists of: introduction, main body, critical apparatus, commentary, indices, bibliographies, illustrations, tables, lists, maps, etc. Those elements are sometimes listed in the table of items, also known as the table of contents" (*Encyklopedia wiedzy o książce*, A. Birkenmajer, B. Kocowski, J. Trzynadłowski (eds.), Ossolineum, Wrocław 1971, p. 2584).

scope of which is limited considerably by its attributes: “instrukcyjny” (“instruction”), “szkoleniowy” (“training”), “informacyjno-instrukcyjny” (“information and instruction”), or “informacyjno-szkoleniowy” (“information and training”). The segmentation of the main body (recurring sections and columns), and the issues raised, as well as the information on the publisher and the mode of circulation (every bulletin includes an inscription “confidential” (“poufne”) or “classified” (“tajne”) are near identical in most of the referenced issues. An exception existed in the form of special issues, e.g. devoted to a single event (conference), or anniversary issues (e.g. the issue of 1956 published to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the operations of the Office). The issue of the numbering of consecutive volumes requires vigilance and additional research: consecutive numbering was maintained throughout several years, from 1952 to 1956, in other cases only for individual years¹⁹. All those components are particularly significant when discussing the conditions of the identity of the bulletin as a periodic publication, yet they seemed to fulfil a secondary role in relation to the mode of distribution (classified material) and the aim of the publication, which I am going to discuss now²⁰.

“There is no book of censorship wisdom”²¹ – on the creation of training material

Despite the decision to issue the “Instruction Bulletin” was made “pursuant to arrangements between the party apparatus and the chief censorship institutions”²², it seems that it was partly a response to a grassroots initiative by censors who complained there was no instruction manual. The fact that the work of censors required theoretical foundations was indicated in statements made during the First National Conference of the Managers and Delegates of the Voivodship Offices of Control of Press, Publications and Shows, which was held on 23–25 May 1945 in Warsaw. Daria Nałęcz referenced the stenographic record from the meeting of the delegates of voivodship and city offices of control of press of 23, 24 and 25 May 1945, yet only the records of the first two days have survived – the “lack of a report

¹⁹ Such an organisation is not unrelated to the full title of the periodical. Usually, continuous numbering over a period of several years is used for a single title. At this stage of the study it is difficult to state whether it was always like that because apart from the selected years, there are only separate issues available, e.g. from 1945, 1949, and 1950.

²⁰ Not all internal censorship documents were of the Bulletin nature; suffice to mention “Instruction Letters” (“Listy Instrukcyjne”) which differed from the discussed documents in terms of their content, layout, and title. All cryptotexts share certain qualities (the mode of distribution), yet the indicated set was specific only for the bulletins.

²¹ “Instruction Bulletin”, June 1945, p. 2 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 210).

²² D. Nałęcz, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

of the remainder of the meeting”²³ is compensated by the “Instruction Bulletin” of 1945 entirely devoted to the third day of the conference, during which an instruction seminar was held, individual centres were evaluated, and the conference was summed up²⁴. The difficulties which the lawmakers of the new freedom-of-speech-related order faced were discussed in the opening fragment of the actual report: “We work”, said Ferdynand Chaber, who was back then a deputy director of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers’ Party, “in an area without any reliable traditions, no literature. The democratic nature of control requires that work to be based on new foundations which differ completely from that what once was”²⁵.

Unfortunately, the author of the words did not clarify from which previously implemented foundations censors should distance themselves. The whole is more of a project nature, rather normative than descriptive, penal even. That is indicated by a series of specific guidelines intended to improve the quality of the work of censors, e.g. the one on the requirement for operatives at field offices to regularly read new regulations regarding their work. Chaber seemed to be saying that the situation would had been different if Office operatives were able to use the “book of censorship wisdom”²⁶. It is possible that due to the lack of such a compendium, Chaber, in discussing the main problems raised at the three-day conference, “raised for discussion series of valid and not valid censor interventions in the above-mentioned matters, and in summary averaged certain rough standards, guidelines for censor’s work”²⁷.

It seems that it was one of the first attempts at creating “user-friendly” instructions understandable for censors that exceeded the rigid framework of regulations, not always easily applicable for operatives. Five years after the basic guidelines necessary for reliable censorship work had been indicated (the bulletin was dated 25 May 1945), the first issue of the “Training Bulletin” was published (the title page date was: March 1950), and the opening *Introduction* seemed a reiteration of the theses of Ferdynand Chaber:

We hereby release issue 1 of the “Training Bulletin”. The aim of the bulletin, being based on examples from our censorship practice grouped by problem areas – start-

²³ Ibidem, p. 78. The stenographic records break off with a sentence: “(briefing will be continued tomorrow at 9 a.m.)”.

²⁴ The discussed issue of the “Instruction Bulletin” included the changes suggested in the daily session as the report of the Main Office was moved to the final part, while the second day began with a Report of the Voivodship Offices.

²⁵ “Instruction Bulletin”, June 1945, p. 1 (APG, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 210).

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 2.

²⁷ Ibidem.

ing with omissions and interventions, and unnoticed (if an intervention was not necessary but the matter should had been reported to the GUKP) ideological distortions – will be to deepen the problems which we face in the press, publications, and performances²⁸.

The content of the bulletin confirmed the assumptions of its designers. The material was organised per themes, and the title “training” was of an “education from mistakes” nature, where not regulations but censorship practice was used as the basis. The examples of specific interventions (or lack thereof) did not take the form of simple listings. Each example was the basis for a more or less extensive discussion. Its intention: “the task of the bulletin [...] will be to deepen the problems which we face in the press, publications, and performances”²⁹, though awkward linguistically, seemed to be fulfilled, as it was the case with the “Information and Instruction Bulletins” which were issued since January 1952. The opening article of the January issue, entitled *Raise the quality of our work* (*Podwyższyć poziom naszej pracy*), stated the reason why the censorship’s internal periodical was established:

The decision to regularly issue the “Information and Instruction Bulletin” resulted from the need to offer collective help to GUKP operatives in Warsaw and in the field in their difficult and responsible work³⁰.

The three quoted passages seem to support the thesis that, regardless of the title page changes, the material which has been located in archives could be treated as examples of the same periodic publication, indicated by, e.g. similarly defined objectives. The bulletins, being examples of cryptotexts, were supposed to, according to their creators, differ from bare regulations and guidelines created by the state apparatus and sent to field offices. Classified censorship bulletins became a type of a guide, a medium for exchanging professional experiences, giving a practical “help in censors’ work”³¹, yet fulfilling the classic structure of a guide understood as a text by a sender instructing a reader.

28 “Training Bulletin” no. 1, March 1950, p. 1 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 328). GUKP is referred to as Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy (tha Main Office of Control of Press).

29 Ibidem.

30 “The Information and Instruction Bulletin” no. 1, January 1952, p. 1 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 100). See also Illustration 1.

31 “Information and Instruction Bulletin” no. 10, October 1952, p. 1 (APG, WUKPPIW, sygn. 75).

1.

PODWYŻSZYC POZIOM NASZEJ PRACY

Decyzja o systematycznym wydawaniu Biuletynu Informacyjno-instrukcyjnego wywołana była koniecznością okazywania pomocy kolektywnej pracownikom G.U.K.P. w Warszawie i w terenie w ich trudnej i odpowiedzialnej pracy.

Pomoc ta możliwie najpełniejsza winna być realizowana drogą omawiania w Biuletynie najaktualniejszych zagadnień z różnych dziedzin naszej pracy, drogą przeniesienia i wymiany doświadczeń w celu przyswajania sobie i zastosowania w praktyce bardziej doskonałych metod i sposobów organizacji pracy, która dotychczas była mało planowana i niestosownie skoordynowana.

Zadaniem Biuletynu jest ułatwić wciągnięcie każdego pracownika politycznego w krąg zagadnień wszystkich dziedzin pracy, tak poszczególnych terenów jak i G.U.K.P. w całości. To niewątpliwie każdemu z nas pomoże widzieć więcej i ułatwi powiązanie każdego odcinka pracy z ogólnym jej charakterem walki na froncie ideologicznym i z całością zadań wobec których stoimy.

Równocześnie Biuletyn winien pomóc w ożywieniu życia politycznego każdego kolektywu pracowniczego, każdego pracownika, szczególnie w terenie, w podwyższaniu i wzmacnianiu jego aktywności społecznej i bojowej postawy ideologicznej stawiących nieodzowny warunek dla bezbłędnej i precyzyjnej pracy każdego z nas.

Jest to tym ważniejsze obecnie, kiedy kraj nasz, Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa z bohaterską polską klasą robotniczą i jej awangardą - P.Z.P.R. - na czele wszystkich pracujących i całego narodu - w wyniku trwających ostrych bojów klasowych - zwycięsko wkrocza w trzeci rok planu 6-letniego budowy podstaw socjalizmu.

W Orędziu noworocznym do narodu Prezydent R.P. tow. Bierut stwierdził m.in., że:

"Wykonaliśmy pomyślnie i z nadwyżką zadania pierwszych dwóch lat naszego wielkiego i historycznego planu 6-letniego - planu uprzemysłowienia Polski. Wstępujemy w rok trzeci, który będzie rokiem przełomowym dla zwycięskiego wypełnienia całego planu. Z jeszcze większą ofiarnością oddajemy Ojczyźnie swą pracę, pomnażając jej siły!"

Illustration 1. *Raise the quality of our work (Podwyższyć poziom naszej pracy)*, "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1952, p. 1 (APG, WUKPiW, ref. no. 100)

“Our censors should not be conceited mentors”³². Profile of the perfect operative within the contextual relations perspective

Paraphrasing the famous words of Jean-Paul Sartre, one could state that “all works of the censorship office contain within themselves the image of the reader for whom they are intended”³³. Of course, in the case of the creation which the Office’s bulletin was, censors were mainly the intended recipients³⁴. Then, the basic objective of the discussed publication genre was to update the attributes of the control powers included in the text so that they influenced the reader from their very first contact as the sender intended it. That, in turn, was to lead to the creation of a perfect recipient of the message, i.e. the implied reader³⁵, the implied censor in this case. Some guidelines were formulated explicitly, while other may be reconstructed based on passages not raising the issue directly.

The bulletins prove helpful in reconstructing the image of the censor and the work of the Office itself, the latter being indicated by the texts raising the problem of rationing free speech³⁶. To recreate the profile of a model operative from Mysia Street (where the headquarters of the censorship office was located) a researcher must conduct a thorough analysis of the material since the guidelines formulated in the discussed cryptotexts should be (re)interpreted in view of the socio-political conditions of the function and the style of expression. The establishing of the disciplines discussing the propaganda and ideological aspect of the language prove helpful – on a context basis they are raised by poetics, the theory of communication, and the philosophy of language.

The readers of the bulletins could read expressions of self-criticism, as the following one which was a bitter thought after the Warsaw conference, which

also revealed a series of serious shortcomings in the system of our work. The detrimental “intrusiveness” and non-tolerance of the censors – our two major plagues – were subjected to fierce criticism by both managers and delegates. [...] When the results of the Conference become guidelines for everyday work, when the culture of our branches rises to the proper level, then we will fulfil our noble task³⁷.

³² “Instruction Bulletin”, June 1945, p. 5 (APG, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 210).

³³ J.-P. Sartre, *Czym jest literatura*, trans. J. Lalewicz, PIW, Warsaw 1968, p. 121.

³⁴ I understand the recipient as a presented reader, i.e. such a type of an internal reader (of a specific work of literature, that is) who “is present directly, featured in the text through sentences which define them, and expressions directed at them” (H. Markiewicz, *Wymiary dzieła literackiego*, Universitas, Cracow 1996, p. 256).

³⁵ An implied reader is another type of the internal reader. The notion has a few meanings; at this point I understand it as the “correlation of specification compliant with the author’s intentions” (H. Markiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 257).

³⁶ Vide, e.g.: K. Budrowska, *Kilka słów o PRL-owskim cenzorze. Próba portretu*, in: eadem, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL...*, pp. 111–119.

³⁷ “Instruction Bulletin”, June 1945, p. 1 (APG, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 210).

The analysis of the classified publications of censorship from 1945 to 1956 proved that, at least in the initial years after WWII, the Office was not always able to cope with certain problems. The incessantly recurring issues included the improvement of the censors' work; the indicated problems included low efficiency of their activities (number of detrimental omissions), and, on the other extreme, the problem of censor over-zealousness in the form of censors' excessive intrusiveness and intolerance³⁸. In particular the latter issue, contrary to intuition in the context of an institution rationing the freedom of speech, remained the Achilles heel of censors' practices, which was indicated in fragments of the bulletins and other statements:

The "nosiness" of rookie colleagues seems to stem from the erroneous conviction that the qualifications of a censor are measured by the number of interventions they make. On the contrary. Practice has actually shown that "nosiness" usually goes hand in hand with insufficient vigilance. If there are a lot of unfounded interventions, there are also omissions of major errors in the press³⁹.

It must be stressed that

consultations with the Main Office in order to settle the doubts were only natural; thus, censors protected themselves against criticism and official consequences pending both for a lack of interventions and redundant interventions⁴⁰.

Based on several dozen issues of the bulletin it appears that an operative responsible for evaluating the texts submitted to the Office of Control was supposed to display efficiency, self-restraint (being the opposite of over-zealousness and pickiness), tolerance (being the opposite of intolerance), and openness to criticism (bulletin authors pointed out instances of "gagging the criticism of the shortcomings of our young statehood"⁴¹). While "being efficient" and "being restrained" seem understandable per intuition, "being tolerant" and "being open to criticism" require explication being terms within the realm of guidelines defined by any (regime) office rationing freedom of speech.

That evokes a quite obvious question: whether those fragments were simply false, included in the bulletins for propaganda purposes (as a kind of psychological smoke screen), or they represented a special mode of understanding those

³⁸ See among others: *Ibidem*, p. 4–5.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ M. Woźniak-Łabieniec, *Wokół recepcji Traktatu polemicznego Witolda Wirpszy. Głosy o Miłoszu w roku 1951 w świetle dokumentów cenzury*, "Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica", 2011, issue 2(14), p. 153.

⁴¹ "Instruction Bulletin", June 1945, p. 5 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 210).

problematic terms. To settle it, I believe one should refer to the theory of contextual independence (studied by the philosophy of language, and by linguistics) because the difference in meaning which could be assumed in those fragments does not seem a simple semantic difference. The theory of contextual dependence identifies two major cases of the dependence of expressions on the context: narrow dependence based on additional parameters, which once supplemented offer the lexical meaning (a good example of that are index expressions, such as pronouns), and broad dependence based on the difficult to determine number of interpretational assumptions, and implicature. It seems that in the discussed case the latter applies, as the meanings of “tolerance” and “being open” could had been modified by obvious (for contemporary recipients) additional assumptions, such as that openness means in practice openness to the only legitimate ideology.

Thus, one can assume that the meaning of the modifiers of the perfect censor is overlaid with a context understood as a “discourse which surrounds a linguistic unit, and enables one to define its interpretation” or as “circumstances or a set of facts which surround a situation or event”⁴². Therefore, when recreating the network of notions presented in relation to the perfect censor, it is necessary to consider the parameters indicated in the definition.

One interpretation is the deformation of the meaning by shifting semantic fields defined as the sum of meanings of a given linguistic sign, covering its denotation and connotation. The attributes of “being tolerant” and “being open to criticism” defining censors would mean “possessing quality X, the meaning of which was modified when compared to classic speech”⁴³. The modifications (or emulations, when more extensive interventions within semantic properties occurred) were, of course, exacted by the legislators of the newspeak, a reference to which at this point, due to the nature of the Office producing periodicals, seems justified. Based on the bulletins from 1945–1956 one can propose a hypothesis that the discussed cryptotexts featured three basic variants of newspeak: persuasive-propaganda, bureaucratic, and kitsch-ludic⁴⁴. The construction of the profile of the perfect censor was mainly done using the first one. The architects of the language of the bulletins intentionally abused the semantics in classic speech thus deforming almost all its layers (as it was written language, accent deformations must be excluded)⁴⁵, and appropriated notions used by the other party to the discourse. That

42 T. Ciecierski, *Zależność kontekstowa. Wprowadzenie do problematyki*, Ośrodek Badań Filozoficznych, Warsaw 2011, p. 13. The above-mentioned meanings seem apt in the context of this discussion, though one should also mention another definition which treats context as “a text in which a specific word or expression was used (especially quoted somewhere else)” (W. Kopaliński, *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warsaw 1991, p. 277).

43 I understand “classic speech” as general speech (vide M. Głowiński, *Nowomowa i cięgi dalsze. Szkice dalsze i nowe*, Universitas, Cracow 2009, pp. 11, 17, etc.)

44 Ibidem, p. 60.

45 Ibidem, p. 15.

resulted in a situation where not only notions such as: “being tolerant” and “being open to criticism”, but also such slogans as: “freedom”, “detrimental tendency of girdling the press”⁴⁶, “gagging criticism”, “censors should be independent of the producers of words”⁴⁷ present in the bulletins were knocked off their semantic perch becoming the attributes of the control power included in the messages of the cryptotexts.

It seems that the concept of newspeak proposed by Michał Głowiński may be treated as a variant of contextual dependence. That which should be considered the most is the fact that the newspeak used in the internal periodicals of the censorship office was devoid of the propaganda aspect, so distinctive for texts within general distribution. A similar situation applied to censor reviews, which utilised the devices of the propaganda style despite representing cryptotexts, i.e. classified texts with intentionally limited distribution.

The above-mentioned interpretation methods do not, obviously, nullify the first of the hypotheses explaining the use of such expressions as “tolerance” and “being open”, according to which the selected passages, in this case guidelines regarding censor qualities, must be simply treated as false. With such an interpretation one should assume that the legislators of the system used false statements, i.e. such which “were either impossible, or which did not comply with what they proposed”⁴⁸ – in the case of the analysed texts, the latter applies. We can also say that all of the declarations of freedom of speech, independence of the censors and the democratic nature of the Censorship Office “were only superficial and that they reflected the model of the communist propaganda of the time”⁴⁹.

The discussed cryptotexts of informative, instruction, and training natures prove to be non-homogeneous both in linguistic terms and in terms of their contents, which was also indicated by censors’ articles, which I shall discuss now.

Bulletins as the common interest of the operatives of the Office Censor as a co-author of the bulletins

The bulletins of the censorship office mainly included texts of the instructive nature, that gave guidance to the censors. The dominant form was the monologue, the authors of which seemed to possess omniscience (at least regarding the operations of the Office). The bulletins contained lots of articles from the editorial office but also many from the voivodship’s offices⁵⁰. Some of them were reports or letters from

⁴⁶ “Instruction Bulletin”, June 1945, p. 4 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 210).

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 16.

⁴⁸ T. Ciecierski, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Z. Romek, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁵⁰ See among others: “Information and Instruction Bulletin”, no. 2, February 1953, pp. 38–42 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 18); “Information and Instruction Bulletin” no. 1, January 1954,

the censor units or from the particular censors. Thanks to them the somewhat authoritarian general tone was mitigated by columns where common operatives of the prevention and repression apparatus were given voice. Because of that the bulletins became the place for exchanging professional experiences, or even a type of a censorship confessional where one could hear self-criticism and satisfaction of penance.

In the available material, there are statements by operatives from various field offices, i.e. from Łódź, Cracow, Olsztyn, Katowice, Poznań⁵¹. Operatives responsible for evaluating culture texts wrote in the form of letters, which sometimes assumed the shape of a column.

The "Information and Instruction Bulletin" from January 1956 included a letter personal in tone by Stanisław Paż, a censor from the censorship office in Olsztyn. The text, located in the Letters Section under the title *Let's face the truth, comrades... (Spójrzmy sobie w oczy towarzysze...)*, began with a fragment revealing the working conditions of operatives:

Sitting at night, all alone with the People's Republic and awaiting the columns, I began developing the summary of annual censor work. I perfectly remember the period when I was taking my first steps, or rather I already started learning the censor "craft" under the supervision of comrade Rotnicka, Majzner, Wachowiak, and others⁵².

What is noticeable is the lofty style of the statement, possibly inadequate either to the raised issue, or the form of a letter sent to, however one would not consider it, a company bulletin; though what is more significant in the context of the discussed issue is the fragment revealing the hierarchic structure of the Office, where an experienced operative is responsible for raising young censors. We can find more of these kinds of statements in the bulletins, see the article called *A few remarks of "a young censor" (Kilka uwag "młodego cenzora")*⁵³.

pp. 7–14 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 39; a letter from a voivodship office in Stalinogród – it was the name of the city Katowice, the name existed from 7.03.1953 to 21.10.1956); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1954, pp. 23–25 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 39); "Information and Instruction Bulletin", no. 2, February 1953, pp. 38–42 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 18).

⁵¹ See among others: "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 9, September 1952, pp. 48–49 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 78); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1953, pp. 69–72 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 19); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1954, pp. 39–44 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 39); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 3, March 1953, pp. 60–75 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 17); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1956, pp. 51–59 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 4).

⁵² "Information and Instruction Bulletin", no. 1, January 1956, p. 51 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 4). See also Illustration 2.

⁵³ "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 7, July 1952, p. 39–42 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 84).

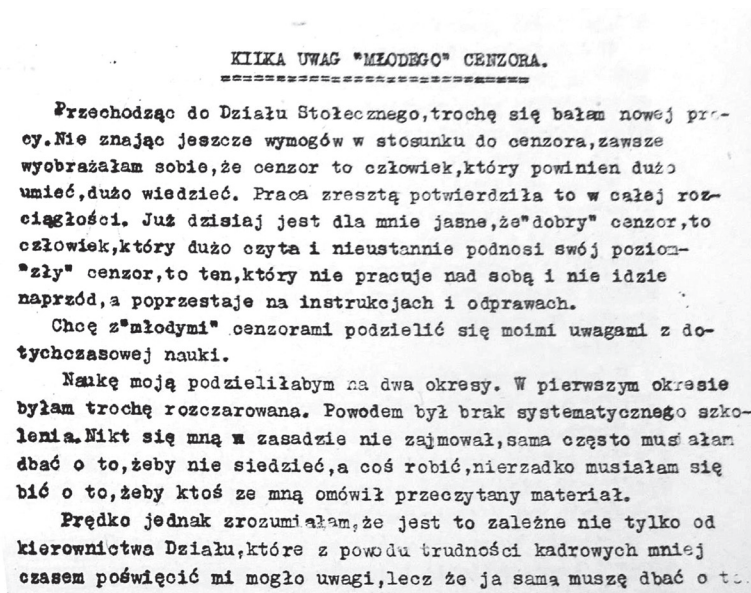


Illustration 2. A few remarks of "a young censor" (*Kilka uwag "młodego cenzora"*), "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 7, July 1952, p. 39 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 84)

The remainder of the cited letter from Olsztyn also described the nature of the work of a censor who, capitalising on his own experiences, strived to indicate the qualities necessary to properly fulfil the activities he had been tasked with. It referred to a censor's nose and know-it-all-ness⁵⁴, which a good operative of the censorship office should possess, though "in the province" they seemed completely redundant. The Olsztyn-based operative was not coy about his embitterment in the lack of challenges in his work, though there were some good aspects of the situation:

It would be difficult to discuss specialisation in the work at our WUKP as we do not have any more serious items submitted for inspection, while "Głos Olsztyński" and "Mazury i Warmia" do not discuss any problems of everyday life. [...] At the Voivodship Office, work is not as exhaustive and tiresome as at the Main Office. There is no editorial board or a publishing house over our heads crying hurry up, hurry up, comrade – do not hinder our work! You can calmly read and consider the material, hence the greater opportunity to work on expanding your interests⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ "Information and Instruction Bulletin", no. 1, January 1956, p. 51 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 4).

⁵⁵ Ibidem, pp. 51–52. WUKP is referred to as Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy (the Voivodship Office of Control of Press).

The problem of selecting the material presented in the bulletin, and, more broadly, the matter of the periodical's quality, was also raised in the introduction to the periodicals. Special issues offered opportunities to present such texts, e.g. the issue from February 1956. The opening column entitled *What next?... (reflections of the Bulletin's editor)* (*I co dalej?... (refleksje redaktora Biuletynu)*) summarised the ten years of the operations of the Office, and despite the reservation that "It is not befitting to speak ill of the jubilarian..."⁵⁶, there were some critical remarks in the opening piece. Yet they were of a different nature as they were voiced by the persons shaping the periodical, not censors from field offices. How much the latter influenced the shape of the bulletins? To answer that question, one would have to conduct a detailed analysis of all the issues scattered through the archives, however, upon reading the discussed article, one might presuppose that the critical mass had been achieved and exceeded as the predominant tone of the text was that of beating one's breast:

Does a lack of active cooperation, of demands, and encouragement justify the board? I believe that only partly. The main error in the body's work is its spontaneous nature, a lack of regular meetings, of a long-term plan, and low interest of some members of the body in current periodical matters⁵⁷.

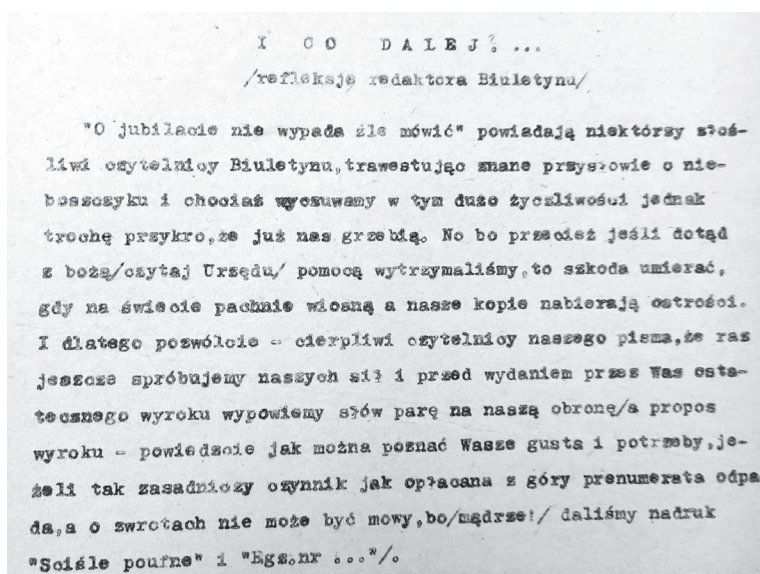


Illustration 3. *What next?... (reflections of the Bulletin's editor)* (*I co dalej?... (refleksje redaktora Biuletynu)*), "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 2, February 1956, p. 2 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 6)

⁵⁶ "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 2, February 1956, p. 2 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 6).

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 5.

But that was only one side of the story. In many bulletins the editor board assured that it does what it can to improve censors' skills. For example it tried to develop the optimal paradigm of censor reviews. It realised that:

An incorrectly developed review may lead a reader to the incorrect interpretation of a play or a film, and discredit even a completely positive performance with high artistic qualities. An example of that was the review on the play *Lato w Nohant* [*Summer at Nohant*] by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz [...] An example of a review of a film which was also politically detrimental was the discussion by "Tygodnik Powszechny" (issue 47) of the Soviet film entitled *Cyrk* [*The Circus*]⁵⁸.

The discussed internal periodicals of censorship published censor reviews, usually supplemented with instructive commentary. For operatives evaluating culture texts those constituted the theoretical foundation for their practical activities, while for a contemporary research they offer important material which supplements the existing state of research into the genetic foundation of censor reviews⁵⁹. The material also includes articles which constituted attempts at building a definition of a review by analysing its components, considering the author, and other extra-literary circumstances. Such a theoretical material was included in issue 7 of the bulletin from 1952; the text itself *For higher quality of work on books. I. General remarks on reviews (O wyższy poziom pracy nad książką. I. Uwagi ogólne o recenzji)* was preceded by the following passage:

In proposing a series of remarks on reviews, we wish to start a series of studies in the following issues of the "Bulletin" based on actual analyses of good and poor reviews and indicate which moments should be emphasised in reviews⁶⁰.

In bulletins censors were encouraged not only to write reviews, articles and letters but also to take part in a competition for the best review of the book organised by the Office of Control. In August 1952 the competition was announced, and

⁵⁸ "Information and Training Bulletin" no. 1/3, January 1949, p. 8 (APG, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 196). *Lato w Nohant. Komedia w 3 aktach* was first published in "Skamander" in 1936, then it was published in (among others): 1937, 1949 and in 1953; the play was translated into English in 1942: J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Summer at Nohant. A play in 3 acts*, transl. C. Wieniewska, Minerva Publ. Comp., London 1942 (see: B. D. [B. Dorosz], *Iwaszkiewicz Jarosław*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, vol. 3: G–J, J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warsaw 1994, p. 320).

⁵⁹ A. Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, *The censorship review in the Polish People's Republic as cryptotext...*; eadem, *Recenzja cenzorska Polski Ludowej...*

⁶⁰ "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 7, July 1952, p. 26 (APG, WUKPPiW, ref. no. 84).

censors were supposed to write a review of a book *Rivers are burning* (*Rzeki płoną*) written by Wanda Wasilewska, back then one of the most famous artists and left-wings political activist⁶¹. The event didn't meet with great response – only four of sixteen censorship offices sent their reviews. The best three ones were published in the bulletin in November 1952⁶²

There were also cases of censors' own works of literature published in bulletins. The anniversary issue of the bulletin from January 1955 concluded in two satirical works: the first, sent by the Office of Control in Łódź, was entitled *Our balance* (*Nasz Bilans*)⁶³, the other, prepared by the Satirical Commission at the Main Office, was entitled *Little strokes fell great oaks* (*Cicha woda brzegi rwie*)⁶⁴. Both were prepared to be staged, which was indicated by the stage directions and the accompanying musical setting (the staging of the former was supposed to be accompanied by music replayed from records). The work by the Satirical Commission premièred at the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows on 22 January 1955, as indicated in the note.

* * *

Bulletins of censorship office offer many research perspectives. Censor reviews surviving in the cryptotexts will prove a valuable object of study for literary researchers, and their analyses will enable researchers to discover the mechanisms of creating the only legitimate evaluation. The reading of the bulletins from 1945 to 1956 and the extraction of the peculiar nature of the decline of the Stalinist period, i.e. putting on and removing the screw, will reveal the scale of the deformations exacted on the Polish culture by the prevention and repression apparatus in the first decade after World War II.

61 "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 8, August 1952, p. 41 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 81); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 9, September 1952, pp. 48–49 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 78); "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 10, October 1952, p. 48 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 75).

The book *Rzeki płoną* was published in 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955 (see: E. G. [Ewa Głębińska], *Wasilewska Wanda*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, vol. 9: W–Z, J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warsaw 2004, p. 52).

62 "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 11, November 1952, pp. 43–66 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 72).

63 "Information and Instruction Bulletin" no. 1, January 1955, p. 66 (APG, WUKPPIW, ref. no. 110).

64 Ibidem, p. 82.

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Anna Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk

Biuletyny polskiego urzędu cenzury z lat 1945–1956. Rekonesans

Streszczenie

W artykule omawiam wybrane aspekty biuletynu urzędu cenzury z lat 1945–1956. Biuletyn był poufnym, skierowanym przede wszystkim do cenzorów i tworzonym na zamówienie państwa wewnętrznym pismem Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk; ze względu na cel pełnił funkcję szkoleniową, instruktażową i informacyjną; z uwagi na sposób dystrybucji biuletyn to kryptotekst, czyli tekst poufny o celowo ograniczonej dystrybucji.

W artykule przedstawiłam stan badań nad biuletynami i warunki tożsamości pisma. Omówiłam także sylwetkę “idealnego” cenzora w perspektywie zależności kontekstowej. Przybliżyłam ponadto problematykę, jaką poruszano w piśmie, w którym prezentowano przede wszystkim materiały na temat cenzury oraz działalności Urzędu Kontroli; publikowano artykuły odredakcyjne oraz materiały z terenu (recenzje cenzorskie, sprawozdania, bilanse, listy nadsyłane przez zespoły cenzorskie lub konkretnych pracowników), a nawet twórczość literacką samych cenzorów.

Słowa kluczowe: poufne biuletyny urzędu cenzury, cenzura w powojennej Polsce, cenzurowanie literatury, cenzor, kryptoteksty

Bulletins of the Polish censorship office from 1945 to 1956. A reconnaissance study

Summary

The aim of the article is to discuss selected research perspectives offered by the bulletins of the censorship office created in Poland from 1945 to 1956. Due to the chiefly confidential nature of the analysed documents I defined them as classified papers, ordered by the state, directed mainly to censors. These documents were internally circulated in the Main and Voivodship Offices of Control of Press, Publications and Shows. Due to their aim bulletins played an informational, tutorial or training role, and functioned as a type of a guide for censorship practices. Due to the distribution they are cryptotexts (i.e. classified texts of intentionally limited distribution).

In the article I discussed the state of knowledge on the bulletins and I also considered the context-based identity conditions of the periodical. I indicated the pitfalls which accompany any attempt at recreating the profile of the *implied censor* and I discussed the language of the bulletins. I also indicated the content of the paper.

Bulletins presented mainly the materials on censorship and on the organisations of work in the Office of Control. The research material consists of both articles from the editorial office and from the voivodship's offices (i.e. censorship reviews, reports, letters from the censor units or from the particular censors) and even literary attempts of the censors themselves.

Keywords: classified bulletins of the censorship office, censorship in post-war Poland, censorship of literature, censor, cryptotexts

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