

Censorship in the People's Republic of Poland

Gawet Strzadala

Abstract: This article discusses the topic of censorship in the communist Poland. It describes the functions of the office of censorship (Main Office for the Control of Presentations and Public Performances; *Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk*) as well as other forms of more informal influence on the authors working for public publishing houses. The underground publications suppressed during the Stalin era as well as difficulties encountered by Polish historians after 1956 will be the subject of the analysis. Furthermore, the article indicates the complementary role of the underground publishers after 1970. These publishing houses had a significant impact on the birth of political opposition in the communist Poland.

Keywords: repressive and preventive censorship, underground press, opposition, USSR, communism

Political censorship existed in totalitarian countries where the government attempted at eliminating the circulation of all information which was considered inconvenient for the government. Keeping full control over the press, radio and television allowed them to shape the society according to the adopted standard. Censorship was also found in authoritarian states. Pre-war Poland may serve as an example of authoritarian leadership style since the power was in the hands of the "Sanation" government (*Sanacja*). However, in the Second Republic of Poland the methods used for restricting the freedom of speech were rather lenient. Repressive censorship was applied, which meant that the texts would be censored after they had been published. Printing houses would be legally obliged to submit the first copy of the printed item to the Social and Political Department (*Departament Społeczno-Polityczny*), an organisational unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the event of lack of approval, the print-run edition would be withdrawn. Still, it was possible to file an appeal against the censor's decision to the court supervising the functioning of the surveillance units. The authoritarian system aimed at keeping up appearances and creating an impression of democracy and thus some of the censored articles were published

in the press with white spots replacing particular excerpts. The reader was well aware of the fact that the given article had been censored or that certain parts were missing (Witek & Źmigrodzki 2003: 41). For authors and publishers, repressive censorship had an advantage over preventive censorship (which was a common practice in the communist era) in that it allowed exploiting legal loopholes. For instance, the first copy would be submitted at the moment when the whole print-run had already been offered for sale. The oppositional press in the interwar period would often use the white spots strategy, thus the notion of “white spots in history” commonly employed in Poland with regard to Soviet distortions of contemporary history evolved. Shortly before the Second World War, censorship became more severe, especially in that part of Poland which was closer to the German border. A good example of this phenomenon is the book by Władysław Studnicki (a Polish Germanophile who, in 1939, published a book entitled “Facing the Oncoming Second World War”) which was confiscated by the office of censorship after being published. Almost all copies were seized. “I still possess one of them”, the author has written. “I appealed to the court against the confiscation. In July 1939, the case was examined in the court. I was defending one chapter after another but once I got to the excerpt on the impact of the Soviet support, I lost control and burst into tears” (Studnicki 1995: 38). In the case of this book, the entire print-run was withdrawn from print and all copies were confiscated. In many other earlier cases, elsewhere than at the German border, the court often allowed publishing the works questioned by censors, not always in their entirety but at least their parts.

The beginning of the Second World War and the occupation of the Republic of Poland had a disastrous effect on the Polish national heritage. The Nazis and the Soviets closed all academic and public libraries and confiscated a vast majority of Polish books. 35,000 libraries were shut down and 14 million books from the bookshops were seized (Witek & Źmigrodzki 2003: 42). The Nazi-Soviet Pact ordered suppression of Polish attempts at independence: anti-German propaganda was prohibited in the regions under Soviet occupation and anti-Soviet propaganda was prohibited on the territory occupied by the Nazis. It was the Soviet-German war of 1941 that made Russians and Germans promulgate the crimes committed by the other party. In particular the debate on the Katyń massacre had serious repercussions on an international scale. Stalin broke diplomatic relations with the Polish government in exile and began working on the establishment of the pro-Soviet Union of Polish Patriots (*Związek Patriotów Polskich*) (Pobóg-Malinowski 1990: 399). It should be emphasised that the censorship units of the Allies did not allow publishing any information concerning Katyń for they preferred not to irritate their Soviet partner. The Cold War period brought up this topic in the USA, however still not all documents regarding the case have been disclosed (Zychowicz 2012: 69).

As far as Polish education under Nazi occupation was concerned, all higher education institutions and the majority of secondary schools were closed. The situation was slightly different in the regions occupied by the Soviets where institutions such as the Lviv University survived. However, these educational establishments were subject to Sovietisation procedures and strong ideological pressure. All lectures were delivered in Ukrainian and principles of Marxism–Leninism were imposed on the academic community. For some time, Polish researchers and scientists were permitted to work at this university but were forced to teach in Ukrainian. According to one of the lecturers, Countess Karolina Lanckorońska, “books related to non-materialistic philosophy and many other fields which did not speak in favour of our Eastern neighbour (and there were many like this) would be kept locked while pornographic literature was being given back to the public” (Lanckorońska 2001: 26–27).

When in 1944 the Red Army once again invaded the Polish territory, Russians established the Polish Committee for National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*; PKWN) situated in Lublin, composed of Soviet-controlled puppet politicians. Within the PKWN, Information and Propaganda Department was formed as well as the Press and Information Section, which belonged under its supervision. This department was in charge of monitoring printing houses as well as making decisions regarding paper rations and political control of press, with Jerzy Borejsza as the head of this unit. The system copied the model of Soviet propaganda and censorship. In November 1944 Piotr Gładzin and Kazimierz Jamróz, two Soviet-minded experts on censorship working for the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs under the People's Commissariat of Education of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, came to Lublin. The Soviet “advisors” were the authors of legal regulations determining the functioning of censorship units in the communist Poland. Before the Second World War ended, on January 19, 1945, upon the request of Stanisław Radkiewicz (the Minister of Public Security), the Central Office of Press Control (*Centralne Biuro Kontroli Prasy*) was established. The Ministry of Public Security was mainly concerned with acts of terror against opposition, persecution of the Home Army and monitoring press control procedures (Witek & Żmigrodzki 2003: 42).

On the 15th November 1945, the Central Office of Press Control was transformed into the Main Office for the Control of the Press, Publishing and Public Performances (*Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk*) supervised by the Secretary of the Polish Workers' Party, which later (named Polish United Workers' Party) was legalised by a decree dated 15 July 1946. The wording of the decree concealed the links between the institution and the totalitarian security services. Andrzej Krajewski believes that the legal regulations regarding censorship infringed the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland

of 1952 and the Code of Administrative Procedure (*Kodeks Postępowania Administracyjnego*) adopted in 1960 (Krajewski 2002: 22). The Code assumed that public authorities should provide legal grounds for each decision concerning the citizens. The decisions should be made in public and in writing and the name of the institution issuing the particular decision should be indicated as well (*ibid.*). The People's Republic of Poland attempted at giving an impression of a democratic country; in fact almost all activities undertaken by the government which was strongly dependent on the Soviet Union, were against the law. This was particularly noticeable in matters related to censorship. This state of affairs was confirmed by the inspection conducted by the Supreme Chamber of Control (*Najwyższa Izba Kontroli*) in 1966, which found numerous proofs of negligence and many inaccuracies. Nonetheless, this chaos did not resemble other poorly organised Soviet structures but was a "calculated chaos" aimed at enforcing interests and wishes of the Communist Party rather than acting in compliance with the procedures. In the case of the People's Republic of Poland, these actions would be performed in favour of the current strategy of the Polish United Worker's Party. Just like in George Orwell's novel "1984", the past had to be changed in order to control the present and to shape the future. This caused situations where even a person who was fond of communist ideology risked trouble with the censors if their views did not conform to the current strategy of the Party. Detailed guidelines coming from the sections of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party as well as the ministries specified the recommended intervention methods. The Decree of 1946 formulated five main criteria of censorship:

- threat(s) to the system of the Polish state,
- revelation of state secrets,
- action detrimental to the international relations of the Polish state,
- violation(s) of the law or morality,
- misleading public opinion by giving information inconsistent with reality (Żmigrodzki & Witek 2003: 44).

Communists, particularly at the beginning of the Soviet times, considered the work of censors as a mission and demanded ideological engagement. After 1956, in the times of increased individual liberties and weakened terror, obedience and task accomplishment was mainly enforced. According to Marian Orzechowski, a communist historian and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Poland, historians who were members of the Workers' Party were particularly inspected by the censors since they were to represent the Party: "Censors were convinced that historians from the Party, especially those actively present in politics, were particularly obliged to speak and write in compliance with the Party's strategy" (Romek 2001: 151). This worked both ways: when a censor

working on a text written by politically active historian or journalist noticed some “heretical” content, they were not certain whether it represented a new strategy of the Party of which the author had not received guidelines yet, but which could become binding in the future. The censors feared being accused of excessive zealotry as the required priority was the quality and not the quantity of corrections. The communists favoured preventive censorship and thus the corrections were not visible. The aim was to make the reader believe that the words and content of the article were the ones of the authors even if a considerable amount of modifications had been made. Journalists, writers and researchers who addressed controversial themes attempted at circumventing the censors by using many allusions and other tricks (see also Löhmus 2012). Sometimes they succeeded, but sometimes they had to compromise their opinion to match the official one. Academic publications were also subject to censorship. This was among the tasks of thesis promoters who, just as today, influenced the content of their student-papers, only that the influence was both of educational and political nature. This regarded mostly PhD and habilitation dissertations which were to be published. Master's theses were rarely published and thus more often happened to contain improper content (Romek 2001: 159). Sometimes communists would falsify source texts and documents, especially these regarding the history of the Communist Party of Poland, the predecessor of the Polish United Workers' Party (*ibid.*: 167).

The controlling procedures were multidimensional and complex, and composed of numerous stages: three stages for non-periodical publications and four for periodicals. A regular control would begin with a preliminary inspection, i.e. the censor would read the typescript and after potential corrections were made, a consent for typesetting would be given. Periodicals did not have to undergo this first phase. The next stage was about actual censorship; the texts were evaluated based on the first prints. Then the version to be offered for sale was read and, if approved, distributed. The last stage included repeated censoring for the purpose of verifying the work completed by the censors. Books already offered for sale would be checked and, if any irregularities were detected, the whole print-run would be withdrawn and censors would be subject to sanctions. These were not too severe since the employees were not treated as enemies of the system but rather as staff who lacked competence. Such an employee would be subsequently given easier texts to work on (Witek & Żmigrodzki 2003: 45–46). In order to improve censorship procedures, trainings and meetings were held during which the current strategy of the Party would be presented. Censors working for the Office were not indoctrinated or provided with manipulated information and no propaganda was offered to them. Instead, current objectives of the propaganda were discussed. This was necessary as the trends in censorship – the control of ideas and speech and the list of prohibited topics

– would change on a regular basis. Stefan Kisielewski in his characterisation of the communist censorship stated that the aim was to:

- a) make readers believe that the texts reflect the authors' opinions;
- b) make the writers used to a certain type of reasoning and expressing thoughts so they know how to avoid corrections or suppression of their work (cited by Krajewski 2002: 24).

During the communist era, censorship was not an official policy, neither were the activities of special services or the police (the name Civic Militia, *Milicja Obywatelska*, suggested that it was rather an institution established by the citizens for maintaining order than the state police). According to Kisielewski, censorship units played two roles: one concentrated on destroying certain elements of reality and the other one based on logocracy, i.e. creating a non-reality. Both these functions were performed simultaneously and secretly to the great detriment of literature and authors who were forced to conformity and had to sign distorted versions of their thoughts. When Khrushchev's "thaw" began, Stefan Kisielewski could finally enter into debate with a party journalist Mieczysław F. Rakowski who earlier questioned "his" article but at the time the polemic lacked the right to political incorrectness. "He thought he questioned my ideas whereas I did not write this article. IT WAS THE CENSOR WHO WROTE IT," said Kisielewski (capitalisation in the original, see Bartyzel 2012).

The Main Office for the Control of Presentations and Public Performances would control all media and institutions which could potentially convey content unfavourable to the government. Evidently, such an event could never take place since radio and television was government-controlled but as mentioned above, the policy of the Workers' Party evolved and a given content, previously considered to speak against the system, could become acceptable, and the other way round. Obviously, censorship mechanisms were active also at earlier stages and editors selected the publications in consideration of avoiding potential difficulties. It has to be remembered that a communist country, being the only employer and distributor of production resources, was also able to manipulate paper distribution and thus punish the disobedient authors. The Catholic social periodical "Tygodnik Powszechny", the only independent paper, would often face such sanctions.

In the People's Republic of Poland, the most harmful damage in the cultural sphere was made at the turn of the 1940s and 50s when the whole collections of pre-war literature were destroyed. On February 2, 1949, during the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, all "clerical" and "reactionary" literature was banned. The action was to be completed during summer holidays not to irritate teachers and pupils (Żmigrodzki 2002). Book lists were strictly confidential and were sent to education boards and then to paper mills where they were destroyed. The aim of

these actions was to erase the public memory. It was not a procedure designed to be a spectacle as in the case of the Nazis, who would burn books in public. It rather involved clandestine actions. Registers were compiled for bookshops and public libraries. Some librarians were reluctant to cooperate with the Workers' Party; still they happened to be forced to obey the orders. Many a time, the entire oeuvre of writers such as Zofia Kossak-Szczucka or Ferdynand Goetel would be suppressed. The largest register of prohibited publications that survived until today comes from 1951. It contains three lists of books for adults and youth (1682 items), "outdated" socio-political literature (238 items) and children's literature (562 items). Fear had many faces; books were destroyed mostly due to ideological reasons. Nonetheless, some of the decisions were incomprehensible or even absurd. It happened that books were banned only because they were published by an "inappropriate" publishing company whereas the same titles, such as the Grimms' fairy tales, were allowed provided that they were published by someone else. First and foremost, anti-Soviet literature was eliminated, e.g. "Od białego caratu do czerwonego" ('From white to red Tsarism') by Jan Kucharczyński. Publications by Józef Piłsudski, the author of Polish independence, would be destroyed, so were the books about him. Secondly, literature published by National Democracy and related to or written by Roman Dmowski. Books addressing the topic of Eastern Borderlands, such as Joachim Bartoszewicz's "Znaczenie polityczne Kresów Wschodnich dla Polski" ('The political significance of the Polish Eastern Borderlands') or even Kornel Makuszyński's "Uśmiech Lwowa" ('Smile of Lviv'). Jewish themes were not welcome either, and not only anti-Semitic content. Apart from literature discussing Polish affairs, access to Western and American books was restricted as well, e.g. "Gone with the wind" by Margaret Mitchell or Agatha Christie's work. As far as Polish novels are concerned, Helena Mniszkówna was banned along with a guide on proper behaviour for young girls ("O przyzwoitym zachowaniu się młodej panienki i pielęgnowaniu zdrowia"). Curious examples included a book about carrots ("O uprawie marchwi pastewnej"). The latter one was withdrawn because it revealed advantages of individual farming over collective agricultural initiatives (Witek & Żmigrodzki 2003: 50).

After 1956, censorship became less severe but this did not reverse the fact that valuable cultural heritage had simply been destroyed under Stalin. All individualistic and democratic trends were banned by the censorship since the ideal totalitarian state could only be built on the ruins of traditional values. The "uncomfortable" cultural heritage of the pre-war republic was often obliterated. Writers, historians and economists had to forget the notion of freedom of speech.

It has to be borne in mind that the communist system was the only employer and the monopolist and thus was capable of ruining citizens by depriving them of all financial means. In addition, a totalitarian country was a "prison"

because nobody could leave it without obtaining a relevant consent. Tomasz Strzyżewski, former communist censor who escaped the People's Republic of Poland and revealed the truth about the institution he had worked for in Radio Free Europe (*Radio Wolna Europa*), was right to conclude that: “[...] censorship would have functioned even without the office. The government needed it only for unifying the censorship criteria in problematic situations. Censorship was born spontaneously as a consequence of the employer-employee relationship” (Strzyżewski 2006: 10–11).

Journalists and cultural activists functioned in this system; some of them felt comfortable cooperating with the authorities, others decided to compromise and agreed with censorship due to conformity or fear. People also chose the third possibility of resistance: silence. Poland in the communist era was not a sovereign country; it reflected the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty. As a matter of fact, the dependence on USSR was stronger and had many dimensions. As Czesław Madajczyk, a Polish historian stated: “In 1968, censors’ comments came from Soviet historians, mainly in relation to the Nazi-Soviet Pact” (Romek 2001: 136–137). It was difficult not to mention this pact when writing about the Second World War period; however, it was strictly prohibited to mention the secret protocol showing the future spheres of influence called the lines of demarcation. Katyń massacre was a similar case which remained a taboo until the end of the communist times. Polish-Russian relations and the war of 1920 were also censored topics, often presented in a manipulated manner. Polish historians had to consult many issues with Soviet researchers. Also today, there are debates between Polish and German, Polish and Ukrainian or Polish and Russian historians, but these are discussions of equal partners who seek to clarify discrepancies and form common views. Back then, the Russians would impose the only acceptable, one-sided version of Polish-Soviet relations. Jerzy Tomaszewski, expert in ancient times, mentions that after 1968, when Jews were expelled from Poland, it was not allowed to write about the Jewish community. It was considered best to avoid this topic and present neither positive nor negative views (Romek 2001: 244–245). The most characteristic thing was that in the People's Republic it was illegal to write about censorship. This restriction was binding until 1990 when censorship was finally abolished (*ibid.*: 68). Tomasz Strzembosz would write about the Polish Underground State (*Polskie Państwo Podziemne*) and discussed the problem of Soviet occupation in Easter Borderlands. Of course, he could not speak openly about the Soviet occupation and that is why he published his work only after 1989. Writing on particular subjects was even dangerous. “It is dishonoring,” wrote Strzembosz, “that my research had to be kept confidential due to the fear of the Committee for State Security but also of my colleagues: the fear that someone would report me, investigate the case or make me abandon the topic” (*ibid.*: 202).

Stories about censorship happened to be amusing at times. Tomasz Szarota reminisces about a funny episode related to the publication of his doctoral thesis. During final corrections, a typo was found that had not been noticed before. Skipping one letter in the term ruralisation (*rustyfikacja* in Polish) resulted in the use of the word russification. Obviously, if it had not been found, he could have been in trouble (*ibid.*: 208).

Censorship in the communist Poland resulted in acts protests of the intelligence such as the famous “Letter of the 34”, signed by 34 Polish artists headed by Antoni Słonimski. It stated: “Limiting paper distribution for printing books and paper as well as restrictions of press censorship threatens the development of national culture. We, the undersigned, consider existence of the public opinion, the right to criticism, freedom of speech and access to reliable information indispensable to the development and well-being of the citizens and their nation and demand a change in cultural politics in compliance with the Constitution of Poland” (Albert 1989: 825). The letter was ignored by the authorities and the rough reaction of the communists came only after it was published via Radio Free Europe and the foreign press. In reply, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party published a letter signed by six hundred loyal authors and the Soviet-dependent Polish Writers’ Union. This organisation was controlled by the communists and 26% of its members belonged to the Workers’ Party. Numerous authors and cultural activists from Western Europe identified with the rebellious Polish writers. As a result, those who signed the “Letter of the 34” faced various sanctions such as a ban for publication or limited paper rations (e.g. for “Tygodnik Powszechny” the editor-in-chief, of which Jerzy Turowicz, was one of the signatories (*ibid.*)).

The 1960s were a tough period for the Polish culture. Authors considered reactionary did not get published; the young generation of writers was denied access to print media as well. The most paradoxical event occurred in 1968 and concerned the prohibition for stage of a play called “Dziady” (‘Forefathers’) by Adam Mickiewicz, the author who was considered the greatest national poet, due to alleged anti-Soviet content of the staging. The play was written in the 19th century and could not possibly relate to communism. The audience particularly applauded the anti-Russian parts in “Dziady”, which was criticised by the Soviets and, as a result, the drama was banned. This event caused street protests, violently repressed by the communists (*ibid.*: 879). During a special meeting of the Polish Writers’ Union, Stefan Kisielewski called the system “dictatorship of the ignorant” and as a consequence he was later beaten up by unknown perpetrators. In the 1960s, the satirist Janusz Szpotkański wrote a comic opera “Cisi i gęgacze” (‘The silent and the gabblers’), which was distributed at his own cost. This comedy presented a biting satire on the communist party. Szpotkański was sentenced to three years of prison (*ibid.*). Repressions were faced also by Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski for their “Open letter

to the Party” (‘List otwarty do partii’) (*ibid.*: 851–852). Others who received prison sentences included the so called “Mountaineers” (‘Taternicy’) who would smuggle prohibited literature, e.g. the volumes of “Kultura” journal edited by Jerzy Giedroyc in Paris.

In late 1970s the underground circulation came into life. Censored books were published which provided illegal access to independent social ideas. Underground circulation was also crucial for great literature which was banned from public publishing houses. Polish readers were denied contact with the oeuvre of many Polish and foreign authors. Those who had the courage, via the underground press, published historical materials which were prohibited due to censorship.

In 1980, Solidarity (*Solidarność*) was established and its third postulate (which was one of “The Twenty-One Demands”) regarded censorship. Influenced by the Gdańsk Agreement, the government proposed an act which limited the role of the Main Office for the Control of Presentations and Public Performances (Radzikowska 1990: 5). The main difference between the new act and the decree of 1946 was that the corrections made by censors should be made visible in the text. Moreover, the censors’ decisions were subject to appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court. Unfortunately, after the martial law, this act was amended and regained its older form from before 1981. This was particularly harmful for academic publications which were to be exempted from the preventive control. The provision concerning the publication of censors’ corrections remained in force however in reality only Catholic periodicals benefited from this privilege.

On 29th January 1990, the Polish United Workers’ Party self-dissolved and shortly afterwards censorship was abolished. The Act regulating this issue became effective on June 6, 1990 (Romek 2001: 35–36). It should be highlighted that even in free Poland under Tadeusz Mazowiecki as Prime Minister four months had passed after the dissolution of the Party until censorship was eliminated.

In liberated Poland, censorship does not exist; however, various forms of self-censorship are present, keeping taboos in their place is obligatory in certain circles and there are attempts at ostracism towards certain groups and opinions. After 1989, the notion of political correctness, already commonly used in Western countries, came to Poland. It is a form of self-censorship, appealing to people willing to belong to contemporary elite. This type of censorship forbids the discussion of certain matters or imposes the way they should be discussed. Authors who are critical about political correctness call it “soft censorship”.

Obviously, this new trend coming from the USA has its advocates as it is associated with open-mindedness and tolerance.

In today’s Poland, knowledge of emigrant literature (1939 to 1989) and underground literature (works dated 1976 to 1989) is deficient. Not enough effort has been made to make oeuvres of emigrant writers accessible for Polish readers.

This is effective through the phenomenon of copyright, which may constitute an effective form of censorship. The case of works by Józef Mackiewicz, an migrant writer, copyrights to which were acquired by Nina Karsov-Szechter, owner of a London-based publishing house Kontra might serve as an example here. Numerous Polish publishers struggled to publish the works by Mackiewicz but did not succeed due to the fact the author cast a negative light not only on communist milieus but also emigrants and oppositionists. The protests of publishers and literary circles resulted in some of the less controversial texts by Mackiewicz being published in Poland, but still not all of them are available. The owner of Kontra declared the following: "I agree for distribution of Józef Mackiewicz's works published by Kontra in Poland against the will of the late writer and against my own beliefs. Józef Mackiewicz was convinced that I would not do anything he would not have wished, and that is why I inherited the rights to his oeuvre" (Witek & Żmigrodzki 2003: 65). The truth is that Józef Mackiewicz did not allow his works to be published by the public institutions of the People's Republic (they were banned at the time nonetheless). Meanwhile, he approved of the distribution in the underground circulation and thus of the idea to establish the Kontra publishing house. Nevertheless, maintaining such a state of affairs after the political transformation in Poland and the abolition of censorship is nothing but an excuse to hinder access to the works of this outstanding writer. Thus it is easily seen that intellectual property and copyrights may constitute a form of censorship and an obstacle for the spiritual development of a nation.

In conclusion, we may say that this paper presents the mechanism of how censorship functioned in Poland in the twentieth century, especially during the communist era. Censorship of the totalitarian state used both preventive and repressive means. In addition to the institutional official censorship, there was also profound informal self-censorship, and some authors have gone so far as to assert that censorship was an inherent part of the system itself, and not the function of designed offices. The interventions introduced by the censors (sometimes quite unfounded and absurd) were not marked or mentioned in the text. The aim of such practice was to divert the reader's attention so as the reader would not know which were the original words and thoughts of the author, and which were the sentences inserted by the censor. This falsely suggested that the authors shared the ideas of the ruling communist party. As the next stage, the "Solidarity" movement introduced a change in the law on censorship in 1980, stating that all interference had to be marked in the text. After the imposition of martial law changed the law again, the situation went back to how it was during the Soviet totalitarian regime. Up to the end of the People's Republic of Poland it was forbidden to write about censorship, or to present the history of the institution. Although at present quite different rules and ideals about the freedom of speech are observed, some remnants of censorship can still be traced.

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