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„Worthless and in Fact Harmful” – Censorship in Poland in 1951 on Two English Writers: Graham Greene and Gilbert Chesterton

*„Bezużyteczne a nawet szkodliwe” – cenzura w Polsce w roku 1951 wobec
publikacji dzieł Grahama Greene’a i Gilberta Chestertona*

ABSTRACT

Censorship in Poland during the Stalinist Era was one of the most important organs of power which made it possible to influence the worldview of citizens. As a propaganda tool, it decided what to convey to the recipients and in what interpretation. The aim of the article is to present how the works of two English authors were assessed by the employees of the censorship office. The accusations and the interpretations of the novel made by the censors help to understand how the West was perceived in the country of people’s democracy and how capitalist countries were wanted to be presented to readers.

Key words: censorship, English literature, ideology, Marxism

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STRESZCZENIE

Cenzura w Polsce w okresie stalinowskim była jednym z najważniejszych organów władzy, który pozwalał wpływać na światopogląd obywateli. Jako narzędzie propagandowe decydował o tym, co przekazywać odbiorcom i w jakiej interpretacji. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie, w jaki sposób prace dwóch autorów anglojęzycznych zostały ocenione przez pracowników urzędu cenzury. Zarzuty i interpretacje powieści dokonane przez cenzurę pozwalają zrozumieć, jak Zachód był postrzegany w kraju demokracji ludowej i jak chciano przedstawić czytelnikom kraje kapitalistyczne.

Słowa kluczowe: cenzura, literatura angielska, ideologia, marksizm

The article examines the functioning of censorship in Poland during the Stalinist era using two cases of publications of a modern novel translation. The selection of two foreign works by writers viewed similarly by the censors makes it possible to discuss closely the approach of the censorship office to the so-called West. Besides, censorship reviews presented below contain statements about religious and social topics, which may be considered representative of this type of archival material. In the censorship workshop, it was significant to pay attention to the way of interpreting the content and the ideological attitude of the author, which discussion on the example of Chesterton's and Greene's works becomes exceptionally valuable.

So far, Polish researchers have focused on discussing the relationship between the censorship office and native writers. Cases of persecution of Polish artists by the authorities and censorship blocking the printing of their works have been analyzed in detail. The authors of the studies have focused primarily on discussing the phenomenon of censorship and its impact on the publishing market, as well as preventing the publication of works by prominent Polish artists active at that time, such as Czesław Miłosz, Stanisław Lem, or Władysław Broniewski and Jerzy Andrzejewski. In English, John Bates, Kamila Brudrowska, and Anna Wiśniewska Grabarczyk wrote about censorship in Poland¹. The last ones concentrate on the content of the instructional bulletins, which also did not discuss publications that were translations of works by Western authors during the period prepared by Wiśniewski-Grabarczyk. Therefore, paying attention to the censorship opinions of translations is an enhancing supplement to the knowledge of the working methods of the censorship apparatus in Poland. The only work that focuses holistically on the

¹ K. Kamińska-Chełminiak, *Cenzura w Polsce 1944–1960*, Warszawa 2019; K. Budrowska, *Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland 1948–1958*, Berlin 2020; A. Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, *Censorship of literature in post-war Poland: in light of the confidential Bulletins for censors from 1945 to 1956*, Łódź–Cracow 2022.

problem of censorship of English literature in communist Poland is the dissertation by Robert Looby. Looby also briefly touches on the strong position of the PAX Publishing Institute when he mentions the publication of *The Adventures of Father Brown* but does not discuss censorship reviews and discussions surrounding the decision to publish this book. The case of publishing the novel *A Gun for Sale* was not mentioned by him, so the archival documents presented below can be considered as a supplement to the study of this topic².

The article presents archival materials with a commentary on the impact of the reservations made by the censors on the final shape of the books. The materials provide both historical information and are an interesting source for literary and linguistic analysis: the language used by the censors, arguments, and the state of knowledge they represent allow us to better understand this environment and the system of work. The choice of two cases of books that appeared just after they were submitted for printing by the publishing house is not accidental. Under conditions considered reasonable for this system, the tool of power over publishing houses was also delaying the publication of books by postponing the issuance of a decision by the censorship office. In both cases discussed here, several censors were engaged to issue additional opinions. The effect was still pleasing for the PAX Publishing House as both books were available in bookstores the following year. The two cases discussed below allow us to observe several factors: the attitude of censors to Western authors considered catholic by the censors during the worsening of the situation under Stalinism. Secondly, both titles were published by a publishing house with a huge influence but also identified with the catholic environment, which exacerbated the reluctance of the employees of the censorship office.

Stalinism in Poland is characterized by repression and death sentences against political opponents, widespread surveillance, and top-down control of every aspect of life, combined with an economic policy whose priority was by no means the well-being of the society, or at least decent living conditions. As Marcin Zaremba notes, it was not only the feeling that the regime was consolidating that affected the morale of Poles. The bad economic situation, temporarily patched by the switch to the production of consumer goods in 1954, had a negative impact on the standard of living. The lack of satisfaction with basic needs increased the feeling of uncertainty, and the attempts to remedy the situation did not work, as evidenced by the situation at the end of the 1950s when development

² K. Looby, *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland*, Leiden/Boston 2015, s. 104.

opportunities were exhausted and the investment decisions made did not have a positive impact on the life of the average citizen. The huge debt of the Gierek era shows the long-term consequences of the industrialization of Poland³. Citizens belonged to a state that was fully controlled by the party. As a result, the state became „a demiurge that had at its disposal all the goods that allowed man to exist. [...] every aspect of private and collective life was to be within the exclusive scope of state decisions”⁴. But The Stalinist era may be characterized by a two-pronged approach as well – repression, a sense of fear and oppression went hand in hand with a not-so-subtle propaganda campaign aimed at forcefully educating and creating a new type of socialist man that would meet the needs of the regime and decision-makers. Monopolizing the national interest, imposing one vision of the future of the homeland, in which love for the nation meant love for the Party and anyone who thought differently immediately became an enemy of the system and an enemy of the people – this is the shortest description of the politics of that time. Although the press was the basic tool for „taking, maintaining, exercising and controlling” power, any content published in print (or radio, later on television), especially dedicated to a wider audience, was intended to serve the regime. This attitude explains the perspective of the censor, as a controller, but also an interpreter. Press readers and direct book buyers were the main recipients of content published through these two media. Despite the authorities’ enthusiastic attitude towards using this institution for propaganda, only 6.6–10% of people used libraries in 1950–1951⁵. In this text, we focus on the less bloody aspect of the regime, but still criminal and has the potential to have a long-term impact on the mentality and knowledge of the then-recipients, if only the intentions of the authorities came true and the crude propaganda was permanently instilled in the minds of those subjected to it over the years.

RESULTS

Tracing the publishing process, from the obligatory submission to the Censorship Office to the moment of publication, the complexity of the

³ M. Zaremba, *Wielkie Rozczarowanie. Geneza rewolucji „Solidarności”*, Kraków 2023, s. 187–188.

⁴ M. Mazur, S. Ligarski, *Cywilizacja komunizmu. Odmiana nadwiślańska 1944–1956*, Warszawa 2016, s. 74.

⁵ M. Mazur, *O człowieku tendencyjnym... Obraz nowego człowieka w propagandzie komunistycznej w okresie Polski Ludowej i PRL 1944–1956*, Lublin 2009, s. 241, 243, 280–281.

situation not only of works from „the West” can be seen, but also those recognized by the then authorities as religiously and ideologically involved. It should be noticed that the PAX Publishing Institute held impressively strong position as the part of Catholic PAX Association, which was officially supported by the communist government at that time. Despite the criticism expressed by the censors in the reviews presented below, permission was finally granted to print both books. As well, a collection of short stories by Gilbert Chesterton was published with an introduction that got particularly negative opinions. The attention of censors in Poland at that time focused not only on controlling what information should be available to the whole society; the political and ideological correctness of artists, but also on moral and, as mentioned, religious aspects. Before the changes which began with the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1955 censors had a restrictive approach to the writers’ presentation of the details of private life, morality, and explicitness in describing scenes of intimate relationships⁶. The goal was to educate citizens through the appropriate selection of reading material. The method adopted by the authorities can be compared to a parent who selects only those books for the child that will show him an appropriate example or at least the text that can be accompanied by a didactic interpretation (e.g., in the introduction or commentary), but prohibits independent choice, reading descriptions considered as too drastic or inconsistent with parent’s

⁶ After lifting the borders on the influence of the Western world, including contemporary literature (*Hello Sadness* by Françoise Sagan can be considered a youth novel of this generation), one can also observe a greater tolerance of censors for literalism and even vulgarity, as long as such a description could still be used in the interpretation layer as a tool to demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist one. How shocking the clash of cultures was for young people is described by Andrzej Krzywicki in a study devoted to the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students. Even though the guests from abroad were carefully selected by the authorities, it was impossible to control what young people told Poles about their homelands. Their relaxed behaviour, spontaneity (Krzywicki points out that in contrast to the Norwegians or Americans, the Poles seemed shy and withdrawn), but also the clothes (or the cosmetics they used) opened the eyes to what life in the West was like compared to everyday life in the communist regime. However, the Polish press, dependent on the then authorities, still tried to show that the native youth did not react positively to all the novelties, e.g., teenagers from Pomerania were not to appreciate jazz music and „degenerate, uncultured dances”. Krzywicki mentions that also foreign guests complained about the conditions in hotels and fatty meals devoid of fresh vegetables. These observations are supported by statistical data on the number of food poisonings resulting in hospitalization during the festival. A. Krzywicki, *Poststalinowski karnawał radości. V Światowy Festiwal Młodzieży i Studentów o Pokój i Przyjaźń 1955 r.*, Warszawa 2009, s. 287–298.

beliefs, removing them from the view. Adult readers in Poland were treated in the same way, as evidenced by the censors' comments below. It was considered inappropriate to show the reader a scene of a character getting drunk or cheating unless the hero of the story represented a hostile system or ideology. So, in the case of Graham Greene's novel, the censor considers that showing the heroes as degenerates, unhappy and disappointed people, living in a sense of injustice, is beneficial for the state, because these characters live in the West (specifically in England), have suffered harm from the capitalists (fraud, theft, exploitation) or the clergy (a description of Christmas in an orphanage), two groups considered hostile to the communist system. The first part of the article introduces the topic of censorship in post-war Poland, and the second part discusses, on the example of specific archival documents, how the regime's mind engineers tried to influence and manipulate the printed works and thus their recipients.

Referring to the guidelines for censors, employees of the Censorship Office were particularly sensitive to social and political aspects, and their overtones in relation to the political system in which they lived. Sometimes we may get the impression that the zeal to demonstrate the ability to read each work in a socialist spirit, rejecting the historical context, leads even to ridiculing the tone of some censorship reviews. The fact that it took so many censorship reviews to decide on publishing two books in the genre of fiction shows how much emphasis the then authorities put on the control of citizens, what they listen to, what they read, and what conclusions they could draw from the available materials. It also shows the rigidity of the system, which artificially imposed one (Marxist) methodology, one way of interpretation, and one worldview, approaching its task uncritically and often without respect for the readers. As Victor Klemperer noted, this type of top-down imposition of interpretations was a feature of totalitarian regimes, the features of which we also recognize in People's Poland in the 1950s⁷.

HISTORY OF THE POSTWAR CENSORSHIP IN POLAND

Officially, in a country governed by a system called people's democracy, which Poland was during the Cold War era, the institution

⁷ V. Klemperer, *The language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: a philologist's notebook*, London 2020.

of censorship did not exist⁸. The official statement does not mean that the authorities in Poland after the Second World War gave up controlling the information and opinions disseminated among citizens. The department responsible for censoring the content published in Poland was modeled on the Soviet organ, General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press, Glavlit. The Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in Poland was responsible for the control of all printed content, including those published in the press, in the form of leaflets and posters, and broadcast by radio and television. For that reason, all forms of expression available in the official circulation were subject to censorship, and the Censorship Office issued approvals not only for the publication of new materials but also had the power to suspend reissues, e.g., novels that were already known to Polish audiences, which before the war, in a different political system, raised no objections. The introduction of totalitarian isolation through censorship led, especially in the area of journalistic work, to a distraction from the subject of professional objectivity, as only one version of the events was considered valid by the government. One more form of clearing the area of content hostile to the system was to withdraw already published items (bookstores and libraries) from circulation.

The most extensive list of authors and works selected for withdrawal from circulation was created in 1951. That is why this year may be considered excessively important for the history of censorship in Poland. It was also the year of publication of the two titles discussed in this paper. The mentioned list included the essay by Gilbert Chesterton „Poland and Bolshevism” published in 1920, which was, for obvious ideological reasons, harmful in a country belonging to the communist bloc⁹. Other works written by Chesterton were not intended to be withdrawn from the reading market by the authorities.

The beginnings of censorship in post-war Poland should be sought on 18 July 1944, when during a session of the National Council and the Main Board of the Union of Polish Patriots, the Department of Information

⁸ More about the censorship as one of „official secrets” in Poland under the communist regime: Z. Łapiński, *Preface*, w: K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, s. 9–12.

⁹ [Cenzura PRL]. *Wykaz książek podlegających niezwłócznemu wycofaniu 1 X 1951 r.*, oprac. Z. Żmigrodzki, Wrocław 2002. On the same list it can also be found the name of Agatha Christie with the annotation „all works”, or less known, but no less objectionable items, such as *Memoirs of a British Agent* by R.H. Bruce Lockhart, or *Jamaica Inn*, a novel by Daphne du Maurier. As can be seen from these few examples, the reasons for disqualifying certain reading positions were both ideological (e.g., accusing du Maurier of improper representation of the bourgeois) and political reasons, the demands of which intertwined with each other.

and Propaganda was established. This department was included in the structures of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, which on 7 September 1944 issued a decree on the scope of operation and organization of the Information and Propaganda Department. In that year, Piotr Gładin and Kazimierz Jarmuż, two officers of Gławlit were delegated to prepare the censorship apparatus for the Polish territory¹⁰. The body controlling the content disseminated in the official circulation in the period 1944-56 was the Central Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Performances, established in 1945, in January 1946 the Central Censorship Office was established, and in July 1946 it was transformed into the Central Office of Press and Publications Control and Shows and functioning under that name until 1990¹¹. The Censorship Office in Poland was directly under the authority of the Ministry of Public Security. In 1949, by the ordinance of the Council of Ministers, one of the plans was finalized on the way to full dependence on the authorities: the editorial rights of non-governmental and non-party publishing houses and educational institutions were taken away. Despite this, a special position in the country was maintained by the PAX Publishing Institute, founded in 1949 by the PAX Association established in 1947 by Bolesław Piasecki¹². As a consequence of the attitude focused on cooperation with the authorities and the strong personality of the group leader, the position of this publishing institute was solid. Due to its closeness to the Catholic Church, which in Poland during communism was clashing power for decades, even the Censorship Office respected the position of this publishing institute. It does not mean that the texts submitted for publication by the PAX publishing institute did not follow the standard procedure of submitting a given work to the opinion of censors and obtaining approval for publication. *Gun for Sale* and *The Adventures of Father Brown* are particularly interesting examples as previously published before World War II in Great Britain and written by authors considered by censors as catholic writers. The publications discussed here are the first post-war reissues of both books. The content of censorship opinions about both works shows the way of thinking of the censorship office employees, the ideological training, and the perspective

¹⁰ J.M. Bates, *From State Monopoly to a Free Market of Ideas? Censorship in Poland, 1976–1989*, w: *Critical studies, Censorship & Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, red. B. Müller, Amsterdam–New York 2004, s. 142–144.

¹¹ Polish: Główny Urząd Kontroli Publikacji i Widowisk (GUKPPiW), hereinafter referred as the Censorship Office. Cf. K. Kamińska-Chełminiak, *Wpływ Związku Radzieckiego na proces tworzenia cenzury państwowej w Polsce (1944–1945)*, „*Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*” 2020, 55, s. 143–158.

¹² Although the association was formally registered in 1952.

of a country of people's democracy rereading a book created in an imperialist, capitalist, hostile country. Anticipating one of the first questions that arise when reading censorship reviews, one can ask whether Great Britain was a stereotypical example of a Western or imperialist country for Polish censors. Reading all the documents discussed in this paper regarding the narratives by Greene and Chesterton shows that a more specific distinction is not made. However, before discussing individual records, it is necessary to take a closer look at the structure of the censorship review form and the decision-making process of the Censorship Office. In the Archives of Modern History Documentation are kept six so-called preventive reviews¹³ written by censors of short stories by Chesterton and the same number of censorship reviews regarding to *A Gun for Sale* submitted for publication. The archive group also includes two additional texts provided by the PAX publishing institute as a part of discussions about the decision to publish the novel *A Gun for Sale*.

There were two types of opinions issued by the censors: the so-called „preventive review” and „secondary review”. The preventive review form was completed before the manuscript was accepted for publication. The secondary review was dedicated to texts already published and subjected to the censorship process once again, e.g., texts were re-verified after introducing changes to the law. In both cases, the content assessment was to refer to strictly defined criteria contained in „Notes” printed on the form and remind censors what they should refer to and how to respond to the content they read. From the post-war period to 1956, the layout of the review forms did not change, so the description of the document below applies to all review forms referred to in this work. The review

¹³ Preventive review is the name established by the Censorship Office for reviews written by censors before making a decision to publish the text. The second type of reviews prepared at the Censorship Office were secondary reviews, which referred to materials already published. The term „censorship review” will appear more frequently in this article because it differs from the „review” associated with a scientific review written by an expert. The censorship review was intended to control the content, although reading such documents shows that censors did not shy away from rating the aesthetics of the narrative or the sometimes surprisingly critical evaluation of works written by scientists. The research was focused on archival research in the Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw. The query of the catalogue of the Institute of National Remembrance has not yet supplemented the database with new documents, but the research will be continued, including information about the work of censors, as well in local branches of the censorship office. No information has yet been found about the censors involved in the publication of the books discussed in the article, but the IPN archives contain the files of their colleagues, e.g., Emilia Niereńska, who, as a censor, gave opinions on the editions of works of literature, but also held other positions in the security apparatus (reference number: IPN BU 0193 /3501).

form contains sections that censors completed by hand or on a typewriter. Sections are entitled as follows:

Title and subtitle [of the paper, book, etc.]; 2. Author(s); 3. Publishing company; 4. The number of copies to print; 5. A new book or reprint; 6. Original work or translation; 7. Original language; 8. Date of delivering the material to the reviewer; Notes: the review should, *inter alia*, answer the following questions: a) The subject and problem of the book, b) The ideological and socio-educational significance of the book. 9. Proposed interference and their brief justification, 10. Reviewer's application: a) grant permission, b) refuse permission, c) grant permission after making changes, 11. Reviewer's signature and date, 12. Decision.

Points three and four were not always fulfilled, the censors did not always follow the recommendations regarding the content of the review itself. In the entire archival collection, one can find opinions limited to very laconic information about the content of the work, sometimes completely omitting the written opinion about the work. There were also „engaged” reviews, extensive and supplemented with additional pages with content analysis, especially in the case when, after issuing two standard preventive reviews, it turned out that the opinions of employees turned out to be contradictory, or the decision to issue the title was still not made. Then another reviewer was appointed or the decision was made by the head of censors, hence the annotations and additional comments were usually written in pencil on the review cards and usually only initialed. Point 9. was sometimes limited to the list of page numbers on which changes should be made, or completely omitted if the content of the review itself clearly indicated flaws or errors in reasoning committed by the author in the opinion of the censor. In the case of the twelve censorship reviews cited in this article, there were no more than two-page review forms.

In the vast majority of the examined documents, a signature was used in the form of the censor's name and surname (not always legible). It also happened that reviews were signed on the first page, in the upper right corner of the page, and the signature was repeated or only initialed at the end. The dates of submitting the work for review and issuing the censor's assessment led to significant conclusions – if both were entered, it turns out that the pace of the censors' work was quite dynamic, in the case of the opinions discussed here – the reviews were submitted after a few days. The case publishing both of the books discussed here turns out to be exceptional for several reasons. First, forms were filled in for preventive reviews, even though the censors themselves sometimes use the term „reissue” in texts that discuss the novel and the collection of short stories. This was since both books had already appeared

in pre-war Poland and, looking from this perspective, it would not be the first edition of these works in this country. These were the first editions after the war, in the new state of reality, and obviously – the first for the PAX publishing institute established after the war. The second issue is the number of review forms filled in by censors – three sets for each title, so more than usual, when one set (two reviews) was generally enough to make the decision. It is known from the dates of the submission of individual opinions that the negotiations between the Censorship Office and the publishing house proceeded quickly, and the publication of both books took place immediately after the approval for publication (in the same year). This can be considered as confirmation of the strong position of PAX at the time – the books were not only published but also the introduction to Greene’s work, which some censors did not appreciate, was printed without any changes to the original text submitted for a consultation. The fact, that the text of the mentioned introduction survived in the archives is also exceptional. Keeping additional records among censorship reviews, so the entire texts on which comments were placed was not a rule in the Censorship Office.

GRAHAM GREEN, *A GUN FOR SALE*

The first set of review forms contain opinions about the novel *A Gun for Sale* by Graham Green. The Polish translation of the novel for the PAX publishing house edition was made by Andrea Otto-Tonchu-Ru. She, like Janina Kolendo, whose name will be mentioned in this paper, was a liaison officer during the Warsaw Uprising¹⁴. *A Gun for Sale*, published for the first time in 1936, tells the story of the killer Raven, who was paid for the murder of a minister of war with counterfeit banknotes, which puts the hero in the position of being hunted down but also chasing the people who betrayed him. From the genre of a sensational novel, considered by Greene himself to be „entertainment”, which was to provide a wider audience, the narration remains faithful to the author’s convictions in the layer of social analyses and deliberations on the moral condition of society. The English countryside-centered novel about stopping the war was brought to the silver screen six years after the premiere of the book and adapted to new, difficult conditions of the Second World

¹⁴ This is another proof that PAX employees came from the same socio-ideological background. Cf. K. Busse, *Wróg czy sojusznik? Stowarzyszenie PAX pod kontrolą aparatu bezpieczeństwa*, w: *Nie tylko Partia? Organizacje społeczne w Polsce Ludowej 1944–1989. Geneza, Funkcjonowanie, Znaczenie*, red. T. Rudzikowski, Warszawa 2017, s. 97–122.

War. The creators of the American film, today considered one of the classics of noir cinema, not only followed the shift in meaning already contained in the title itself, which turned from the problem of the arms trade to Raven himself (*A Gun for Sale* refers to him and his profession), but also moved the plot from fictional city Nottwich to Los Angeles. Alan Ladd was cast in the lead role, while the slightly vulgar chorus girl from the novel was transformed into the acclaimed nightclub singer and stage magician played by Veronica Lake known for her acclaimed femme fatale roles. The film adaptation was not known to the Polish censors who eventually decided to re-publish the novel in 1950. Reading the censorship reviews leads to the conclusion that the censors were poorly informed about Greene's ideological beliefs. This poses some difficulties because Greene's pro-Marxist attitude has been known from the early years of his work, and although he was disappointed with the ideology of the Soviet Union as a result of learning about the course of the Moscow trials (1936–1938), he still believed in the ideological aspect in reconciling socialism with Christianity and socialism with a human face. In 1932, while visiting Oxford, he even announced an essay competition. The author of the winning work was to go on a trip to Leningrad as a reward¹⁵.

Michael G. Brennan thoroughly discusses the dynamism of the development of the Greene's political thought, providing the reader with much evidence of the critical attitude in novels about social injustice or exploitation. Greene paid attention on the struggle of the individual, decisions of the protagonist, not the collective community. This fundamental difference to the expectations of the reader looking for the author's socialist beliefs is very clear in Greene's novels, for whom the central character becomes the driving force of the action, his experiences and reflections allow the reader to get to know the world to which the author invites the reader. Relying on individual experiences as part of the narrative and the way of presenting the worldview of the author was visible for the censors and caused the negative judgement about Greene's novel. Still, this is not a satisfactory answer to the question of why the censors treated Greene, who sympathizes with socialism, so harshly. Just two years before his new novel was submitted for publication, in 1948, he took part with over 20 English delegates in the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Peace organized at Wrocław.

Graham Greene was not included in the list of authors banned in Poland in 1950, the proposal to publish his novel would not even be discussed then. Although some censors correctly read the message of some threads of the novel containing criticism of the school system

¹⁵ M.G. Brennan, *Graham Greene: Fictions, Faith and Authorship*, London 2016, s. 25–31.

or the exploitation of representatives of the lower classes, only by reading this one book and not by broader research on the author's work and worldview. This was obviously due to the limited time allocated to issuing an opinion on a single censored copy. The employees of the Censorship Office, especially in the first years of its existence, did not have a satisfactory substantive background, both in the form of a book collection and appropriate training. Some of the staff were young and inexperienced¹⁶. Greene's works transferred to the screen, „Gun for Hire” from 1942, based on the novel discussed here, and „Fallen Idol” from 1948, were not shown in Polish cinemas.

One and a half year passed from the moment the novel was submitted for evaluation to the first censor until the last opinion concerning the 1951 edition was published. The very first review form was handed over by an employee of the Censorship Office on January 14, 1950, and the last one – was on 4 June 1951. Reviews were written in colloquial language, they often (exceptions are indicated in the further parts of the text) include simplifications and abbreviations. Authors did not always follow the rules of punctuation, which sometimes resulted in the need to read the handwritten text several times before transcribing it. The English translation tries to reflect the use of colloquial expressions and the emotional characterization of some phrases.

The author of the very first review form was Daniela Probołowska, who worked for the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows from November 1950 until 1951¹⁷. No information left about the exact moment and the reason for leaving this position. After the Second World War, she worked at the Ministry of Public Security, as the secretary and the typist, worked also as a subordinate of Julia Brystygier, who acted as director of Department V from 1945, became its director in 1950 and remained in this position until 1954. Probołowska did not belong to the group of the most eminent employees of the ministry, but when it comes to censors, her case is an exception in terms of the amount of preserved and available information on the course of her career. In most of the cases

¹⁶ K. Kamińska-Chełmniak, *Wy jesteście aparatem, który ma demaskować wroga. Polscy cenzorzy w latach 40. XX wieku*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze Kraków” 2017, 60, s. 904–921.

¹⁷ The list of names in the archives of personal files of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows employees informs that Probołowska was only employed in 1951, but in Central Archives of Modern Records (part of State Archives in Poland located in Warsaw, Hankiewiczza 1) there are files with reviews issued by this censor in 1950, i.e., after Probołowska resigned from the position of head of the Censorship Office of the Department V of the Ministry of Public Security. The famous Department V was commanded at that time by Julia Brystygier, known for her cruel attitude towards the prisoners she questioned.

examined for this article (several dozen employees out of three thousand three hundred and forty-one known by name and surname), only a few censors also worked in senior positions and left an available trace in the documentation¹⁸.

The novel was reviewed by Probołowska on January 5 and was handed over to its superiors on January 14 1951¹⁹. The censor suggested that the novel should not be released and her interpretation of the Green's work was based on the ideology imposed by the authorities in Poland at that time. This is why Probołowska states that the writer shows the „negative aspects of poverty caused by capitalism” and develops the accusation that the protagonist has an opposing attitude towards collective action in favor of independent decision-making resulting from individual motives. If the characters believed in the ideas of socialism, they would be able to assemble and fight together against capitalism, poverty, and inequality for a democratic society organized within a proper system. The censor concludes that unfortunately, the heroes created in Greene's imperialist reality are unable to unite, they turn out to be too „degraded and spoiled”, which topic Probołowska expands on in discussing the social groups appearing in the pages of the novel. It should be noted that in the review form completed by her, Probołowska devotes much attention to emphasizing the moral values of the characters, to show how corrupt and hypocritical the Western world is. She calls Marcus „squalid”, and characterizes students who appear as a group of third-plane figures as „recluses and nerds”, if they come from wealthy families. If they are poor, they turn out to be „resigned, embittered regulars of brothels, people who get into «rows» quarrels, often sadists and degenerates”. According to Probołowska, the novel also contained an anti-Semitic accent. It should be noted that the censors struggled with the subject of the representation of the Jewish nation in literature and, as will be indicated in one review

¹⁸ Akta służbowe pracowników GUKPPiW (Official files of Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows employees), Cf. Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie [dalej: AAN], Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Warszawie [dalej: GUKPPiW], sygn. 4492–7833. The issue of accessibility is a separate topic because there are personal files of individual employees of the Censorship Office, but access to them remains limited for legal reasons (Act on the national archival resource and archives from 14.07.1983 art. 16 b, pkt. 1, 2, 6; Regulation EU 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 IV 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC).

¹⁹ Submitted for evaluation: 5 I 1951; date of submission of the censorship review: 14 I 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 60. All the discussed documents can be found in the above-mentioned folder; in the following footnotes only the numbers of cards are given, and the issue date of the document, if information about such has been preserved.

of Gilbert Chesterton's collection of stories, sometimes suggested removing all references to this topic. The censor indicates three sentences that appear in the novel to be changed. The first is Sir Marcus's description, in which appears the following sentence: „He spoke with the faintest foreign accent and it was difficult to determine whether he was Jewish or of an ancient English family”²⁰. The Polish translation in the printed version²¹ replaces the word „Jew” with the word „foreigner”²². The next passus Greene refers to Sir Marcus's nationality, which comes as Raven sights at him with his gun: „Don't you want to pray? You're a Jew, aren't you? Better people than you, he said, believe in a God”²³. Polish translation omits the second question²⁴. The last sentence in the novel that was indicated by the censor to be removed or edited turns out to be impossible to identify due to the discrepancy in the page numbering of the typescript used by Probołowska. Without a broader context, this sentence turns out to be impossible to find. The censor concludes: „The whole thing, which is worthless in Poland at present, and in fact harmful, should not be released”.

The preventive review by Probołowska contains the most important elements of most of the works cited here: censors, following the guidelines for formulating reviews were obliged to read the content, in this case of the novel, having in mind an ideological influence on Polish audiences. Probołowska emphasizes capitalist-communist antagonism, which from her perspective turns out to be the only way to read the novel. The censor does not allow herself to read the novel in the historical context, look at the social conditions or the author's views, but arbitrarily adopts a pre-chosen point of view. The faithfulness and conviction with which the Probołowska fulfils her task arouse astonishment in the confrontation with the obvious abuses that are perpetrated by creating the reading of the pre-war novel in the spirit of the ideology in force in her then Poland.

It should be added that the then authorities made every effort to properly subordinate the citizens ideologically. Parallel to changes in the organization of the state, including the establishment of an office responsible for censorship, the work on changing the mentality of the society continued. As Stanisław Kondek notes, they were conducted ineffectively, because the government artificially imposed a semiotic revolution without taking time to familiarize citizens with new terms, constructs, and

²⁰ G. Greene, *A Gun for Sale*, transl. A. Tonchu-Ru, London 2005, s. 94.

²¹ Idem, *Broń na sprzedaż*, (no information about the translator) Warszawa 1951.

²² *Ibidem*, s. 142.

²³ *Ibidem*, s. 158.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 220.

a system of values. The language used by the authorities through official communications, subordinated daily press, radio broadcasts, etc., was a ritualized language, full of ideologically and emotionally charged phrases, evaluating specific attitudes and imposing a unique and correct interpretation of events. New meanings are given to particular terms, for example, binding only pejorative overtones to slogans such as the „bourgeoisie” or „the West”. The following review was issued on January 3, 1951²⁵ by an unknown censor and contains an even more radical assessment of two aspects already touched upon by Probołowska. The censor describes characters created by Greene as „foolish” if they turn out to be decent and positive characters. Although he also assigns the same attribute to the client who hires Raven. It is crucial to note that the reviewer accuses the writer of presenting the client as „stupid” as if the censor did not understand the motivations of the character or wanted to deliberately distort it. The client paid the killer with counterfeit banknotes to lead the police on his trail and get rid of the killer through the administration of justice without resorting to the use of another killer, who would cover his tracks. The whole concept of this trick was probably deliberately ignored by the censor because the plot was very clearly explained by Greene in the novel and it is difficult to find a genuine misunderstanding by the reader. Although the censor accuses Greene, or the translator – it is not entirely clear in this part of the review form – of describing the language of the novel as „vulgar”, adding the remark „entire passages full of anti-Semitic nonsense and absurd. Translation terrible”. The review itself is based on sentence equivalents, mental shortcuts and colloquial expressions, which results in an unintentional parody of the review itself than mockery of the novel as it supposed to be in censor’s intention. Here is how the censor characterizes Raven, the protagonist of *The Gun for Sale*: „The hero-murderer, a victim of social conditions, must be the son of a hanged man and a mother who committed suicide by slitting her throat with a razor. The summary leaves no doubt: the book is socially harmful, and even if somebody could take the trouble of getting it printable, it should be published with an overview: here is an example of an English socio-sensational novel. Not worth the paper”. Reading all the censorship reviews shows that the authors of the opinions about the novel did not have specific knowledge of Great Britain and treated this country just as the part of “the West”, without any deeper reflection. None of the summaries of the novel relates to the setting of origin of the author unless the censor emphasizes Greene’s alleged catholicism.

²⁵ Submitted for evaluation: 30 XII 1950; issue date of the censorship review: 3 I 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 61.

This particular opinion contains one detail characteristic of the way love relationships are described in censorship reviews in general. While this topic has not been touched upon in the rest of the documents relating to Greene and Chesterton's novels, we find similar statements relating to other books published in the same years²⁶. According to the top-down instructions, the censors were supposed to pay attention to descriptions considered too naturalistic, blunt, and erotic threads in general. Freedom in this sphere of life was identified with the Western model, thus corrupted and requiring full rejection by the socialist society. Interestingly, instructions on how to decide which content could be considered indecent were quite vague²⁷. Thus, the censor describes the relationship between Raven and the main female character sparingly as a „friendly feeling/peer relationship”²⁸.

The summary of the novel and the opinion of another censor who openly mocks the whole concept of the novel, its genre, and value, both educational and entertaining, drip even more with sarcasm and irony²⁹: „The murder of a hired thug of an undefined Minister of Military Affairs gives the author a starting point for the creation of a novel plot, full of «bloodcurdling effects», full of tracking the villain by «a nice detective» and waving an automatic pistol. Props such as the detective's love for a girl involved in the crime, a corpse hidden in a fireplace, and similar moments of «emotional tension» were also not forgotten”. The censor describes the plot assumptions constituting the starting point for the action as „so naive that they lie beyond the limits of any criticism” and concludes: „From a class point of view, the book is demoralizing and socially harmful – printing should not be allowed”. The frank statement that the novel is judged through the prism of the Marxist concept of class struggle perhaps best explains the censor's perspective. The ridicule of sensational elements aims to show the absurdity not only of Greene's writing but of Western entertainment literature in general. Communist authors, especially the valued Soviet ones, would not ridicule themselves in this way, because they convey to the readers, the working people, essential content for shaping

²⁶ An example of absurdity in this topic is the criticism of Roma Świątycka (the censor) about „lewdness” allegedly contained in *Nowele greckie* translated by Seweryn Hammer in 1951. The censor's review is in Central Archives of Modern Records. Cf. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 3018.

²⁷ Cf. K. Budrowska, *Cenzura, tabu i wstyd. Cenzura obyczajowa PRL-u*, „Napis” 2012, 18, s. 233.

²⁸ Pol. „uczucie koleżeńskie”.

²⁹ Submitted for evaluation: 23 I 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 62.

their collective identity based on the ideas of socialism. Literature serving ideology was to fulfil the propaganda task in the first place.

The collection of censorship reviews is supplemented with the written justification for the need to publish the novel by Janina Kolendo³⁰. As the PAX publishing editor, she also prepared the analysis of individual characters appearing in the novel to prove the value of the novel for readers in the People's Republic. This document is cited before the rest of the reviews because the order of preventive reviews cited in this paper also corresponds to their chronology, so Kolendo's opinion influenced subsequent censors' reviews presented below.

The introduction to Kolendo's letter to the Censorship Office is also accompanied by an introduction, which the censors did not want to approve, although the text was already published in the first edition of the novel in 1951 with its content unchanged. Janina Kolendo was the editor and publisher of the PAX Publishing Institute.

Janina Kolendo interprets the work herself, proving the legitimacy of publishing it as an illustration of the capitalist and devastating reality influence of the system on the life of citizens. Using numerous quotations, she discusses the character and motivations of the main characters and presents conclusions in line with the „party line“. Kolendo reads the novel in such a way as to convince workers of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows to agree to publish it with the presented interpretation. The author of the note states that the political thread was made fictional and detached from specific historical figures to build accusations against capitalism and imperialist war as such, not just one leader. As she notes, „crackling capitalism must resort to war to save its endangered interests“ and next „the construction of Raven's fate is an accusation against capitalism both in childhood and by the burdens of that period that brought it down the path of successive crimes“. The author recalls the influence of „pseudo-religious“ upbringing and pathological behavior of the guardians in the orphanage, who postponed corporal punishment to the second day of Christmas because of the holiday occasion. Demonstrating the hypocrisy of religious people and institutions could be used as one of the arguments showing that this particular novel can contribute to the power in Poland fighting against the Church. The fact that Kolendo herself represented a publishing house unofficially considered simply catholic should not, however, raise any major objections. The PAX Publishing Institute remained a controversial institution as it tried to reach an agreement with the authorities despite representing different

³⁰ Note on Graham Green's book *A Gun for Sale* by Janina Kolendo; typewritten on a regular A4 paper sheet (not a form). *Ibidem*, k. 64–67.

views. Such a compromise was not acceptable to everyone³¹. As an argument confirming the criticism of the imperialist and capitalist system, Kolendo invokes the words of the hero himself, who states: „in such a world it is not worth making children”³².

Kolendo extracts directly from Greene’s novel fragments allegedly proving the criticism of capitalism by the author himself, e.g., in the description of a city in which we come across wealthy bourgeois neighborhoods in the vicinity of horse slaughter and scruffy flats, between which there is the smell of boiled vegetables. Kolendo does not use quotations at this point, but generally quotes the image presented by the author, the words „There was no excuse for the ignorance of one half of the world about how the other half lives. The academic life with its fascination is macabre”³³ are the conclusion of the author of the note. The way of avoiding the placemarks of the citation by Kolendo may lead the reader to erroneous conclusions that she was quoting Greene directly³⁴. Kolendo also adds an observation that is supposed to be another evidence of Greene’s condemnation of the capitalist system, which is „the description of a police station with drunkenness, bribery, dependent on big industry, in whose hands is the real power”. The whole text seems to be written hastily, with mental shortcuts and sometimes without following the rules of punctuation. Kolendo signed the letter to the Censorship Office on January 22, 1951, so in response to the first reviews. Conclusions contained therein (three sentences) refer to the argument that the novel serves as a tool to reveal „an Anglo-Saxon myth, which, however, lingers in some societies”. Kolendo further states that the novel reveals the hopelessness of individual man’s efforts since war can only be opposed by the organized masses. Furthermore, emphasizes here the importance of community and collectivity, which distinguish a socialist society from a capitalist society, full of individuals who cannot organize themselves together - if they did, would certainly arise against the system. In the final sentence she agrees with removing the allusion that Sir Marcus was of Jewish descent.

Since, after the preparation of two standard parallel censorship reviews, no agreement was reached and the Censorship Office still had not made a decision to publish the novel. Janina Kolendo’s letter also had to be discussed and the novel was handed over to subsequent reviewers for evaluation. The opinion of the next censor contains some direct and

³¹ K. Busse, *op. cit.*, s. 97–122.

³² AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 64–65.

³³ G. Greene, *Broń*, s. 163, 170.

³⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 66.

quite ostentatious remarks that provide the modern reader with information that the censors were fully aware of the relationship between individual institutions and the position of their representatives³⁵. „The story of the girl «who saved the peace of the world» is false and naive, presents the improbable consequences of the events – so nonsense, Wallace style (a reference to Edgar Wallace). The justification for the edition in the introduction is not very convincing – improper explanations, exposure, incorrect. The book would be unnecessary – however, taking into account other (word illegible) social and political moments, it may become one of the «weekly novels» types of literature. Due to the publishing house (PAX Publishing Institute), whose political position is significant, these moments should be shown in the sharpness of falsehood, as they coincide with the position of Piasecki and the Pax group. In my opinion, a book can be published under the condition of a new, politically appropriate text”.

Contrary to the opinions of colleagues, the next censor review is the only one that appreciates the introduction by Janina Kolendo³⁶: „it is a devastating analysis of English bourgeois society, showing all the abomination of the exploiting class. In the mouth of an English writer, it is a precious thing which [word illegible] will well strike the myth of this [word illegible] life. Secondly, the book is related to the fight for peace. Of course (as emphasized in the foreword), the author erroneously poses a problem here, believing that peace can be saved here by an accidental action of individuals, but we know that it is impossible. All in all – thanks to such an appropriate preface – I see no obstacles to the publication of the work. PS – it adds a certain piquancy to the book, published by a catholic publishing house and written by a catholic writer, that it includes quite «disloyal» comments on the Church, which is also not indifferent to us”. It is equally valuable to pay attention to the fact that in the last sentence, the censor fully identified himself with the authorities using the word „us”.

The last review form³⁷ once again demonstrates an aversion to a work considered by the censor, Irena Dąbrowska signed also as B-2-117755, in advance to be a typical text representing a hostile ideology: The book by the English writer Graham Greene „A Gun for Sale” is a „monstrous criminal and sensational pulp, the appearance of which on the Polish publishing market should probably be attributed to someone’s culpable oversight”. The censor’s summary is characterized by the use of ideological

³⁵ Submitted for evaluation: 2 IV 1951; date of submission of the censorship review: 5 IV 1951. *Ibidem*, k. 73.

³⁶ Date of submission of the censorship review: 9 IV 1951. *Ibidem*, k. 74.

³⁷ Date of submission of the censorship review: 4 IV 1951. *Ibidem*, k. 76.

terminology, e.g., manufacturers or bourgeoisie, and deliberate ridicule of the plot. The censor himself has spelling mistakes, which once again adds unintended comedic quality to her work. This is how Dąbrowska portrays episodic characters: „the other book extras are prostitutes, policemen and fascist students. The Polish bourgeoisie will see what the life of the English «democracy» looks like, 3. The author blames the internal contradictions of the capitalist system; 4. Although the book is full of sensation, it does not hurt to read a well-written book on arms dealers etc. etc. They cannot defend the position that this macabre should have been published. Nota bene, all of the allegedly positive sides of the book are there. Probably only in the imagination of the publisher, who created them for the evasive explanation and justification of the need to publish this highly harmful both morally and politically nonsense. It is safe to say that the novel *A Gun for Sale*, smuggled into our book market, is a complete antithesis of the Marxist worldview and it is pointless to conduct some deeper political and ideological analysis of it. The book cannot be reprinted under any circumstances”.

Cards 76–79 in the archival folder contain the aforementioned preface to the book written also by Janina Kolendo: „*A Gun for Sale* is a sensational novel with a light plot. A nice girl of easy virtue, the only, apart from this minister, an enjoyable character in the entire book, after many vicissitudes, stops the war that an arms dealer tried to unleash between the capitalist states. [...] under the mask of sensationalism *A Gun for Sale* is a tragic novel that proves the nonsense of living in a capitalist system. [...] The symbol of the country’s rulers, the criminal Sir Marcus, a cynical cosmopolitan, who buys lives and views for money is also an unhappy man”. The author of the introduction presents a clear division of heroes according to the social groups they represent: „state dignitaries and Anglican bishops are spoiled lords of life who disregard the poorer; there are lower townspeople, terrible townspeople, exploiting and unsure of their future. Even lower, the miserable abused proletariat. There are also students, savage, fascinated students who will someday join the townspeople or Sir Marcus’ agents. There are stupid policemen, [...] there is a whole kaleidoscope of harmed people, brought up like idiots, speculators or bandits. [...] and Greene gives no way out of this world. He only accuses”.

Kolendo further agrees that the plot seems unreal and very simplified, that only a collective of people is capable of fighting for peace. The entire statement in this area corresponds to the ideological requirements of the epoch. In her text we can find also a quote from one of the censorship reviews, used in full seriousness: „it does not hurt to read a well-written book about arms dealers”. It contradicts the whole previous criticism of the plot and structure of the novel, but the priority was to obtain

approval for printing. The conclusion contains a rather subtle sarcasm referring to the most recent strikes in France at the time: „It was in January this year (1951), in connection with the attacks of the democratic French press on the proliferation of this kind of people in France, American newspapers strongly admonished the French to remember the great and responsible role of these brave and worthy of the highest respect people, merchants and private arms manufacturers, in the great work of defending Christian civilization”.

G.K. CHESTERTON, *THE ADVENTURES OF FATHER BROWN*

The Adventures of Father Brown is a collection of short stories selected from several books by Chesterton: *The Innocence of Father Brown*, *The Wisdom of Father Brown*, *The Incredulity of Father Brown*, and *The Secret of Father Brown*. The publisher used Polish translations of eight stories selected for publication before the war and does not provide information about the names of the members of the editorial team who prepared the volume discussed in this article. There is also no information, both in the correspondence between the PAX Publishing Institute and the Censorship Office, and in the book published in 1951, about the author of the introduction to the first post-war Polish edition about the adventures of an English preacher. Although, unlike the discussion surrounding *A Gun for Sale*, the editorial content is not mentioned at all, four aspects have to be highlighted by an unknown editorial member. First of all, in the second paragraph, the author of the introduction calls Chesterton a „great catholic writer”, which may be assumed as a compliment. Anticipating the critical remarks of the censors towards portraying the life of a selected social group by the writer (as censor Mieczysław Felszar describes them below: „wealthy English families – focus on the wealthy and careless representatives of the class of owners pierced the censor’s eyes”, the opinion of the author of the introduction should be recalled, where the unknown editor from PAX Publishing Institute tries to demonstrate that Chesterton „expresses fundamental truths” but also „disregards the canons of this elite culture which stands on the sidelines of life”. Reading the entire introduction may lead to the conclusion that the text is a polemical response to the accusations raised by the censors. Knowing that the objections were passed on to the publishing houses, it can be concluded that the tone chosen in the introduction is not accidental. Further on the author states even more directly that Chesterton has brought himself to be accused of „the hypocrisy of the bourgeois

world and of showing the vices to which this hypocrisy leads”³⁸. Similarly to Kolendo in the introduction to Green’s novel, the author of this introduction adopts an interpretation of the work focused on showing the writer’s criticism of the world order in which he lived.

While in the case of Greene’s writings the criticism of the system, constitution, or crisis of values does indeed exist, it is difficult to assume that Chesterton would adopt as the main mission of Father Brown’s adventures to criticize the confusion of the bourgeoisie. The author of the introduction also devotes much attention to describe Chesterton’s forbearance and confidence in the good nature of man, while remaining aware that „almost the entire modern intellectual elite of the West has blurred the line between good and evil”, while Chesterton retained „understanding wisdom full of encouragement and hope” and he did not blindly approach idealistic declarations.

Now it is necessary to look at the censorship reviews. Mieczysław Fleszar begins by criticizing the quality of the translation: „I don’t see a reason to publish *Adventures of Father Brown* for two reasons³⁹: first, – the translation is so scandalous, done by someone who does not know English, or Polish which disqualifies the book. A book written with some weird jargon cannot be allowed to admit the reader. Especially since Chesterton is a good stylist⁴⁰. Secondly – the choice of short stories raises one serious reservation. All of them justify vendetta (*The Coptic Cup*⁴¹) or personal revenge and fraud (*The Purple Wig*) or often leave the criminal with impunity (*The Man with Two Beards*). They all suggest that matters of human life can, and often should be, dealt with by a small group of people interested in this particular case without the interference of official factors – the law, public administration bodies responsible for watching over the social order⁴², etc. [...] Chesterton’s selected novellas are simply deeply immoral and they should not get into the hands of our society, whose morality is still shaken by experiences of the occupation (Felszar means here Nazi Germany Occupation during the II World War). The content of the stories is based on the life of wealthy English families. [...] It should be emphasized that the criminal elements are presented rather

³⁸ *From the Publisher*, w: G. Greene, *Broń*, s. 5.

³⁹ Submitted for evaluation: 9 I 1951; date of submission of the censorship review: 19 I 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 104.

⁴⁰ Words „good stylist” are added by hand after crossing out the two other words, illegible.

⁴¹ Censor used wrong title for *The Arrow from Heaven*.

⁴² The censor uses here another mental shortcut and it does not refer to any specific name of the administrative authority.

discreetly, by no means naturalistic. However, this is where the positive balance of stories ends. The question arises: who needs similar crime stories, who will they bring up and how. There is sensational literature on the literary market, presented in an educational form, related to positive characters. In Chesterton's stories – of course – there are no such motives. These stories do not deserve to be published"⁴³. „These novellas are known in many linguistic modifications to a wider audience. They are based on psychologizing views and criminal acts. I believe PAX can be authorized". On the reverse of the form, a list of 10 interventions to the translation of the short stories was written: Out of 10 comments, five concern the removal of the word "Jew" from the narrative. The following one suggest removing the mention of the French revolution in the short story *The Blue Cross* after the words „The French move the world not by promoting paradoxes, but by introducing truisms" – here Chesterton gave the example of the revolution. From *The Strange Crime of John Boulnois* the censor ordered to remove the opening paragraph of the story, which he considered to be „the apotheosis of the American press"⁴⁴. Another suggestion of interference can be considered quite bizarre because the censor expresses reservations about the quotation from the book of Esther (5:13), which is quoted by the main character in the same story. Father Brown's words were: „But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate". The censor demanded that the word „Jew" be removed, which was applied, although the commonly accepted Polish translation of the Bible takes the same wording as the English one, and theoretically, the publishing house could argue with this indication of interference. Ultimately the problematic word was omitted in the 1951 edition. One should ask if the censor was not aware of the fact that he was implying an interference in the quote, since Father Brown's words were put in quotation marks. However, this was not a sufficient argument for him and he did not recognize the authority of the source text. Once again, the censor only informed about the page number on which the word raises objections, therefore three consecutive indications of interference were established by carefully comparing the Polish translation with the original text of the stories. The first relates to a statement in which Hickory Crake calls the Indians „noble savage"⁴⁵, which has been translated into a repetition of the word „Indian" without any adjective. The

⁴³ Submitted for evaluation: 22 I 1951; date of submission of the censorship review: 30 I 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 105.

⁴⁴ This censorship form informs for the first time about the circulation: 10 000. Eventually the first edition was published in 15 500 copies. *Ibidem*, k. 106.

⁴⁵ G. Chesterton, *Przygody księdza Browna*, Warszawa 1951, s. 144.

last indication of interference on p. 25 of the same story is impossible to find because on the indicated page and the neighbouring ones there is no departure from the original text in the Polish translation. Taking into account the nature of the previous points, the indication of the places where the censor sought pejorative expression on the subject representatives of other nations, it could be concluded with a great deal of caution that the censor in the last indication of interference had in mind the term “Red Indian”, which in the Polish translation appeared as „Redskin”⁴⁶.

Surprisingly, the next censor praised the protagonist of the stories and observed that Father Brown is „a progressive Democrat and expresses views that can only be applauded”⁴⁷. On the other side, the same worker of the Censorship Office lists 10 places to interfere (only page numbers) and requests the revision after making changes. Unfortunately, this time identifying the sentences was not possible, but the annotations of the censor’s supervisor remained clear even though were made in pencil. It seems that seven out of ten remarks were deleted, including the question „What Roland”. The sentence must have been related to the story *The Blue Cross* included in the 1951 edition at the beginning of the collection, but in the copy handed over to censors it was placed in the middle of the book (the censor notes that the name appears on p. 80). Based on the indication of the page number of this story, it can be concluded that this censor also demanded the mention of the French Revolution to be removed.

After this series of censorship reviews, the comments were finally sent to the Pax Publishing Institute, which responded by delivering a pre-print version of the book to the Censorship Office on April 23, 1951, after the comments had been submitted. Then the book was re-assessed by censors with two secondary reviews. The decision to re-evaluate the publication shows that the Censorship Office was still concerned about the impact of the book on its readers. The author of the first secondary censorship review was Roma Świątycka, who worked in this profession for an exceptionally long time, because for 20 years (1949-69). For identifying her with one of the authors of the previous opinion, speaks the same handwriting and tones of praise regarding the aspects of the novel perceived by the censor that can be considered positive from the point of view of the ideology in a communist regime. Furthermore, Świątycka observes: „In the preface to this book, the editors do what they can to reduce the progressive aspects of the stories to zero. It seems to me that the circled sections should be removed or amended”. Although the text

⁴⁶ Date of submission of the censorship review: 2 II 1951. AAN, GUKPPiW, sygn. 2833, k. 155.

⁴⁷ Date of submission of the censorship review: 5 IV 1951. *Ibidem*, k. 109.

was submitted for review on April 28, 1951, the censorship review was not submitted until August, as indicated by a handwritten note. The text of the secondary review was created on the form intended for preventive review (both differ only in the headings)⁴⁸.

The friendly reception of Chesterton writings by the last censor is apparent immediately⁴⁹. The text written with a typewriter without Polish diacritics was corrected by hand, this time also with taking care of stylistic corrections made over the text and punctuation: „Book by G.K. Chesterton's *The Adventures of Father Brown* contains eight stories of a detective character. Against this background, the author discusses his philosophical considerations. Using sharp satire, he makes fun of snobs, idlers, and business people. The protagonist of these stories is a modest priest Brown, who in every story is the best detective who solves criminal mysteries". As it can be noticed, the data provided by the censor is not particularly sophisticated, but correctly reflects the content of the stories and for the first time we may assume that the worker of the Censorship Office even enjoyed the book. „It is the epitome of a modest, but wise and healthy-looking man. Why exactly the priest is the hero of these stories – is not known. At any rate, apart from the title, nothing in Brown reveals his spiritual calling. Brown's book can be described as a crooked mirror for certain manifestations of the life of Anglo-American bourgeois society... new poetry and the new moral beauty of modern civilization [...] The book does not have any didactic value, but despite this, it is quite pleasant reading, which does not raise any special objections".

FINAL THOUGHTS

Reading the censorship opinions allows us to look at the office's working methods and learn about the individual opinions of censors regarding both the general aesthetics of the novel in question and the censor's interpretation of ideology. We can observe here attitudes full of commitment and willingness to „track down” irregularities or evidence that Western literature presented a dangerous world because it was a capitalist and imperialist reality, that the described evil and atrocities could only happen in a hostile system. Therefore, *A Gun for Sale* was

⁴⁸ Date of submission of the censorship review: 28 IV 1951; number of the censor: B-17-866 and note made by pencil with the information about the number of copies to be printed: 15500. *Ibidem*, k. 112.

⁴⁹ The date of submission of the censorship review: 15 IX 1951; censor identifying number: 2B 178-66. The same number is printed on the first edition of the book. *Ibidem*, k. 116.

considered a suitable novel to pass on to Polish readers – to warn and educate them. In the case of *The Adventures of Father Brown*, the situation is somewhat different. The interpretation of the censors followed a different path, taking into account the risk of translating the message of the stories into the everyday life of the reader. As one of the censors noted, a departure from the authority of the police towards punishment, e.g., in the form of a caution or burdening the conscience with guilt, could encourage recipients to dangerously undermine the need to appeal to the authorities. Attention is also drawn to the guidelines for interference related to threads considered to be discriminating against specific groups (which resulted in the removal of any mention of them) and comments indicating stricter criteria related to morality.

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NOTA O AUTORZE

Gabriela Gajda – w rozprawie doktorskiej *Filologia klasyczna w Polsce w latach 1944–1956 wobec przemian politycznych i nacisku ideologicznego* (Uniwersytet Wrocławski) łączy warsztat historyka z badaniami literaturoznawczymi, analizując archiwalia Urzędu Cenzury pod kątem funkcji języka jako nośnika ideologii. Od roku 2016 współpracuje z Polskim Towarzystwem Filologicznym.

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Gabriela Gajda – in the doctoral thesis *Classical philology in Poland in the years 1944–1956 in the face of political changes and ideological pressure* (University of Wrocław) combines the workshop of a historian, examining, among others, archives of the censorship office, with the workshop of a philologist exploring the problem of language as a carrier of ideology. Since 2016 has been cooperating with the Polish Philological Association.