



Relation on the Line Government-Media (Based on the Situation in Poland after 1945)

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Abstract

Between 1944 and 1989, Poland belonged to the countries of 'Eastern Block'. It was associated with a number of political, social and economical consequences. The most important institution, which was trying to control all the major social issues, was announced the Polish United Workers' Party. Therefore, the undeniable fact was that in the initial phase of Communist authorities, they managed to reduce and even to eliminate the effects of many opposition activists, including the Church. In that process, the media were used and they were politicized in every possible way. In December 1944, it was established the Ministry of Information and Propaganda and then in 1946 it was established the Central Office of Control of the Press, Publications and Performances which was the main organ of censorship until 1989. After 1989, the situation of media was changed drastically. There were established several private broadcasting stations and many newspaper publishers. Since that moment the media have started to take over the dominant role to form so-called 'the Fourth Estate'. However, undoubtedly both the authorities and the media have been connected by the network of interdependencies.

The aim of this work is to present the evolution of the press and its activities over the last 60 years in Poland. The analysis of selected issues is based on a changing political situation during chosen period of time.

Presented considerations are based on an assumption that in Poland the tasks of the press institutions were different before and after 1989. They were mainly influenced by the political system and also the legal and administrative conditions.

In performed analysis is used a historical - critical method of existing archival data and other source materials, including the normative acts.

Key words: Transition, Eastern Europe, media, press, politics, Poland

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Polish media in the early postwar years

In July 1944, on the Polish territories occupied by the Red Army there was formed a new political organization called the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polish: Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego – PKWN*). That organization initiated by the Soviet was a kind of counterbalance for the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile (*Polish: Rząd Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na uchodźstwie*) which was recognized by the anti-Hitler coalition countries. It was also a signal of Soviet interest to introduce the post-war Polish country under their sphere of impact. The provisions of the Yalta Conference led to the real division of European lands between two blocks. Among countries under the patronage of Moscow beside Poland, there were found the People's Democracy Countries i.e. the German Democratic Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the People's Republic of Hungary, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Socialist People's Republic of Albania and also outside Europe, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Cuba. Sometimes, historians exclude from above group the following countries: the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the rule of Josip Broz Tito and also the People's Republic of China, the Socialist People's Republic of Albania (Krajewska & Krajewski, 2013: 267- 273).

In the first days of a gradual takeover of control in each country by the communists, including Poland, they introduced the planned development of media manipulation. As it was mentioned many times by researches of that period of time, in the Communism words were primarily served to hide the truth (Habielski, 2009: 196). The political assumptions, which were adopted by the communist authorities, were generally determined. The primary objective was *'complete dependence and subordination of the media which were supposed to be in its significant part a fragment of the political system, and at the same time its instrument'* (Habielski, 2009: 196). Those guidelines were not changed significantly during the entire existence period of the Polish People's, and since 1952 the Polish People's Republic.

In 1944, they took place the post-war activities aimed at the creation (or restoration) and the systematization of existing system of media, i.e. the press and the radio. As the historians emphasize, the crucial issue was a rule which was not undergone any public consultation. Moreover, it was said that the press and other media were a kind of social good and hence their founders, owners and disposers could be only the publishing cooperatives, the political parties, the social organizations, the state or scientific institutions, but not private persons. Additionally, that rule imposed a state monopoly in the field of communication for the public and journalistic environment (Habielski, 2009: 173). That monopoly was initiated to create the own nationwide mass press facilities by the communist authorities. As part of that activities, it was increased the impact of the most important journals of the Polish Socialist Party (*Polish: Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS*) 'The Worker' (*Polish: Robotnik*) and the Polish Workers' Party (*Polish: Polska Partia Robotnicza – PPR*) 'The Voice of the People' (*Polish: Głos Ludu*) (Łojek & Myśliński & Władyka, 1988: 90). In 1948, both newspapers were combined creating 'The People's Tribune' (*Polish: Trybuna Ludu*) which was one of the largest issued newspapers published in the Polish People's Republic. Also, two smaller satellite parties launched an intensified activity of press. The Peasants' Party (*Polish: Stronnictwo Ludowe – SD*) started to function by creating 'The People's Daily'

(*Polish: Dziennik Ludowy*), a weekly 'The Village' (*Polish: Wieś*) and the monthly periodical 'The Peasant Thought' (*Polish: Myśl Chłopska*). The Alliance of Democrats (*Polish: Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*) began to publish 'The Daily Courier' (*Polish: Kurier Codzienny*) and 'The New Age' (*Polish: Nowa Epoka*). Moreover, at the same time they were created several new titles of national and trade magazines which all of them were subordinated the Communists. In the middle of 1943, the press organ of the People's Polish Army began printing – 'The Soldier of Freedom' (*Polish: Żołnierz Wolności*) (Komornicki, 1965: 22-24) and since October 1944 it started to be published a capital journal 'The Life of Warsaw' (*Polish: Życie Warszawy*).

The Catholic press as well as the opposition publishers operating legally until 1947 were only partially independent. However, it was not related with the existence of freedom of expression and freedom of speech in reborn Poland (Habielski, 2009: 172).

At the same time, it was established the Department of Information and Propaganda which changed its name to the Ministry of Information and Propaganda (*Polish: Ministerstwo Informacji i Propagandy – MIP*) after the transformation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polish Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego – PKWN*) into the Provisional Government. The scope of ministry activities was quite broad. Beside a support of daily and periodical newspapers, it was also responsible for: press agencies, radiophony, film production and cinematography, houses of culture, informational publishers, as well as extensive and massive, domestic and foreign propaganda. The main tasks of that institution were the management of printing houses, the paper assignment and pre-selection of censorship (Strzyżewski, 1977). In 1945, the range of tasks was expanded about the activities of coronary and the organization of demonstrations. Also, there were attempts to influence on social attitudes through manipulations and gossips. The ministry also managed the Central School of Propaganda Instructors (*Polish: Centralna Szkoła Instruktorów Propagandy*) and the Central Political-Educational School (*Polish: Centralna Szkoła Polityczno-Wychowawcza*). By the spring of 1945 when the communists strengthened their position, they began to create the provincial offices and local branches of the ministry (Habielski, 2009: 180).

In the same year, at the request of the ministry it was established the new organ whose the main task was a preparation of information service for the press, radio and also the state offices and institutions. It was called Polpress. In the following years, the organization changed its name to the Polish Press Agency (*Polish: Polska Agencja Prasowa – PAP*) and in 1947 after the termination of the Ministry of Information and Propaganda it came under the sovereignty of the government. That institution has been working constantly without changing its name until today. After the revolution of political system in Poland in 1991, there was a symbolic connection the Polish Press Agency and the Polish Telegraphic Agency (*Polish: Polska Agencja Telegraficzna – PAT*) – the informational organ of the immigration authorities (PAP, 2013).

The next very important point of communists activities was the introduction of universal media censorship. The institution which was responsible for the censorship started to work in 1944, when it was formed the Central Bureau of Press Control with the help of the Soviet specialists (*Polish: Centralne Biuro Kontroli Prasy*). In March 1945, as it was announced under the regulation, the acceptance from the side of censorship institution was necessary to print: all materials with informative character (newspapers, newsletters, magazines) as well as reprints of newspaper, magazines and books, textbooks, calendars, scientific works, literature, performing arts, poetry, songs,

slogans, leaflets, proclamations, appeals, announcements of various types, drawings, caricatures and monthly reports. The printing of newspapers and magazines was only possible after the acceptance of by a chief editor and a censor and after putting the stamp with the words 'It may be printed' (*Polish: Zezwala się na drukowanie*) (Habielski, 2009: 180).

In the next year, the Central Bureau of Press Control changed its name to the Main Audit Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control (*Polish: Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk – GUKPPiW*) which was formally subordinated to the Council of Ministers. Additionally, they were changed the competences of the newly-established institution. Beside the control activities and after the final liquidation of the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, it received the concession opportunities. It meant that the Main Audit Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control decided which titles, how often and how many copies of them had the rights to be published. Moreover, the censorship had a real impact on the selection of the newspaper staff and its publisher.

The adopted program assumptions of the communists and the created structure of repression and censorship functioned in a practically unchanged form through the entire Stalinist period until the 'thaw' of 1956. When under the influence of the social instances, the communist authorities decided to modify certain guidelines, including a sphere of the media.

Millennium Campaign as a sign of the media battle between the state authorities with the Church. Epoch of the 'Gomułka socialism'

In October 1956, there was a political crisis in Poland. During the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polish: Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej – KC PZPR*) Władysław Gomułka, who was released from prison a few months earlier, was elected for the First Secretary of party. At the same time, there was made a number of other personnel changes in the composition of the Central Committee. In the first speech, Gomułka announced the liberalization of economic and social relations, the improvement of situation in the country with maintaining continuity of the communist party (Dudek, 1995: 29). In the first days of the new government, it was proclaimed a resolution related to a 'reduction of the censorship competences' during 8th plenum at the party meeting in Warsaw headquarters of the Main Audit Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control (Habielski, 2009: 233).

The October social atmosphere and reorganization of authorities led to conclusions that in Poland it could have been created a new system of media functioning as a result of those changes. It was assumed that they would have achieved a high level of independence. However, those opinions were verified very quickly by the policy of new First Secretary because the press (not only political) adopted his election with an authentic enthusiasm. In the beginning, Gomułka tried to accept some press diversities, including the ideological diversity, but he did not want to tolerate a disobedience and the 'subversive slogans'. Therefore, quite rapidly he started the works aimed at 'tempering the atmosphere' and the restoration of censorship controls. Once again the Main Audit Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control became an effective tool which protected the party interests. The communist authorities were again suspicious against all forms of deviations from the established directions. Furthermore,

they were ready to intervene wherever their authority or their monopoly seemed to be affected. They tried to impose on the society a vision of the internal and international situation which resulted from the ideological character of system (Habielski, 2009: 237, 242, 247).

The sign of the conflict between the government vs. the free media (which there were very few at that time) became the events of the years 1958-1966. In 1957 the Catholic Church in Poland proclaimed the preparation for a celebration of the Millennium of the Polish Baptism which should have occurred in 1966. The communist authorities reacted quickly on the growing activity of the Church by taking a massive propaganda campaign aimed at minimizing their impact on the Polish society. From the point of view represented by the communists, their reaction was more than understandable. The Millennium of the Polish Baptism undermined indirectly the 'socialist' character of the country by classifying the Polish citizens as the Catholics. Thus, that event caused to increase the impact on the society of ecclesiastical authorities in comparison to the state authorities (Krajewska & Krajewski, 2013: 267- 273). As the most important action the communist authorities decided to establish an own secular celebrations which could have been a counterweight to the Church campaign. As a result of that initiative, in 1958 they proclaimed the Polish State Millennium which became the main point of media campaign. Its essential purpose was precisely formulated by the Department of Propaganda and Agitation (*Polish: Wydział Propagandy i Agitacji*) and the Administrative Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polish: Wydział Administracyjny Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej*). According to the guidelines, the Polish People's Republic was 'a crowning achievement of the development process of nation and state, the heir of patriotic and progressive tradition of the entire millennial achievements of the nation' (Habielski, 2009: 262-263).

'Battle for the number of souls' (Wilanowski, 2002) of Polish citizens – the Catholics who represented a large majority of country, which counted over 27 million of inhabitants (GUS, 1956: 24), took place in the years 1965-1966 when the Millennium Campaign was linked with the anti-German propaganda. Until 1970 the Federal Republic of Germany did not accept their western border with Poland placed on the Oder and Neisse. Therefore, the authorities of the Polish People's Republic usually responded using the political attacks on the Federal Republic of Germany which were related to the 'historical' danger coming from their site. The press, journalism, literature, radio and also film were included to that battle about the Polish reasons of state. Those steps were slightly in the conflict with the assurances about the inviolability of borders proclaimed by the communist authorities. As historians highlight, 'it was not about the logic, but about the consolidation of society and legitimizing through history' (Habielski, 2009: 262-263). A great opportunity to join the anti-German and the anti-Church threads was an announcement of *The message of the Polish bishops to the German bishops* (Opoka, 2013) in 1965. That message of representatives of Polish Church to the representatives of the Western German Church was received as an anti-Polish action by the communist authorities, mainly due to the ending phrase of message – 'we forgive and we ask for forgiveness'. According to the arrangements of state authorities, the campaign to honor the Polish State Millennium was not supposed to have an anti-religious character but it was aimed at people who were against the Polish rights (Habielski, 2009: 262-263). Despite the actions taken by the state institutions, they did not achieve to reduce the significance of Church

celebrations. Any harassment and any press anti-Church campaigns did not bring the expected results. The celebrations of the Millennium of the Polish Baptism did not contribute only to strengthen the Catholicism among the Polish Nation but also they became the political expression of the union between the faithful and the Church. On the other hand, that attitude was also a kind of distrust sign against the communist authorities and other organizations linked with them (Krajewska & Krajewski, 2013: 267- 273, Noszczak, 2010).

Press in the years 1970-1989/1990

At the turn of 1970, the process of media transformation was started. One of its sign was a beginning of the second cycle of publishing (самызда́т) which was not under the control of communist censorship institutions. Those activities became even more intense after the change of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in December 1970. Despite the activities of the independent press, the state media still occupied the most important and indivisible places in the country. Even after the takeover a control by the new ruling crew, 'the media were immediately harnessed in the service of legitimizing of new crew, using a tested convention of mystification' (Habielski, 2009: 278). The main objectives of legally operating media were appointed by the activists of the Communist Party in frame of the 6th congress. In a resolution, which was adopted a year after Edward Gierek became the First Secretary, there was stated that '(...) the main task of the press, radio and television is a comprehensive action of information and current affairs for a permanent consolidation of the entire nation around the party and its program. Therefore, it should improve systematically the all system of mass media based on the gained experience and the postulates of society (...)' (Habielski, 2009: 280). Thus, it was sanctioned the sovereignty of party over the media and the ability to use them for the party purposes.

At the turn of the years 1970 and 1980, a method of censorship of emitted materials became more effective. The censorship staff in all departments was expanded, with a special regard to the television. According to the guidelines, everything, which was considered as 'incompatible with the spirit of the times', could have been rejected by the censor. A current control over the process of television program creating was responsible for intensifying auto-censorship habits. The norm became 'not telling about the things that the authorities would not like' (Habielski, 2009: 280).

The institutions of the media management and control operating in the Polish United Workers' Party were also reorganized. In January 1972, the Press Office (*Polish: Biuro Prasy*) was linked with the Department of Propaganda and Agitation and it was created the Department of Propaganda, Press and Publishers (*Polish: Wydział Propagandy, Prasy i Wydawnictw*). One year before, it was established the office of government spokesman – the institution which was previously unknown in the Polish People's Republic.

In the media, there was presented a campaign informing the society about the ongoing economic growth in the country. The essence of the '*propaganda of success*' was confined to attract the public attention towards a policy of accelerated development which was carried out by the First Secretary. Its realization was supposed to be based on the economy modernization, increasing a prosperity and improving the living standards of citizens. Those intentions could be found in two the most popular slogans

of that time: *'We are building the second Poland'* (Polish: *Budujemy drugą Polskę*) and *'in order Poland is growing in strength, and people are living a prosperous'* (Polish: *Aby Polska rosła w siłę, a ludziom żyło się dostatniej*). The main task of media was reduced to exaggerate the successes of ruling party and to glorify their achievements. The consumerist policy carrying out on the basis of the foreign loans had a breakdown in the middle of 70s. At that time, it took place an erosion of the communist system stability and the formation of some organizations with social character which retreated from the cooperation with the communist authorities. The political crisis and associated with that the liberalization of the media occurred in 1980. Then, under the influence of a wave of workers' strikes the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" was formed (Friszke & Persak & Sowiński, 2013, Garton, 1990).

Even before the introduction of the martial law on the territory of Poland, in October 1981 the resolution about the control of publications and performances came into a force. Article 1, point 1 of the resolution indicated that the Polish People's Republic *'ensure freedom of speech and press in the publications and the performances'* (Dz.U.1981.20.99). However, in the following point there were listed the values where freedom of speech could not have been applied. The restrictions were related to the issues such as an insult of the independence and territorial integrity of the Polish People's Republic, an incitement to overthrow, abuse, ridicule and humiliate of the political system and finally the *'constitutional principles of the Polish People's Republic foreign policy'*. The intended to distribute contents were sent to a preliminary inspection called a preventive censorship. But the following contents were out of preliminary censorship control: the speeches of deputies and councilors, the decisions of courts, the reprints of publications issued after 1945 (which obtained a permission to print previously), the publications and textbooks, the works of Polish literature prior to 1918, the scientific and educational publications, the statistical information and the Church publications with a character of *'faith transmission'* (Dz.U.1981.20.99).

In the end of December 1981, the political and social situation was changed and as a consequence the above mentioned amendment was not applied. After the introduction of martial law, the way of information spread was based on the notice of the Council of State and the Decree of on Martial Law (Dz.U.1981.29.154). Under the first regulation it was prohibited without a consent of the *'competent authorities'* to distribute all sorts of publications and information and to use the printing machines (Habielski, 2009: 321). Thus, there was implemented a total paralysis of the media. All the functioning institutions were totally subordinated to the state authorities. That situation remained until a final abolition of the martial law in July 1983.

In the years 1983-1990, it was observed a slow and systematic reduction of the state authorities impact in the area of media. At that time, the progressive economic crisis led to focus on the economic issues by the state authorities. At the end of that period, especially during the meeting of *'the Round Table'* (Kancelaria Prezydenta RP, 1999; Codogni, 2009; Reiff, 1989), there was noticeable the growth in the number of independent magazines. Besides the quantitative character, that trend also had the qualitative nature. As it was possible to notice, the number of bimonthlies and quarterlies decreased in comparison to the number of dailies, weeklies and monthlies. That tendency presents the table below.

Table 1. Dynamics of a press offer by the typological groups in the years 1980-1990.

Group of Titles	YEARS				
	1980	1985	1988	1989	1990
Daily	52	51	50	53	73
Weekly	137	180	191	239	278
Biweekly	96	103	110	130	144
Monthly	564	592	626	678	646
Bimonthly and Quarterly	625	609	850	748	657
Other	1096	1408	1401	1452	1339
SUM	2570	2943	3228	3300	3137

Source: Own description based on data from the Central Statistical Office.

Transformation of 1989 and its implications for the media

During the initial phase of political and economic transformations in Poland, in May 1989 it was occurred a significant change in the press activity. The main and essential point of that transition was a liquidation of the censorship institution. Eventually, the Main Audit Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control, which was responsible for the control activities, finished its operations on 11th April 1990 under the new press law (Dz.U.1990.29.73). In the same document, it was also noted that ‘according to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the press uses the freedom of expression and embodies the right of citizens to their reliable information, transparency of public life, control and social criticism’ (Dz.U.1990.29.73) as well as ‘the press is committed to present real events’ (Dz.U.1990.29.73). Besides the ideological overtones, that declaration had a real impact on the transformation in the field of mass media, especially the press. Most of the existing at that time titles performed the enforced transformations caused by the present political situation by getting rid of the politically inconvenient names or the editorial management. In addition, it occurred a spontaneous development of new newspapers directed to a wide range of customers. The first phase of changes, which lasted approximately two years (from May 1989 to July 1991), was characterized by a spontaneity and an extensive dynamism (Filas, 1999: 37). After a period of mandatory transformations, there was observed an annual phase of the apparent market stabilization which led to the ‘open battle for a media market, especially the audiovisual media’ in early 1993. The development of the market and its new division (ongoing from the end of 1994 to the present) is characterized by a significant dynamism in the field of mass media, in particular the press. In the table 2 there is presented an evolution of Polish press market in the years 1995-2012.

Table 2. Number of periodical titles and their combined single editions number in the years 1995-2012.

Years	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Titles in absolute numbers	4448	5534	5837	6189	6309	6502	6721	6759	6948	7229	7423	7655	7764	7827
Total single editions (in thous. copies)	83833,9	72332,4	78481,3	76093,9	74095,2	77379,6	86858,5	82912,8	83853,2	86182,2	87353,2	90796,2	91027,8	no data

Source: Own description based on data from the Central Statistical Office.

In 1997, a fundamental sanctioning of political changes in Poland took place. The expression of that event was the establishment of the new Constitution of the Republic of Poland on 2nd July 1997. In the 14th article of this document, it was provided the freedom of the press and other mass media (Dz.U.1997.78.483). Moreover, in the 54th article, it was guaranteed to every citizen ‘the freedom to express of their views and to obtain and to disseminate the information’. It was also mentioned that ‘the preventive censorship of the mass media and the licensing of the press are prohibited’(Dz.U.1997.78.483).

Thus, the state authorities wanted to distance from the legacy of the previous system in which the freedom of own opinion expression was sanctioned. The media, which took the form of mass medium, became the opinion formers. There is no doubt that the appearance of the private media resulted in the further transformation of the relations between the government and the media. The ‘Fourth Estate’ changed the form and scope of its activities and also gained a significant dose of sovereignty. However, it is not possible to separate completely a strong attachment between the media and the state authorities. Nowadays, the media are somehow responsible for the creation of political views in comparison to the previous political system where the state authorities exerted a significant influence on the contents of media.

Conclusions

The aim of this work is to show the evolution of the mass media in Poland and their activities during the last 60 years in the context of the changing of political situation. It is only presented a brief abbreviation of long and complex period in the history of Polish media market development and depicted subject cannot be closed only in this work. It does not deplete fully the adopted issues and it undergoes the ageing process of the presented actual information. However, it should be noted that this work fulfills the assumptions in the context of the press transformation in Poland in the last sixty years. It is worth to underline that the press was strongly affected by the state authorities in the

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period of the Polish People's Republic and it was also served as a tool for the propaganda purposes. The good example of using the press to fight against the communist authorities opponents was the millennium campaign of 1966. In the period after 1989, these kinds of actions were overcome by applying the constitutional legal guarantees and the liquidation of the censorship institutions. But it does not mean the total independence of the press from the state institutions and its permanent impartiality. The author omitted intentionally the characteristics of different areas of the mass media such as radio, television and Internet.

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