

***On rotting eggs, swallow nests and lacquered ducks***  
**– culinary topics in Łódź press 1949–1956**

I

The aim of the article is to discuss the techniques for (not)informing the citizens of the Polish People's Republic (PPR)<sup>1</sup> about the shortcomings of supply in the food and gastronomy industry and about other aspects of its functioning. The choice of the topic corresponds with two basic areas of my research: cuisine in literature and the post-war era censorship.

The research presented in this paper focuses on articles selected from Łódź press from 1949–1956, analysis of which made it possible to answer the question of how the execution of the contemporary government policy influenced the content and the form of what was written about food. They also make it possible to say to what extent the presented texts depicted the real (and, what is more interesting, not always positive) condition of the food sector – to what extent the journalists presented just the official reality which had little to do with factual information. I will try to answer the question of which content was permitted and which was cut out by the censors' scissors<sup>2</sup>.

The food and restaurant sector in the PPR is not an unpopular topic among researchers or artists<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, many stereotypes have appeared about

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<sup>1</sup> The Polish People's Republic was the official name of Poland from 1952 until 1989. According to Constitution of 1947 the official name (until 1952) was the Republic of Poland. In my article I use both names.

<sup>2</sup> I quote data from Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN) as cited mainly in G. Mnich, *Ingerencje cenzury w łódzkiej prasie codziennej (1949–1956). Między prawdą a sielanką*, „Kronika miasta Łodzi” 2012, no 4, pp. 64–74. See also the article in a modified version: G. Mnich, *Obraz Łodzi na łamach prasy*. 3. *Życie codzienne i „od święta”*, in: idem, *Łódzka prasa codzienna w okresie stalinowskim (1948–1956)*, Dom Wydawniczy Księży Młyn, Łódź 2014, pp. 234–250.

<sup>3</sup> It is sufficient to mention a few popular and popular-science works made both in the period and after 1989: the films of Stanisław Bareja (the food scenes from *Miś* – probably the most famous

everyday life in those times, including the broadly defined culture of the table. The generation of people nearing their forties wants to see the time of their childhood as a rather good period, thus censoring (*nomen omen*) unpleasant consequences of the political situation that befell Poland after Yalta. The nostalgic-comic narration about vinegar on shelves is seldom interwoven with less funny information about speculators responsible for the shortage of meat<sup>4</sup>.

## II

Anyone who has ever browsed through censors' files will admit that it is much easier to track down their interventions into press and non-serial publications *ex definitione* created not in line with the government's policy<sup>5</sup> than it is to investigate those being the propaganda bullhorn of the state institutions. However, sociology of literature in PPR cannot be limited to the dichotomy of works dependent on the party's and GUKPPiW's (the *Polish Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows*) instructions and those which purposefully disobeyed them. In the article I show that the former exhibit "malfunctions" – usually in the form of an oversight or unintended mistakes, but also one can

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one takes place in a typical milk bar of the time called "Apis", which serves puree with jam rather than lard); *Co mi zrobisz, jak mnie złapiesz* (a queue as a permanent element of everyday life in PPR) are ones of the most iconic for our memories of the food culture in PPR; B. Brzostek, *PRL na widelcu*, Baobab, Warsaw 2010, A. Fiedoruk, *Prywatne smaki PRL-u*, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2011, W. Kot, *PRL od kuchni. Najlepsze przepisy z tamtych lat*, Olimp Media, Poznań 2009, C. Prasek, *Życie towarzyskie w PRL. Zabawy, kawiarnie, festiwale*, Bellona, Warsaw 2011.

<sup>4</sup> It is sufficient to mention a show trial started in 1964 in the so-called "meat scandal". On 2 II 1965 the provincial court in Warsaw passed a judgement that resulted in death sentence for Stanisław Wawrzcki, the director of Warszawski Handel Mięsem (the Warsaw Meat Trade) with other speculators sentenced to jail. In 2004 the Supreme Court issued cassation of those sentences. Indignation was caused by the length of the prison sentences which were disproportionate to the accusations (e.g. bribery) but also by the very mode in which the accused were sentenced (it was the so-called urgent admission whose sentences the accused could not cancel).

<sup>5</sup> We should remember that the relationship between the state and the church was far from friendly. Catholic periodicals usually have sizeable censorship files. For the catholic press censorship see e.g. M. Trąba, *Cenzorskie oceny tygodników katolickich „Gość Niedzielny” i „Niedziela” w pierwszych latach naporu ideologicznego*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy. Ograniczanie wolności słowa na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, a collection of studies edited by D. Degen and J. Gzella, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 2010, pp. 375–390. Apart from press articles there were also authors who from the beginning of their careers did not want to subordinate themselves to policies of the state apparatus, see an article about the hardships of a disobedient artist B. Tyszkiewicz, *Pod prąd. Jerzy Zawieyski wobec zmian w polityce kulturalnej państwa w latach 1945–1955*, in: *„Lancetem a nie maczugą”. Cenzura wobec literatury i jej twórców w latach 1945–1965*, edited by K. Budrowska, M. Woźniak-Łabieniec, IBL, Warsaw 2012, pp. 11–41.

find attempts to intentionally (albeit gently) steer away from the guidelines of the censorship.

While working on the article I went through selected editions of “Dziennik Łódzki” and “Express Ilustrowany” from 1949–1956<sup>6</sup>. All the articles regarding the topic of cuisine have been used in my research. However, for clarity I have mentioned only those publications that proved especially helpful in recreating the actual shape of the food sector in Łódź and its vicinity within the relevant timeframe.

### III

A reader unfamiliar with the PPR’s procedure of permitting the texts to be printed may assume that the most important role in the publication process was played by institutional censorship<sup>7</sup>. It is just partly true since the censorship office was just one of the many instruments responsible for controlling the text from the moment it was created (or even was being created if we consider the creators’ own control mechanisms) until its publication. A very important function in press texts (especially the texts presented in this article – texts from newspapers presenting information in accordance with the guidelines of the party and

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<sup>6</sup> Those newspapers were very popular in PPR: “Dziennik Łódzki” (founded in 1884; the post-war editions were published from 1 II 1945 r.); “Express Wieczorny Ilustrowany” (the first edition was published on 2 VII 1923; the title remained unchanged until 1939, but from 17 I 1946 it was published as “Express Ilustrowany”). In the article I also mention “Głos Robotniczy” (an organ of Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers Party) and from 1949 of PZPR (Polish United Workers Party); the newspaper was first published in June 1945).

<sup>7</sup> The Polish Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in Warsaw was founded with a decree of the State National Council and the Council of Ministers (*Dekret z dnia 5 lipca 1946 r. o utworzeniu Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk.*, Dz.U. z 1946 r. Nr 34, poz. 210). On 9 V 1949 the Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz issued a decree about organisation and properties of the Polish Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows and its subordinates. That document states that the institution would have its local branches called voivedship and municipal offices of control. Point 3 of the decree states that „for the city of Łódź and Łódź voivedship one voivedship office of control is hereby created” (*Rozporządzenie Prezesa Rady Ministrów z dnia 9 maja 1949 r. w sprawie organizacji i właściwości Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk oraz urzędów podległych.*, Dz.U. z 1949 r. Nr 32, poz. 241). This made the Łódź branch one of the seventeen representatives in the country (from 1975 there were 49 local offices – the number corresponds with the new number of voivedships; it should be noted that the name also changes from the Voivedship Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows to Branch of the Polish Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows) and was set up on 9 V 1949. The Łódź branch was located at 8 Parkowa street.

the state<sup>8</sup>) was served by the already mentioned self-censorship<sup>9</sup>. It was common for a journalist and/or a publicist to know what they can and cannot publish. That self-censorship mechanism was aided by mechanisms of dependence operating in local and broader structures. It was those procedures (written and unwritten) that preceded the last stage, that is, the proper intervention of a censor<sup>10</sup>. Its purpose could be to “repair” the text – when the censor removed accidental or intentional printing errors, botches, slips of the pen or ambiguities they spotted in the text. It could also take the form of more profound changes when it was necessary to cross out disturbing fragments or even to reject the whole text<sup>11</sup>.

An average reader of (not only Łódź) press could not see any signs of censors’ interventions since they were not marked in any way. Each rejected fragment was replaced with its improved version and the place of the whole rejected text was taken by a different one<sup>12</sup>. The result was that each editorial board was equipped with surplus articles which could replace those rejected ones.

When discussing both the characteristics of press writing of 1945–1956 and the censors’ interventions it is necessary to avoid one-sidedness. The journalists as well as the workers of GUKPPiW and its local branches were usually aware that press articles could not explicitly contradict the external conditions of the real world. That “administration of truth” in small doses was also present in food and restaurant sector. Even more so since some information about the state’s culinary policy was the secret of the state. The information about the problems with provisioning, which suggested that shops were lacking basic food products, was

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<sup>8</sup> The article does not discuss those press articles that could undoubtedly worry the censorship nor does it present the authors who didn’t always obey the rules of self-censorship (or just did not experience it), see the biweekly satirical magazine “Karuzela”, published in Łódź in the years 1957–1992.

<sup>9</sup> About this “internal censorship” (in publishing houses, editorial boards, etc.) or “self-censorship” – done knowingly and cynically but also very often unconsciously” you can read in M. Fik, *Cenzor jako współautor*, in: *Literatura i władza*, edited by B. Wojnowska, IBL, Warsaw 1996, p. 145.

<sup>10</sup> T. Mielczarek reminds us that “From incomplete statistical data we know that censors intervened from 10000 to 15000 times a year. Most interventions involved the media with about 10% of the total number done in books.” (T. Mielczarek, *Pisarze w PRL: „pieszczochy władzy” czy ofiary systemu*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy...*, p. 217).

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the described above mechanisms were especially important when controlling the press - here time was of great importance. Each editorial board had to have a trusted group of employees who gave the censorship office as few reasons for intervening as possible. Otherwise the newspaper could not be published on time. (In the case of non-serial publications the censorship process could be much longer and, thus, more thorough). The mechanisms of indoctrinations in press are described by, among others, J. Wojśław, *Obraz teraźniejszości w propagandzie komunistycznej Polski lat 1949–1954. Zarys problematyki*, Wydawnictwo UG, Gdańsk 2009.

<sup>12</sup> The editors and censors tried as hard as they could to stick together the fragments around the rejected piece to preserve the cohesion and coherence of the text. As can be seen from numerous examples from belles-lettres those attempts to correct the author were not always successful – it often made the texts incomprehensible. Sometimes it was intentional.

meticulously removed. The publisher together with the censor had to create such a reality that would not in any obvious way contradict the facts.

The workers of GUKPPiW could not (too eagerly) inform about deficiencies of food products but they also had to be careful about texts praising the quality of provision. The censorship also questioned any too optimistic information telling the readers that everything is easily accessible. According to the censors such suggestions would undermine the trust in the newspapers because it was no secret that “supply of meat in Łódź is insufficient”<sup>13</sup>. The situation was supposed to be described in such a way that the descriptions looked better than in reality but, on the other hand, they were not supposed to be too exaggerated in order not to make the citizens anxious.

#### IV

#### Analysis of articles related to food and gastronomy industry

##### A. Wicek and Wacek

In the years 1946–IV 1953 “Express Ilustrowany” printed a series of cartoons about Wicek and Wacek, a joint work of the illustrator Waław Drozdowski<sup>14</sup> and the writer of dialogues Adam Ochocki; those stories were one of the first post-war cartoons<sup>15</sup>. That type of artistic expression, usually associated with American culture, could be accepted only as a medium addressed to undeveloped and undemanding audiences, that is, mainly to young people. This is what basically that series about cunning Poles playing practical jokes on slow-witted Germans was about.

<sup>13</sup> The censors could be subjected to disciplinary measures not only for not intervening but also for intervening too much; see, among others, M. Woźniak-Łabieniec, *Wokół recepcji Traktatu polemiecznego Witolda Wirpszy. Głosy o Miłoszu w roku 1951 w świetle dokumentów cenzury*, „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica” vol. 14, 2011, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> Even before the war Waław Drozdowski drew in “Karuzela” (published from 1936 to 1945) a cycle about the adventures of Pata and Pataschon. This pair of Danish characters was renamed to Wicek and Wacek after the war and, now as a truly Polish “product” (which somewhat weakened the criticisms of cartoons in general as an example of hostile imperialist art), could be presented on the pages of “Express Ilustrowany”.

<sup>15</sup> *Wicek i Wacek. Ucieszne przygody dwóch wisusów w czasie okupacji, na ich cześć wierszem opisane*, text by A. Ochocki, drawings by W. Drozdowski, KAW, Łódź 1989. The cycle is also described by J. Dunin, *Papierowy bandyta. Książka kramarska i brukowa w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1974, p. 243. The history of post-war cartoons and comics is discussed by, among others, K.T. Toeplitz, *Sztuka komiksu. Próba definicji nowego gatunku artystycznego*, Czytelnik, Warsaw 1985; J. Kossak, *Dylematy kultury masowej*, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warsaw 1966.

Among the cartoons we can find several pieces topically related to food<sup>16</sup>. In one of them while reading *Power of will* Wacek complains: “My word! I’m either a polisher, or a washer, or a cook! And Wicek just bosses about! For my brother to act like Hitler to me is scandalous...!”<sup>17</sup>. The young man keeps moaning instead of peeling potatoes. “I wish I could use my willpower to make those potatoes peel themselves and jump into the pot!”<sup>18</sup> Finally, it is Wacek who peels and boils the vegetables. Unabashed Wacek concludes: “I cooked them with my willpower!”<sup>19</sup>.

A different cartoon presents us with Wacek who spends a few hours in front of a closed greengrocer. His long absence unsettles Wicek. He leaves home and goes to look for his friend. Finally they meet in the line in front of the shop. Surely this cartoon would have been censored if it had not been for the last scene. We finally learn that it is the irresponsible shop director that delays opening the store. The customers’ dissatisfaction stemmed from the fact that they are not used to such practices – greengrocers in PPR are not only opened on time and stay open according to the timetable but are also stocked with majority of necessary groceries (like the breakfast buns which Wacek goes to buy).

Not all cartoon stories had such optimistic endings, though. Among the food-related episodes one that was not published is particularly interesting. The censors did not turn a blind eye to a story in which the young pair from Bałuty arrive at a youth camp with a bag full of treats “for the children to have. Maybe they don’t have enough”<sup>20</sup>. When crossing out this sentence the censor Bogusław Holub argued that it’s a “false suggestion regarding the state of nutrition on such camps”<sup>21</sup>.

### B. Meat – the flagship of commodities in short supply

The food product that was often in short supply in PPR was meat. The fact that some goods were in short supply made them “attractive” for the censorship<sup>22</sup>. It is exactly this type of press publications regarding scarce commodities that provides such an abundant resource for a person researching freedom of speech and

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<sup>16</sup> In the article I do not discuss any literary works placed in Łódź press except for *Wicek and Wacek*. It is worth noting here that “Express Ilustrowany” published an interesting short story by Zofia Nałkowska. The story is titled *Turecka kawa* and was published in the cycle “Codzienna nowelka «Expressu»” (Everyday novelette of “Express Ilustrowany”, “EI” 11 X 1949).

<sup>17</sup> “EI”, 15 X 1949.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> G. Mnich, *Ingerencje cenzury...*, p. 64.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> There is yet another consequence: “Meat, like any other desired by unavailable good, has become a serious criminogenic factor” (M. i J. Łoziński, *Historia polskiego smaku. Kuchnia, stół, obyczaje*, PWN, Warsaw 2013, p. 261); see also footnote 3.

eseoan communication between the creator and their audiences. One intervention was performed by Wiktor Klarfeld in "Express Ilustrowany". It resulted in the removal of information about ham from Radom that "finds its way to English tables"<sup>23</sup>. The censor justified his action by stating that the sentence is "harmful to the difficult situation in the meat market"<sup>24</sup>. As can be seen from a preserved censorship instruction the author was aware of the fact that in the time of meat deficit any information about it being exported may be taken badly by the society.

Apart from preventive censorship other ways of bypassing the problematic matter of provision were investigated. For example Poles were advised to reasonably manage their scarce resources, but it was done in a rather peculiar fashion. As early as in the last months of 1949 a food guidance campaign about a meatless diet was launched in local newspapers. The idea was initiated with the decision to popularise "vegetable fats, fish and other commodities able to replace the commodities in short supply". The decision was made by KŁ PZPR (the local committee of the ruling party) in February 1949<sup>25</sup>. A few days later the press, dependent on the party's decision, started convincing the citizens of Łódź that it is worth introducing one meatless or half-meat day into their diets. The latter suggestion can be found in one article from "Dziennik Łódzki" *Company dinners and half-meat Thursdays*. What exactly were those culinary "innovations"?<sup>26</sup> The author explains: "for the summer time half-meat Thursdays are introduced. In that time you can get lazanki with ham, dumplings with meat, pancakes with meat etc."<sup>27</sup>. It gives a fresh perspective to the titles of some press articles like: *There are plenty of vegetables but their distribution fails*<sup>28</sup> or *Visiting Łódź greengrocers*<sup>29</sup>.

That "meatless" initiative was not the only one. The newspapers tried to convince their readers that a vegan diet was very healthy. "Express Ilustrowany" assured that: "Why should you make somebody eat meat dishes if the public has the appetite for vegetables, dumplings and other foods?"<sup>30</sup>. Discouraging from cold meats and championing the vegan diet was also done through newspaper food sections which presented recipes without the "harmful" meat products causing „arthritis, rheumatism and sclerosis"<sup>31</sup>. The newspapers hardly ever suggested pork chops or cabbage stew for dinner; they were well aware that with short supply of meat it would be improper to give such recipes. The vegan food sections

<sup>23</sup> G. Mnich, *Ingerencje cenzury w łódzkiej prasie codziennej...*, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> APL, KŁ PZPR, 233, A protocole from the meeting of KŁ PZPR Executive, 15 II 1949, k. 73.

<sup>26</sup> "DŁ" 24 VII 1951.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> "DŁ" 25 VII 1951.

<sup>29</sup> "GR" 19 IV 1956.

<sup>30</sup> G. Mnich, *Propagandowy wizerunek Łodzi na lamach prasy codziennej (1949–1956). Apro-wizacja i wypoczynek*, „Kronika Miasta Łodzi” 2013, no 2, p. 203.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

introduced as the aftermath of the “meatless” campaign did not always serve their purpose. Making the dishes recommended by newspapers was not easy due to constant deficiencies of vegetables, fruit or fish.

As was the case with the desired but unavailable meat, the newspapers soon found out how to reduce the negative results of vegan products deficiency. More or less in the time of the meatless campaign, at the beginning of 1950, the local press advised its readers to grow their own vegetables. It led to the creation of workers’ community gardens near the Matejki, Pabianicka, Drewnowska, Niciarniania and Zgierska streets. Sometimes there appeared articles which tried to inspire the citizens not only to grow their own vegetables but also to breed rabbits and chickens.

Łódź newspapers advised their readers to show their ingenuity not only in the case of food products. In response to deficits in other industries (like the constant shortage of clothes) the readers were presented with sections with sewing manuals.

### C. Not only meat – other culinary topics in Łódź press

The newspapers of Łódź told stories not only about shortages of meat, but also of other food products. Polish tables lacked groats or coffee but also cold drinks, which were very much desired in summer<sup>32</sup>. In “Express Ilustrowany” we can find an article that reminded about periodic problems with providing another basic commodity: *Potatoes are already here – don’t wait and take yours now*. The text informs the reader that “companies should take advantage of the favourable weather and claim potatoes for their cantinas and workers without delay. [...] Retailers have also been stocked [...]”<sup>33</sup>. Especially that last bit was good news for families in Łódź.

Apart from articles describing the shape of the food sector there were also numerous pieces praising the condition of the restaurant industry. In “Express Ilustrowany” you can find a rather misleadingly titled article *Na 3 tysiące gości ani jednego kelnera*. (*Not a single waiter for 3 thousand guests*). It’s not yet another text about problems with catering. On the contrary, the authors inform that Łódź decided to open a huge bar. We learn that it was supposed to house a record-breaking number of people. Each day it would give out 3 thousand hot dishes. The most interesting fact was that there wouldn’t be a single waiter for so many guests<sup>34</sup>.

The above piece belongs to the category of texts that were supposed to show the best side of the restaurant sector. The next article, published in “Głos Robot-

<sup>32</sup> The information about shortages of food products (even those with smaller demand) was removed not only in the Łódź area. To prove that the phenomenon was nationwide we can see the removal of the piece about “shortage of iodised salt and vegetables in Podhale” from “Dziennik Polski” (I. Pietrzkiwicz, M. Rogoż, „Dziennik Polski” pod nadzorem. *Ingerencje cenzorskie w pierwszej połowie lat 50*, in: *Niewygodne dla władzy...*, p. 422).

<sup>33</sup> “EI” 11 X 1949.

<sup>34</sup> “EI” 11 VIII 1949.



niczy”, is not any different. “*Battered herring in vinegar*” removed from market is an example of a text intended to present the shared experience of a journalist and an ordinary citizen. The writer’s task was to lend an ear to the voice of the street and describe the problems of people living in Łódź so suggestively that they could get the impression they had some real influence on the shaping of the post-war reality. The article is interesting because it criticises limiting the range of products after „customers’ complaints about unreasonable pricing of the so-called „battered herring in vinegar”. “In our opinion Łódzki Zarząd Handlu (the Łódź Trade Administration) should rather aim at changing the recipe and lowering the price”<sup>35</sup> summarises the journalist quite harshly.

Another article showing a different aspect of the culinary policies of that time is the already mentioned *Company dinners and half-meat Thursdays*. In the time of vocational activation of women company canteens and all catering institutions played a very important role. A journalist is happy to inform that Ministerstwo Handlu Wewnętrzznego (the Ministry of Internal Trade) “introduces company dinners to replace home and club dinners”<sup>36</sup>. The text describes in great detail the differences between all three types of meals and informs that “Company dinners can be freely arranged. Moreover the menu will be greatly enhanced.”<sup>37</sup>

The attention of the journalists was also caught by those rare restaurants offering more exotic cuisine. “Dziennik Łódzki” published an article *On rotting eggs, swallow nests and lacquered ducks* encouraging the locals to try Chinese dishes. “Oh, it’s so wonderful”<sup>38</sup> writes the journalist trying to convince his fellow citizens to abandon their standard views expressed in “Phooey, how can one eat something that disgusting”<sup>39</sup>. The author describes in detail each of the eponymous dishes and states that the lacquer for the duck “is nothing like the lamination of furniture or nail varnish”<sup>40</sup>. The article also mentions that Chinese cuisine also uses bamboo shoots which “you might also consider to be something disgusting but why then do you like asparagus? It’s also shoots that you’re eating”<sup>41</sup>. There are also some political motifs:

It is remarkable that the treats discussed here have until recently been available only to the wealthy. The vast majority of Chinese population lived in poverty and oppression and sometimes a bowl of rice was for a Chinese peasant or worker an elusive dream.

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<sup>35</sup> “GR”, 27 VI 1956.

<sup>36</sup> “DŁ” 24 VII 1951.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> “Panorama. Dodatek niedzielny do Dziennika Łódzkiego” 29 VII 1951.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

After the glorious victory of the Chinese Revolution the quality of life of the working masses has constantly been going up and traditional treats start to appear also on the tables of workers' families<sup>42</sup>.

The same issue presents us with information about an impressive collection of wines in Tbilisi. Even though the text is very short the author mentions information about their country of origin ("Spanish wines, Hungarian, Romanian, French"<sup>43</sup>) and their vintage ("from 1806 harvest"<sup>44</sup>). It is comforting that a Polish wine lover could taste those specialties for "there is a wide selection of Russian wines and produce from Soviet wineries"<sup>45</sup>, which would surely make their way to the neighbourly Polish market.

Usually every summer and holiday period brought about a number of articles about shortage of cold drinks. The newspapers informed that "soda factories in Łódź produced 55 000 bottles of cold drinks on one shift"<sup>46</sup>, but the demand was twice as high. Also the Christmas period abounded in a number of articles about the quality of provisioning. In 1949 "Express Ilustrowany" assured that the commodities shipped for Christmas should suffice "even when you consider the proverbial appetite of citizens of Łódź"<sup>47</sup> (the fact that *Lemons and oranges are coming to Łódź*<sup>48</sup> was also mentioned after Christmas). The press suggested that gluttony of citizens of Łódź went hand in hand with their excessive thirst, which resulted in shortages of cold drinks in summer and other food supplies in other seasons.

The press rarely placed advertisements encouraging the readers to read other newspapers and magazines. It was interesting to find in the context of my research an ad placed in "Express Ilustrowany" about "How to eat and cook you can learn from the weekly magazine "Kobieta"<sup>49</sup> (Woman). The information is targeted to both the working women and the housewives. We should remember that starting from 1949 PPR saw the creation of the image of a new woman (one that was popularised all throughout the period of socialist realism) – one that effortlessly joined her professional life with her life as a mother, wife and a cook<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> G. Mnich, *Propagandowy wizerunek Łodzi...*, p. 204.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> "EI" 4 I 1951.

<sup>49</sup> "EI" 9 X 1949.

<sup>50</sup> For more see K. Sałdecka, „Żyjemy wciąż jeszcze na rusztowaniach....” *Wizerunek kobiety w polskich powieściach doby realizmu socjalistycznego*, Dom Wydawniczy Duet, Toruń 2013.

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Press was evaluated in the same manner as non-serial publications. The discussed articles about the food sector prove that in PPR all aspects of life were assessed by the power apparatus and in the time of collectivisation even homemade dinners became a public matter.

A thorough analysis of censorship documents and evaluations of particular press releases (done periodically by appropriate institutions) will make it possible to uncover the mechanisms of manipulating the audience and will supplement our as yet incomplete idea about the culture of PPR's tables.

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### **O zgnitych jajach, jaskółczych gniazdach i lakierowanych kaczkach – tematyka kulinarna w prasie łódzkiej 1949–1956**

(Streszczenie)

W artykule zostały omówione sposoby prezentowania sektora spożywczo-restauracyjnego w powojennej prasie łódzkiej. Badaniu poddano wybrane artykuły z „Dziennika Łódzkiego” oraz „Expressu Ilustrowanego” z lat 1949–1956. Podstawowym celem jest ukazanie materiałów prasowych o tematyce kulinarnej w kontekście obecnej ówczesnie reglamentacji wolnego słowa. Analiza wybranych artykułów przekonuje, że działania Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (oraz oddziałów terenowych) nie pozostawały bez wpływu na kształt dopuszczanych do druku tekstów użytkowych. Nierzadko dziennikarze, powodowani autocenzurą, przedstawiali rzeczywistość jedynie postulowaną, niemającą zbyt wiele wspólnego z faktami.

Słowa-klucze: kultura kulinarna; cenzura; historia prasy (powojennej)

Keywords: culinary culture; censorship; history of (post-war) press