

Agnieszka Kloc*

“There Aren’t any Dwarfs; They Got out in Time”. Censored Image of the Home Army in Polish Poetry in 1956–1958

Beginning in the late-1940s, Stalinist propaganda in the People’s Republic of Poland tried to eliminate any positive memories of the Home Army. A breakthrough occurred in 1956, marked by the censorship’s approval on 11 March 1956 to publish in *Po Prostu* an article entitled “Na spotkanie ludziom z AK” [Meeting the people from the Home Army] by Jerzy Ambroziewicz, Walery Namiotkiewicz and Jan Olszewski, which indicated the problem of former Home Army soldiers who, after being persecuted for many years because of their pasts, found themselves in a society being re-shaped by a new political situation that had altered the existing situation¹. The initial short comments by state officials indicated some interest in the mentioned issue by noticing the “Home Army tragedy”² and already in May increased interest in the Home Army was also visible in literary journals. A series of extensive articles were published in *Życie Literackie*³ by Władysław Machejek, a former poviát secretary of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR), and discussion sessions even led to former Home Army soldiers being given a chance to speak out⁴, of course under the supervision of the censorship bureau⁵.

Printing any articles which suggested the history of the Home Army had been falsified and that literary texts discussing the organisation were seized was prohibited unconditionally (as justified by a censor: “considering their spiteful

* Mgr, e-mail: agnieszka_kloc@wp.pl, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Institute of History, 20-031 Lublin, pl. M. Curie-Skłodowskiej 4a.

¹ J. Ambroziewicz, W. Namiotkiewicz, J. Olszewski, *Na spotkanie ludziom z AK*, “Po prostu” 1956, issue 11 (11 Mar), p. 7.

² *O czym mówiono na XIX Sesji Rady Kultury i Sztuki*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 15 (8 Apr), p. 1.

³ Some engaged in polemics with Machejek by referring to, i.a. the false accusations he made against the Home Army leadership and faking historical sources. Censorship was most diligent in prohibiting the latter accusation from reaching the general population. W. Machejek, *Podziemne Państwo AK*, “Życie Literackie”, 1956, issue 21 (20 May), pp. 6–7; W. Machejek, *Wróg Nr 1*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 22 (27 May), p. 2; W. Machejek, *Wróg Nr 2*, “Życie Literackie” 1956, issue 22 (27 May), p. 3; AAN, GUKPP, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 93.

⁴ *Dyskusja o AK i partyzantce*, “Życie Literackie” 3 Jun 1956, issue 23 (228) p. 2.

⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 470 (37/22), l. 20 [43].

tone and destructive focus”⁶). During the political thaw changes of 1956, there began to appear poetic texts which discussed the Home Army theme more extensively, even presenting it from previously prohibited perspectives. At this point it is worth mentioning that a general result of the changes occurring in the Polish poetry was higher exposure of demands for the truth and moral consideration, which had often been curbed by the fear produced when facing the new social reality⁷. Therefore, the initial “thaw” texts related to the previously banned theme had to be presented in terms of the poet’s cognitive dissonance, thus taking the form of a compromise between the internal need to express oneself and the existing political situation, which translated to a large extent as self-censorship. That is why it is important to consider not only the methods of influence and defining the scope of content approved by the censorship institution when analysing the **“game” waged between the poet and the censor, but also the attitudes of the authors**, who often were former Home Army soldiers.

Central guidelines developed for state institutions, which were discussed, for example, during the 3rd Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR), were supposed to, on the one hand, condemn the earlier doctrine-based policies and authoritarian methods of influencing creators, and on the other to shape the “progress” in relations with artists by inspiring their vision through free debate⁸. Therefore, even though censorship decreased the intensity of their influence in the period discussed, the so-called **“Home Army problem”** remained a theme subject to particular control, but the interventions varied in terms of their depth⁹. From that point of view, texts were divided into three groups:

1. Texts which were approved without requiring any changes or with alterations that did not influence their interpretation and which were not associated with the theme of the Home Army;
2. Texts which were changed through deletions (negative censorship) or inclusion (positive censorship) of fragments which influenced the general meaning of the composition or the reception of specific elements or facts;
3. Texts which were halted without an approval for publication.

The archive records of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (GUKPPiW) constitute the source material for this study, i.e.: censor reviews,

⁶ That was the justification behind the halting of an article by T. Hołuj entitled *Drażliwy temat literatury* [Literature’s sensitive subject] which was supposed to be published in “*Życie Literackie*” 26 Jun 1956 (AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 470 (37/22), l. 25 [38]).

⁷ J. Galant, *Odmiany wolności. Publicystyka, krytyka i literatura polskiego Października*, Poznań 2010, p. 244.

⁸ B. Fijałkowska, *Polityka i twórcy 1948–1959*, Warsaw 1985, p. 288.

⁹ The depth of censorship interventions was associated with the degree of modifications and the resulting differences between the versions reported to the censorship bureau and the final form of the published item.

preventive control reports, print permit applications and summaries of interventions in a specific year collected in the Archives of New Records (AAN). Furthermore, the verification of the contents of the archives based on published books and literary journals proved important for formulating the study’s conclusions.

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First, it should be stressed that the first group of texts consisted of poems which had not been found to directly relate to the Home Army, i.e. they did not include neither the name or the abbreviation (AK). Considering the popularity at this time of Aesopian language, a thesis has been formulated stating that the poems quoted herein, apart from their commonly known universalistic reading, may include concealed, “at a depth” meanings accessible to only the initiated, including some allusions to the theme of the Home Army.

Those poems can be found in collections which reached the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows: Zbigniew Herbert’s *Chord of Light* (Apr 1956), A. Ziemny’s *Teraz i zawsze* [Now and Forever] (Apr 1956), Zbigniew Herbert’s *Hermes, Dog and Star* (Apr 1957), J. Przyboś’ *Tools of Light* (Mar 1958), J. Popowska’s *Wiersze* [Poems] (Apr 1958).

Chord of Light, Herbert’s début collection, which received a positive though laconic and generalistic censor review in April 1956, did not raise any censorship doubts. However, a year later, in a collection entitled *Hermes, God and Star* (3185 copies), censors intervened, deleting three lines which did not refer to the Home Army¹⁰. Nonetheless, it is worth examining closely the output of a poet who was associated with the underground activities of the Home Army¹¹, from the perspective of an author who used the so-called Aesopian language¹², which flourished in the literature of the “thaw” period.

In Herbert’s early works in particular, one might find, as Mariusz Zawodniak stressed, not only numerous recollections of the past but also many references to

¹⁰ K. Budrowska, *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009, p. 57.

¹¹ The degree of Herbert’s affiliation and his position in the Home Army remain unclear. According to his wife, he did not participate in armed efforts considering his young age (at the outbreak of WWII he was 15), but he did, to some extent, identify himself with the underground army. Moreover, certain facts in his biography do suggest his strong anti-communist attitude. It is worth mentioning that after graduating from high school he studied Polish at the secret John Casimir University in Lviv for a short period of time and he knew his colleagues’ underground pseudonyms. J. Łukasiewicz, *Herbert*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 19–23; A. Hejman, *Herbert Zbigniew*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan (eds.), vol. 3, Warsaw 1994, pp. 230–231; *Pan Cogito zawsze wolny* (an interview by A. Franaszka with Katarzyna Herbert, the poet’s wife) “Gazeta Wyborcza”, issue 222, 22–23 Sep 2012; www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl/Archiwum/1,0,7649968,20120922RP-DGW,Pan_Cogito_zawsze_wolny.html [accessed on: 22.11.2012].

¹² K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

images of forests, trees, etc., which might indicate not only the presence of recurring motifs and metaphors, but also the previously mentioned Aesopian symbols or keywords. During the WWII occupation, the forest often served as a place for secret meetings of the members of the Home Army, while after WWII it was the last haven for anti-communist partisan forces. At the same time, the everyday language used by the Party and its supporters included expressions reflecting the propaganda offensive, such as “the forest gangs” or “those from the forest” while during the amnesty period they would talk about “returns from the forest”¹³. Additionally, according to Jerzy Świąch, even during the WWII occupation poets used a special coded “occupation language” formed on the basis of spoken Polish, which, using certain cultural codes¹⁴, was understandable only to a selected group of people¹⁵. The more obvious paths connecting the code with a given group, included common experiences, mutual relations, a feeling of solidarity and self-definition, which in the case of people affiliated with the Home Army must have been especially important considering its underground nature, and usage of its own “coded” system of meanings (created purposefully to protect). Those codes were virtually inaccessible for people outside the group or the next generation who did not experience the same events and did not possess the semantic or factual “memory apparatus” necessary for interpreting certain content. It should be stressed, though, that the time when Herbert’s first collections reached GUKPPiW was a time of the general loosening of censorship, which meant lower attention among censors to possible message coding and, in turn, the scope of use of Aesopian language.

Many poems in the *Hermes, Dog and Star* collection quite clearly refer to Herbert’s Home Army past, e.g. the keyword: *forest*, which as early as in the WWII occupation poetry was associated with a space specific for the experience of partisan fighters¹⁶. A poem entitled *A Life*, where the existence of the protagonist depends on the recollections about the dead, reads:

(...)
na podwórze
gdzie bawili się chłopcy
wbiegli uzbrojeni mężczyźni
i rozpoczęła się łapanka
ci którym udało się

(...)
into the schoolyard
where boys were playing
armed men came running
and a game of catch began
those who were able

¹³ M. Zawodniak, *Herbert parokrotnie*, Toruń 2011, pp. 116–127.

¹⁴ In sociology, the notion of a culture code is associated with symbolism and the existence of signs (including words) which can be interpreted only by the “initiated”. Moreover, the decoding knowledge forms in the society in an anonymous and spontaneous yet not always coherent way, are often associated with a specific group. M. Golka. *Socjologia kultury*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 45–46.

¹⁵ J. Świąch. *Poeci i wojna. Rozprawy i szkice*, Warsaw 2000, pp. 42–43.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

zbiec do lasu	to run into the wood
bawili się dalej	went on playing
w żandarma i zbójów	cops and robbers ¹⁷

The general and pejorative expression regarding the *robbers*, i.e. partisan fighters, did not cause the censor to react, but considering the poet’s experiences the reference to the so-called “forest troops” of the Home Army¹⁸ seems quite probable.

Compositions regarded then as prose poetry, some of which appear to be created for children, are an interesting phenomenon in the *Hermes, Dog and Star* collection. The stylistic device, one of the strategies of Aesopian language, of using children’s poetry as a tool for delivering an allegoric message for adults was used by poets such as Herbert who even introduced Aesop into one of his compositions (*The Wolf and the Lamb*¹⁹). Allegory was derived from a dichotomy of worlds. One world empirically available to all and another world with a “depth” accessible to just the initiated. Thus, the detailed story presented by the poet or writer exemplified general phenomena. The additional allegoric nature was related to the method of presenting certain ideals by using motifs and items as figures evoking notions not directly related to the text²⁰. Two compositions in the collection deserve particular attention. In the prose piece entitled *Dwarfs*:

Krasnoludki rosną w lesie. Mają specyficzny zapach i białe brody. Występują pojedynczo. Gdyby się dało zebrać ich garść, ususzyć i powiesić nad drzwiami – może mielibyśmy spokój.	Dwarfs grow in the forest. They have a peculiar smell and white beards. They appear alone. If a cluster of them could be gathered, dried, and hung over the door – we might have some peace ²¹ .
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In *Forest*:

Ścieżka biegnie boso do lasu. W lesie jest dużo drzew, kukułka, Jaś i Małgosia i inne małe zwierzątka. Tylko	A path runs barefoot through the forest. In the forest there are a lot of trees, a cuckoo, Hansel and Gretel, and other
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¹⁷ Z. Herbert, *Hermes, Dog and Star*, Warsaw 1957, p. 80.

¹⁸ Not only Home Army troops operated in the areas surrounding Lviv but also Soviet guerrilla forces. However, if one used Herbert’s biography, it would seem quite improbable that he would address his poem on wartime experience to anyone other than the Home Army, with which he was affiliated and which became a metaphor of the nation’s wartime resistance. Even if one attempts to interpret *partisan forces* in this fragment as a general phenomenon, it seems to miss the message of the entire poem which emphasises brotherhood, the tragic nature of events, and the need to reject any recollections about the dead when confronting the contemporary world.

¹⁹ Z. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

²⁰ W. Tomasiak, *Alegoryczność*, in: *Słownik realizmu...*, pp. 5–9.

²¹ Z. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

krasnołudków nie ma, bo wyszły. Jak się ściemni, sowa zamyka las dużym kluczem, bo jakby się tam zakradł kot, toby dopiero narobił szkody.

small animals. There aren't any dwarfs; they got out in time. When it gets dark the owl locks the forest with a big key, because if a cat got in there, then there would be some damage done²².

Both texts include the keyword *forest*, which could imply a theme of the Home Army. Additionally, the image of a *dwarf* could have had at that time reminded the readers the communist poster slogan known since 1945: *Olbrzym i zapluty karzeł reakcji* [The giant and the disgusting reactionary dwarf], also known as: *AK – zapluty karzeł reakcji* [Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf], which rarely appears in compositions from 1956–1958, quoted to reveal the aggressive political propaganda after Second World War. Moreover, the expression to *get out of the forest* was used in relation to amnesty initiatives announced by the authorities while the expression *hung over the door* could indicate a kind of hunting trophy. The latter brings to mind the Security Service's (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa) so-called *hunts* for partisans hiding in the woods, who, if caught, were quite an achievement for UB and the authorities, a fact that is confirmed, for example, in Machejek's novel entitled *In the Morning There Came a Hurricane*, published in 1955, where he described the activities undertaken to seize Józef Kuraś a.k.a. Ogień²³. The conclusion of *Forest* relates in its symbolism to antiquity, a common usage in Herbert's works. An owl, as a symbol of death and a cat, in this case, as a symbol of a Home Army soldier returning from the forest²⁴. The above texts, seemingly created for children, yet included in a collection together with drastic and tragic wartime accounts, did not raise any suspicions among the censors who conducted preventive control²⁵. However, literary critics identified in the published collection certain characteristics discussed in the quoted texts by Herbert. Jerzy Kwiatkowski identified in *Dwarfs* a metaphor that mixed of abstract and concrete elements as one typical of Herbert and rather enigmatically concluded that it was associated with the "processes of self-therapy – made more complex by the stylistics of irony, paradox and pun associated with the processes of disillusionment, criticism and scepticism"²⁶.

Partisan themes in relation to the Home Army can also be found in the poems by Jadwiga Popowska which, like Herberts, went through censorship screening

²² Ibidem, p. 152.

²³ Cf. M. Mazur, *Ogień w świecie propagandy komunistycznej 1945–1955*, in: *Wokół legendy Ognia. Opór przeciw zniewoleniu: Polska–Małopolska–Podhale 1945–1956*, R. Kowalski (ed.), Nowy Targ 2008, pp. 341–368.

²⁴ According to A.P. Chenel and A.S. Simarro, cats in ancient Egypt were associated with an attachment to a certain territory where food could be found. A.P. Chenel, A.S. Simarro, *Słownik symboli*, translated by M. Boberska, Warsaw 2008, p. 114.

²⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 80–82.

²⁶ J. Kwiatkowski, *Klerk mężny*, "Życie Literackie" 1957, issue 40 (6 Oct), p. 9.

untouched while poems with other themes were removed. During WWII, she was a Home Army soldier and wrote under a pseudonym: *Ewa*²⁷.

An application for a permit to print a collection entitled *Wiersze* [Poems] in 1185 copies (much less than was usually printed at that time) was submitted by the Czytelnik publishing house with GUKPPiW on 11 April 1958²⁸ and a review was ready in just eight days: on 19 April. The censor (sex unknown – **no legible signature** available) indicated the thematic division of the collection into two volumes:

The collection consists of two parts. The second part includes strictly lyrical love poems describing feelings of a woman left by her lover. The first part includes poems with basically political consideration. From poems about the occupation (partisan forces, Jews, [illegible deletion] mother’s fear while waiting for her sons who will never come back) the author moves to poems of contemporary themes which from the political point of view are v[ery] good (...) ²⁹

Further on the censor stated the need to intervene in the case of two poems; the themes of which were not related to the Home Army partisan forces but raised the issues of Jews and the repressive policy of the USSR. The censor treated *partisan forces* as a minor notion. None of the poems referring to that theme were challenged by the following two censors: Barańska and Świątycka, who analysed the entire collection.

Zona partyzanta [Partisan’s Wife] is the most expressive of the poems referring to the theme of the Home Army. It presents partisans as tragic heroes who leave their despairing wives to fight for glory. Even though the forest offers some protection, their fate is set. All that remains for them is a “quiet little pile of dirt”, a cross and the pain of their loved ones. Such a perspective emphasises the huge sacrifice and bravery of “the forest people”, thus turning them into heroic figures. The censorship reviews did not discuss poems about partisans presumably because in April 1958 writing about Home Army soldiers as heroes was still acceptable and the form of the poem itself made the interpretation ambiguous. Popowska was not known to be a Home Army underground soldier as she wrote under a pseudonym during the WWII occupation. Moreover, in the quoted period, the authorities strongly promoted information regarding the achievements of the extremely active partisan forces of the People’s Army. Therefore, from the point of view of censorship, the reader could interpret the poem as a glorification of the People’s Army, mainly because the censor assessed poems about contemporary themes as “very good”.

²⁷ A. Szalagan, *Popowska Jadwiga*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, p. 451.

²⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 596, vol. 68/2, l. 280.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, l. 282–283.

On 5 March 1958, the authorities released a preventive control report on a collection of poems by Julian Przyboś entitled³⁰ *Tools of Light* (3253 copies). Interventions were made to a poem which could be classified as literature of reckoning a popular genre at that time³¹. The leading idea of two poems: *Poległy* [The Fallen] and *Jeszcze o poległym* [More On the Fallen] are the words of Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, a member of the Gray Ranks Assault Groups subordinate directly to the Home Army HQ. He died during the first days of the Warsaw Uprising³². However, Przyboś' main achievement was restoring society's collective memory of the former Home Army soldier's poetry, who in the new political situation could become a role model and his output an inspiration for other authors, even those presenting communist attitudes. The final fragment of *Poległy*, dated 1956, reads:

<p>Nie z czarnych ruin, lecz z podziemia sumień odkopujemy po zmowie milczenia, jak kości jego na ofiarę białe, okaleczoną zwyciężonych chwałę, Nike bez ramion</p>	<p>Not from black ruins but from the underworld of conscience we dig up from a conspiracy of silence, as his white bones for sacrifice, mutilated glory of the vanquished, Nike with no arms.³³</p>
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The not so expressive highlighting of the mentioned “conspiracy of silence”, that is, the toning down of the theme of the heroism of the soldiers of the underground army, did not cause any anxiety in the censor (Stępkowski). It also seems important that at the beginning of the poem the author quotes the words of a soldier who is a member of the Home Army but clearly follows socialist ideals and Przyboś' affiliation with PZPR³³.

GUKPPiW also received poems which displayed antagonistic feelings towards texts referring to the theme of the Home Army. One such example is a poem by Aleksander Ziemny³⁴ entitled *Imiona jutra* [Names of Tomorrow] (from the

³⁰ J. Przyboś was not affiliated with the Home Army. He survived a failed attempt on his life by the anti-communist underground. He was a member of the State National Council (Krajowa Rada Narodowa), PPR and PZPR. The publication of the *Tools of Light* collection, in which he included poems of reckoning, coincided with his withdrawal from the Party. B. Dorosz, *Przyboś Julian*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 6, Warsaw 1999, pp. 500–501; E. Balcerzan, *Wstęp*, in: J. Przyboś, *Sytuacje lityczne. Wybór poezji*, Wrocław 1989, pp. XCIII–CIV.

³¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 46–50.

³² J. Świąch, *Wstęp*, in: K.K. Baczyński, *Wybór poezji*, comp. J. Świąch, Wrocław 1998, pp. XIV–XVII.

³³ J. Przyboś, *Tools of Light*, Warsaw 1958, p. 17.

³⁴ A. Ziemny (born in 1924) was exiled in 1940 to compulsory work in the forests of the Ural Mountains. He returned to Poland with the 1st Army of the Polish Army, he received the rank of lieutenant and since 1949 was a member of ZLP. K. Batora, *Ziemny Aleksander*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 9, Warsaw 2004, p. 473.

Teraz i zawsze [Now and Always] collection published in 1705 copies). The poem criticises the Home Army underground, particularly the leadership, which supported the traditions of Piłsudski’s WWI Polish legionnaires and based its rule on deception and excess and the naive nature of young men while the Warsaw Uprising was supposed to end their lies they told those young men:

Przyszły rojenia konspiracji.	Thus came underground’s dreams.
Dowódca, legun, wzór patriot	The commander, legionnaire, a model patriot
zbywał en gros sygnety złote	sold by the gross gold signets
i biało-orle czynił gusła.	and performed white-eagle wizardry.
Prawdą karmiło się oszustwo,	Lies fed on the truth,
ukradli młodym czysty płomień,	they stole the flame from the youth,
pierwszy, najświętszy sen o broni	the first, the holiest dream of arms ³⁵

While the poem seemed to fit well with the contemporary trend of post-WWII anti-Home Army propaganda, the censor (Trębicki) did not comment on it either in a positive nor a negative manner, only focussing in the review on the aesthetic value of the entire collection, which was released for publication in April 1956. The censor did not analyse the political meaning of the poem, only indicating those general features of the entire collection which did not suite his taste:

All the works of Ziemy from *Bezdroża* [Wilderness] written in 1946 until his narrative poetry piece *Imiona jutro* [Name of Tomorrow] dated 1954 are tainted with the stigma of first writings, that shoddy and poor poetry. Most of the poems in the so-called collection are reminiscence-themed (it must be stated at this point: memories which have become stale and pale), which the author attempts to rhyme [illegible word] – often unfortunate, lacking any fresh metaphors. It stands for hopeless and dreary dullness³⁶.

Regardless of the rather unfavourable review, Trębicki decided to allow the collection to be printed without any interventions.

The second group of compositions raising topics associated with the Home Army, which GUKPPiW officials released for publication after minor modifications, which reflected the general approach of censors towards poetry³⁷. The only text that can be classified in this category is an anthology collected by J. Szczawiej entitled *Imię nam Polska* [Our Name Is Poland]. During a preventive control of 6 October 1958, censorship removed from the collection: a poem by Cz. Miłosz entitled *Równina* [Plateau], bearing no relation to the theme of the Home Army, and one line from a poem entitled *Nalot na Berlin* [Airstrike On Berlin] by an

³⁵ A. Ziemy, *Teraz i zawsze*, Warsaw 1956, p. 47.

³⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 424 (31/36), l. 120.

³⁷ K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

unknown author³⁸. There were no reservations for the publication of poems by former Home Army soldiers: the aforementioned Krzysztof K. Baczyński, Lesław Bartelski, Zbigniew Solarka et al.³⁹ However, one censor (Zawistowska) indicated the need to remove a fragment from the beginning of the *Introduction*:

Additionally, it is most probably the first word of truth that after years of silence we were able to utter about the heroism of our nation under Nazi occupation⁴⁰.

Without the above sentence the anthology seemed general in nature, thus, was a sign of increased control towards the image of underground activities of the Home Army and the fact that the drive towards national liberty was first distorted and later passed over in silence by the state propaganda.

The third group consisting of poems removed from collections or halted and unpublished were mainly associated with an “**inappropriate attitude**” to the officially acceptable theme of the Home Army.

Since 1956, the authorities voiced a slogan of “exoneration”, in combination with an amnesty, for former Home Army soldiers. Censorship allowed some articles by those returning to the country to be published in the press, yet consistently concealed the fact and the circumstances of emigration of people affiliated with the Home Army and the fate of its soldiers during and after the end of Operation “Tempest”⁴¹. Poems began to include metaphors depicting the phenomenon as a “resurrection of the dead”, in the context of restoring collective memory⁴². However, not all poems related to the “exoneration” corresponded with the expectations of the authorities.

An interesting story of a poet-censor game is associated with a poem by Tadeusz Różewicz⁴³ with the telling title *Posthumous Exoneration*. The first documented at-

³⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/6), l. 8–13.

³⁹ J. Szczawiej, *Imię nam Polska*, Warsaw 1958.

⁴⁰ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/6), l. 9.

⁴¹ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 269 [17] (Preventive control report of the *Kierunki* journal dated 16 Dec 1956); AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 480 (38/2), l. 5 [24] (Preventive control report of the *Kierunki* issue 32); AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 484 (38/6), l. 31 (Preventive control report of the *Życie Warszawy* magazine of 21 Aug 1956).

⁴² J. Waleńczyk, *Wino półśłodkie*, Warsaw 1957, p. 52; M. Jastrun, *Wiersze zebrane*, Warsaw 1956, p. 271–272, 322; Z. Herbert, *Hermes...*, p. 119;

⁴³ Upon graduating from an underground Military Academy in 1942, while awaiting assignment to his company, Tadeusz Różewicz (born in 1921) participated in the cultural life of the underground publishing poems in underground gazettes. As a member of the Press Office, he edited so-called “press clippings”. In 1943–1944, as a soldier of the Home Army operating under the pseudonym of “Satyr”, he fought in partisan companies in the Radom, Włoszczowa, Opoczno and Częstochowa poviats. He participated in Operation Tempest; however, after being accused of propaganda sabotage he was forced to leave his company. It is worth mentioning that Różewicz’s affiliation with the Home Army was also on a domestic level: Janusz, his older brother, who died in 1944, introduced Tadeusz to the underground army and Różewicz later married Wiesława

tempt at publishing the poem in issue 227 of *Życie Literackie* occurred in May 1957. In the preventive control report on Różewicz’s poem, which had been cut from a magazine, glued to the document and struck out by the censor, the case inspector (Kasper) briefly justified his decision: “Removed poem questioned the democratisation which had been implemented in our country”⁴⁴. Consecutive versions of the poem were reworked several times which is why it is worth quoting it in its original form:

Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
naszą obojętność	our indifference
Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
nasze milczenie	our silence
Umarli przypominają sobie	The dead recall
nasze słowa	our words
Umarli widzą nasze pyski	The dead see our snouts
roześmiane od ucha do ucha	laughing from ear to ear
Umarli widzą nasze	The dead see
trące się ciała	our copulating bodies
Umarli widzą nasze ręce	The dead see our hands
złożone do okłasków	ready to clap
Umarli czytają nasze książki	The dead read our books
słuchają naszych przemówień	listen to our speeches
wygłoszonych tak dawno	delivered so long ago
umarli słyszą	the dead hear
mlaskanie języków	clucking tongues
umarli studiują referaty	the dead scrutinize our lectures
biorą udział w dyskusjach	join in on discussions
Wszyscy Żywi są winni	All the living are guilty
ci co uciekli są winni	guilty are those who ran away
i ci co zostali	and those that stayed
ci którzy mówili tak	those who were saying yes
i ci którzy mówili nie	those who were saying no
ci którzy nic nie mówili	those who said nothing
umarli liczą żywych	the dead are taking stock of the living
umarli nas nie zrehabilitują.	the dead will not exonerate us.

Presumably because of an unsuccessful attempt at publishing the poem the author decided to modify it. He changed the title to *The Dead*⁴⁵. In the new version, after: “The

Kozłowska, Home Army liaison officer. A. Szałagan, *Różewicz Tadeusz*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 7, Warsaw 2001, p. 91; Z. Majchrowski, *Różewicz*, Wrocław 2002, p. 63–72.

⁴⁴ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 489 (38/27), l. 12.

⁴⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 287.

dead scrutinize our lectures” there is: “**join in terminated / discussions**”, where the added word “terminated” erases the political reading of the poem. Then, after the line: “all the living are guilty” there is an extension through an “unfinished”, parabolic verse:

winne są małe dzieci	guilty are little children
które podawały bukiety kwiatów	who offered bouquets of flowers
winni są kochankowie	guilty are lovers
winni są	guilty are

The goal of these devices was to make the poem more universal and enable its publication in the *Collected Poems* collection submitted for evaluation by the Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing house. It seems that during the political “thaw” the “generalisation” or rather the specific strategy of “blurring the concrete” could have constituted one of the methods of coping with censorship by poets trying to “smuggle” **contemporary and political content. But this device influenced the interpretation of specific facts.** In the case of Różewicz’s poem, the only proof could be found in the ending, an unchanged punchline with the *de facto* ambitious “**exoneration**”: “The dead are taking stock of the living/ The dead will not exonerate us”.

Even though there are no sources confirming that Wydawnictwo Literackie sent *Collected Poems* to GUKPPiW, one might presume that it was the central censorship bureau that made the decision to remove *The Dead* from the collection. This seems likely since it was archived in the unit of the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows in the division of Book Records, which stored the interventions made by the GUKPPiW censors. The officer reviewing the to-be-published *Collected Poems* probably had doubts about some of the poems, so the censor signed as J. Kasper, who previously encountered Różewicz’s poems, was commissioned to produce an intervention report and send it to GUKPPiW. Unfortunately, Kasper already knew the earlier form and title of *The Dead*, which was supposed to be published in *Życie Literackie*, which probably influenced the interpretation of the poem by the case inspector and his final decision. The fragment glued to the report⁴⁶ bears a “**dividing**” **marking in pencil after the line “tak dawno zamkniętych” [terminated so long ago]**, which was probably intended as a boundary of what was accepted by censors. Eventually, a decision was made to remove the poem altogether, possibly in concert with the publishing house or the author himself.

The Dead was also submitted in November 1957 for a Polish Radio program in Krakow⁴⁷, i.e. after it was eliminated by the GUKPPiW officer⁴⁸. The preven-

⁴⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 427 (34/8), l. 287.

⁴⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 489 (38/28), l. 122.

⁴⁸ The intervention report is missing the date, but one might presume that censorship review of the collection took place between 26 July, the date of submitting it for typesetting, and 8 Sep 1957 and signing-off for printing.

tive control report (dated 13 November) by censor Lekan from Krakow Voivodship Control Bureau for Press (WUKP) apart from red line deletions of poems: *Ten* [This One], *Hiob 1957* [Job 1957], *Oparł głowę na dłoni* [He Rested His Head Upon His Hand], bears no red marks by *The Dead*, only a pencilled “no” with an exclamation mark and circled “minus” in blue ink as an indication the poem was rejected by the censorship officer with a final justification: “All deleted poems – full of nihilism, disbelief, bitterness”⁴⁹. Markings made in three colours may indicate they were applied over time, thus, that there was a discussion between the Voivodship Bureau and GUKPPiW, the latter of which issued the final statement. Eventually, *The Dead* was included in a 1988 collection under the initial title *Posthumous Exoneration* and with a slightly modified text⁵⁰.

Even though the collection was still subjected to censorship review during the most tolerant period⁵¹, i.e. before October 1957, the poem (its second part in particular) could not have been accepted by censorship. Apart from exposing past actions of the authorities in relation to the “exonerated” the poem clearly questioned the reasons for “exonerating” the Home Army soldiers as not only overdue but also as ludicrous when compared to the prior harm for which everyone was responsible. Additionally, *Posthumous Exoneration* may also be linked to the personal experiences of the poet remembering his fallen brother, a Home Army soldier.

It seems that, for similar reasons, on 25 May 1957, during a preventive control of a preview of *Books to be published*, a poem by Anna Kamińska entitled *Milczeliśmy* [We Kept Silent] was removed. It read:

Tak, to prawda, milczeliśmy długo.
 Milczeliśmy o trudzie i cierpieniu,
 O śmierci niezawinionej i krzywdzie
 Dokonywanej pod osłoną prawa.
 Partia powiedziała jedno słowo.
 I powstało nagle dwudziestu
 sprawiedliwych,
 Czterdziestu miłujących prawdę.
 Nagle ozwało się stu
 współcierpiących, (...)

Yes, it is true, we kept silent long.
 We kept silent about the hardships
 and pain,
 About faultless death and injustice
 Committed under the pretence of the law.
 The party uttered a single word.
 And suddenly twenty righteous rose,
 Forty lovers of the truth.
 Suddenly one hundred sufferers cried
 out, (...)⁵²

The third group of halted texts was supplemented by a poem entitled *Plwocina* [Sputum] from the collection *Moje strony świata* [My Cardinal Points] by

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ T. Różewicz, *Poezja*, Cracow 1988, pp. 407–408.

⁵¹ K. Budrowska, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵² AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 75.

Jerzy Ficowski, a former Home Army soldier⁵³. With the lack of dating on the censor's report one can only guess that, according to the information located in the printer's footer, the collection was subjected to control between 19 September and December 1957 (from the date when it was submitted for typesetting to the end of the printing process)⁵⁴.

After an unsuccessful attempt at changing the trivial and expressive title *Plwocina* to *Kolczaste widnokregi* [Barbed Horizons] the poem was removed from the collection,⁵⁵ even though the censor intervening on the collection knew that it had been previously published in *Życie Literackie*⁵⁶, which means it must have received a positive review from the WUKP in Krakow,. This is confirmed by the notes next to some of the poems stating the name of the magazine/journal and the issue where a given poem was published. The intervention might have been caused by the fact that a book release had more significance than a press publication which becomes outdated by the next week's issue and which has a specific group of readers.

Unfortunately, the censor did not leave a post-intervention comment, nor did the review survive, thus, one might only presume that the fragment:

Szliśmy dwaj, porzuciwszy kolczaste widnokregi.

Zawołali nam witający,
co im ślina na język przyniosła:

– AK – zapluty karzeł!

– Zaplute karły akowskie!

I do ciężkich cieni nas zaprzęgli,
abyśmy wlekli je za sobą,
po własnej, chętnej grobami ziemi,
kazali karleć

i pluli, pluli niestrudzeni,

na żywe i na umarłe.

Jeden z nas się pośliznął

na ich plwocinie

i padł pod drzewem

Two of us walked, having left the barbed horizons.

Those who saw us cried,
what first came to their minds:

– Home Army – disgusting dwarf!

– Disgusting Home Army dwarfs!

And they harnessed us to heavy shadows,
so that we could drag them behind us,
over our own, hungry for graves earth,
made us dwarf

and spat, spat tirelessly,

on what was alive and dead alike.

One of us slipped

on their sputum

and fell under a tree

⁵³ J. Ficowski joined the Home Army before 1943. At the age of 20 he participated in the Warsaw Uprising. He fought in Mokotów and was captured by the Nazi army. In 1945, he returned to Poland and actively participated in the state literary life. He was also among the poets who wrote commissioned poems; E. Głębińska, *Ficowski Jerzy*, in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze...*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1991, p. 291.

⁵⁴ J. Ficowski, *Moje strony świata*, Warsaw 1957.

⁵⁵ AAN, GUKPPIW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 20.

⁵⁶ The only difference between the version of the poem that was sent to GUKPPIW and the one published in "Życie Literackie" was the lack of a space between lines 23 and 24, which had no influence on its general message. "Życie Literackie" 1957, issue 8 (24 Feb), p. 5.

Czerwonego Boru – na zawsze osiemnastoletni. (...)	of the Red Wood – eighteen forever. (...) ⁵⁷
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was politically inconvenient for two reasons. First, it mentioned the “Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf” slogan exposing the aggressive nature of communist propaganda towards the Home Army⁵⁸. As early as in March 1956 the authors of an article entitled “*Na spotkanie ludziom AK*”⁵⁹ indicated that the offensive posters and the slogan constituted a form of repression. Therefore, during the announced exoneration, the mentioned slogan, magnified in the poem through the use of irony, became politically unfavourable as one which exposed the hostile activities of the communists. Secondly, the image of the death of a Home Army soldier near the “Czerwony Bór” forest was unacceptably clear in its Aesopian nature, alluding to the Soviet influences [Czerwony = red]. The entire poem, then, could have been perceived as a too aggressive attack against the system, especially when other poems in the collection, e.g. *Milczenie ziemi* [Silence Of The Land], *Drzewo genealogiczne* [Family Tree], *Podróż* [Journey], which only alluded to the Home Army theme were not removed.

Another censor, W. Stankiewicz, considered a poem by Wiesława Szumkówna entitled *Scherco II*⁶⁰, which was supposed to be published in issue 7 of Wrocław-based *Poglądy*, as a display of aggressive attitude towards the state:

Urodzonym przed pierwszą wojną	To those born before the First World War
Urodzonym po pierwszej wojnie	To those born after the First World War
Urodzonym przed drugą wojną	To those born before the Second World War
Urodzonym po drugiej wojnie	To those born after the Second World War
Kazali nam żyć	They told us to live
To kłamstwo	It’s a lie
Kazali umierać	They told us to die
Dali nam piękne ciała	They gave us beautiful bodies
Zwinne ręce	Agile hands
Bystre oczy	Keen eyes
Smukłe lędźwie	Slender loins
Mocne nogi	Strong legs
Dali nam piękne ciała	They gave us beautiful bodies
Nieprawda	Untrue
Rzucili pociskom na cel	They tossed us as marks for bullets

⁵⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, ref. no. 426 (34/2), l. 20.

⁵⁸ Z. Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce, 1944–1970*, Warsaw 2010, p. 277.

⁵⁹ J. Ambroziewicz, W. Namiotkiewicz, J. Olszewski, *Na spotkanie...*, p. 7.

⁶⁰ The lack of clarity of the title could had been a result of a printing error and the intended title might had been *Scherzo*.

Bezbronne karły	Defenceless dwarfs
Na poszarpanie	To be mangled
Na wydarcie krwi	To tear out our blood
Wydali nas ziemi rozległej	They gave us to the vast land
Ludziom wydali ludzi	They gave people to the people
Oni nas urodzili	They gave birth to us
To zdrada	It's treachery
Oni skazali na śmierć	They sentenced to death
Słuchajcie wy	Listen, you
Dalecy nieznan	Unknown from afar
To jedno nas łączy	This one thing unites us
Zdrada.	Treachery.

The poem was removed “for its destructive and hostile remarks about the people’s rule”. The mention of “defenceless dwarfs” not only exposed the true nature of communists’ doings after WWII but also suggested that the poem referred to Home Army soldiers and their tragic fate associated with executions and being exiled to the USSR.

* * *

Several conclusions may be drawn on the basis of the analysis of the aforementioned poems. First of all, in 1956–1958, there was a general consent for authors to write about the Home Army, which is confirmed not only by the press debates in literary journals but also numerous poetic pieces related to the heroism and tragedy of the soldiers of the underground army. However, poets at that time, feeling the need for self-censorship because of an unclear political situation, often wrote through the “safe” filter of generalisations. That extended the area of possible interpretations: censorship could consider a poem as pro-People’s Army and therefore pro-communist.

Furthermore, some poems featured a game between the author and the censor, which often consisted of the poet choosing Aesopian language reflected in allegories (Herbert’s dwarf [krasnoludek] as opposed to the forbidden “reactionary dwarf” [karzeł]) or metaphors, which by being based on culture codes producing associations unequivocal for a specific community could become keywords (forest) in literature indicating a specific mode of interpretation. Censors’ helplessness when it came to Aesopian language in poetry was sometimes countered by a small number of copies of a published collection.

Moreover, poets by default were not allowed to refer to or expose certain slogans, e.g. “Home Army – the disgusting reactionary dwarf,” which had been used by communists for propaganda attacks on the underground army. However,

there occurred some oversights in magazines or journals⁶¹ caused by, for example, a lack of detailed guidelines from the state or the new social and political situation which in turn created confusion on how to interpret the texts by censorship officials. That chaos was probably removed in the first quarter of 1957. Collections of poems, on the other hand, which, according to censors, had the “status of a book”, which usually do not become outdated as quickly as the press, where more carefully reviewed in their entirety and any politically inconvenient allusions were removed, usually with the entire poem in which they were found.

The issues associated with contemporary problems of “exoneration” and “amnesty” in relation to former Home Army soldiers constituted a political problem which was particularly controlled. Poems could not question the contemporary propaganda guidelines; otherwise censors removed a given poem in its entirety from the collection or refused to issue a permit for it being published in a magazine/journal or being included in a radio program.

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⁶¹ A fragment of a poem by Czesław Kałkusiński published in “*Życie Literackie*” in June 1956 reads: “I thought they will erect altars for us / and on wounds clotted with pain / shall fall a soothing scent of balm – / and once again the disgusting dwarf / obscures the mirages of proud dreams”. C. Kałkusiński, “*Życie Literackie*” 1956, issue 25 (17 Jun), p. 11; J. Ficowski, *Plwocina*, “*Życie Literackie*” 1957, issue 8 (24 Feb), p. 5.

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Agnieszka Kloc

“There Aren’t any Dwarfs; They got out in Time”. Censored Image of the Home Army in Polish Poetry in 1956–1958

(Summary)

The paper focuses on censorship board’s approach to the subject of Home Army in Polish poetry from the period 1956–1958 of the liberalization of culture. The basic purpose of the research is focused on the identification of censorship reference to the image created by the authors. Moreover, it attempts to specify – on the basis of examples – the kind of content that was accepted, rejected or amended. Juxtaposition of the censor’s reviews, “preventive inspection reports” and the content published works allows for the examination of the depth of the censor’s intervention and their methods of manipulating historical facts concerning the Home Army. Research of the relationship censor-author allows for analyze “Aesop’s language” strategy. The whole of paper is based on a historical context and related phenomena, including the amnesty and so-called the “rehabilitation”.

Keywords: Home Army, censorship after 1945, censorship towards literature