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### **Books:**

#### **Academic books**

*Controlul cărții. Cenzura literaturii în regimul comunist din România (Control of the book. Censorship of literature in the communist regime in Romania)*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014

*Instituția cenzurii comuniste în România, Documente. Vol. I-II (The Institution of Communist Censorship in Romania)*, Ratio & Revelatio Publishing House, Oradea, 2014

*Epurarea cărților în România. Documente (1944-1964), (The purge of books in Romania)*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010

*Golgota românească. Mărturiile bucovinenilor deportați în Siberia (Romanian Golgotha. The testimonies of the people from Bucovina deported to Siberia)*, Editing, notes, Vestala Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009

*Poezia românească din exil (Romanian exile poetry)*, anthology, preface, notes, Romanian Cultural Institute Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006

Alexandru Busuioceanu, *Un roman epistolar al exilului românesc (An epistolary novel of the Romanian exile), Correspondence, 1942-1961*, Editing, notes, translation, opening letter and afterword, Book I-II, Jurnalul Literar Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, 2004

*Personajul în romanul românesc interbelic (The character in the Romanian interwar novel)*, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2003

#### **Novels**

*Die Zensur. Für Anfänger*, Thanhäuser Publishing House, (translated into German by Gerhardt Czejka), Ottensheim am Donau, Austria, 2014

*Kinderland*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013

*Un an în Paradis (A year in Paradise)*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005; translated into Italian by Ileana M. Pop: *Un anno all'inferno*, Gruppo Editoriale Zonza, 2009; into German by Ernest Wichner: *Ein Jahr in Paradies*, Merz & Solitude Publishing House, Stuttgart, 2011

*Negrissimo*, Arc Publishing House, Chisinau, 2003

# CENSORSHIP INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE COMMUNIST BLOC

## Abstract

Since the establishment of communist power in the countries of the Soviet bloc, the newly-founded institutions of censorship were aimed at creating or training the “new man” and developing self-censorship among artists. Their aims were also to consolidate and then to maintain communist power. The censors had to approve all artistic or scientific publications, radio or television broadcasts, theater and film scenarios as well as exhibitions, they could supervise even the work from ministries, including decisions on the state secrets. Knowledge of the operating mechanism of communist censorship contributes to the profound understanding of social and cultural life from that period.

**Keywords:** Censorship, Communism, Glavlit, Purge of Books, Soviet Bloc, State Secret.

In the Soviet Union, censorship, as an independent organization, was formed on June 6, 1922. From 1917 to 1922, in the first years of Soviet-bolshevik power, in Russia there were several institutions dealing with censorship, like: Military Censorship, Revolutionary Court of the Press, State Publishing House, the Party Soviet Press, General Directorate of Political Education of the Central Committee of Communist Party, the Comintern (for foreign Press and Literature). Their activity was difficult to coordinate and the authors banned in one city by a Publishing House or a magazine could publish elsewhere. This was the main reason that led to the establishment of Glavlit.

In the communist regime, censorship was not exercised only by the censorship institution. There are editorial censorship, accomplished by employees of magazines, publishing houses, radio and television, etc.;

repressive censorship, executed by the political department (political control) of the security organs, ideological censorship, performed by the party leadership, which have first and last word, deciding what and how should appear or be banned (The Party gave indications to the censorship institution), "inside" censorship (or self-censorship) which is expressed by the intention of authors to guess ideological, aesthetic, political pretensions to their work over numerous stages of the control. But the main institution of censorship (Glavlit in the USSR) exercises the most important and the largest operations of censorship and control. An army of censors was actually in charge of the whole process of banning, discovering of "anti-Soviet" authors and harmful works.

In 1944, with the advance of the Soviet troops to the west, special officers from the Soviet state censorship body began to implement the Communist system of censorship in all "liberated" countries. As a rule, this process has been made taking into account specific peculiarities of each country or the Soviet interest and this did not involve, as binding, the general establishment everywhere of the Glavlit institutions.

While the existence of such state structure was possible only in the Communist regime (Nazis and democratic regimes have not known institutions like Glavlit), the Communist system in some countries of the Soviet bloc has dispensed of services of this institutions, operating generally without cracks. In any case, book burning, ban and control of manuscripts and of all publications, guiding or manipulation of writers took place almost identical in all socialist countries. Structurally, however, there were two types of censorship systems: 1) with a central institution dealing only with censorship (in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria – and in the Soviet Union, of course) and 2) without such an institution, when the functions and tasks of censorship were assimilated by publishers, party organs, etc. Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, for example, did not have such institutions. But everything that was being published in these countries was supervised by special departments of the Party's Central Committee and "all cultural institutions throughout the country, from the editorial offices of political journals to the publishing houses of children's books, theatre managements, scientific as well as artistic institutions have the prime duty of exercising censorship."<sup>1</sup> The abolition of censorship institution in Bulgaria (1956) and Romania (1977) did not coincide with the liberalization of their Communist (censorship) system.

In the countries of the Communist bloc, censorship began its existence repeating or imitating the stages of Soviet censorship formation: banning

and blocking the press (non-communist, opposition, i.e. nearly all media), purge of books, closure of the private bookstores or their nationalization, punitive measures against public figures, etc. For example, the same as in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the books and media purge started in all countries of Soviet bloc before the official establishment of the institution of censorship: 1949 in Romania and 1952 in Bulgaria, when this institution was founded, it was already reaching the third wave of purges. What the USSR developed over decades (e.g. books purge), was made in only a few years in Romania. The Soviet's indications were very accurate because of their vast experience.

Based on the documents from a single socialist state (the censorship in Romania, for example), we will be able to reconstruct the whole system. The access to information about the main fund of the institution of censorship (recently declassified in Romania) and this study can provide more unpublished and important information on the subject for examination within the wider academic context.

## **The Evolution of the Institutions to Pursue Social and Political Changes**

One should note that these institutions were the most conservative structures of the communist regime. However, certain political or social events, like Stalin's death in 1953, the 20th Congress organized by Khrushchev in 1956, Ceausescu's coming to power in 1965, in Romania, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Solidarity movement in Poland in 1980, etc. influenced the activity of censorship institutions, sometimes until their abolition.

In the Soviet Union, Glavlit changed the name 11 times from 1922 to 1991. But we will mention two important moments: For the first ten years (1922-1933), the Soviet institution was called *Главное управление по делам литературы и издательств Народного комиссариата просвещения РСФСР* - Main Administration for Literature and Publishing Affairs under the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR. From here comes the famous abbreviation – Glavlit – although later the word "Literature" disappears and common phrase in all names of Glavlit will be "Protection of State Secrets in the Press". It's interesting that the countries of the Soviet bloc have not assumed this phrase, although the preoccupations for the protection of State Secrets were similar to the Soviet institution.

One of the most important moments that affected the institutional status of the Soviet Glavlit was the death of Stalin. From the early years of its existence until 1991, Glavlit was subordinated to the Council of People's Commissars which was converted to the Council of Ministers, the censorship institution having the status of a ministry. Over the years, security organs have tried to subordinate Glavlit to their interests, but this was possible only once for a very short time: from March to October 1953, the censorship institution became *Управление Уполномоченного по охране военных и государственных тайн в печати Министерства внутренних дел СССР* - Administration for the Protection of Military and State Secrets in the Press under the USSR Ministry of Home Affairs. Immediately after the death of Joseph Stalin, Lavrentiy Beria, head of the Soviet security and secret police apparatus (NKVD) and Deputy Premier in the postwar years, managed to turn Glavlit in Department 11 of the NKVD. But Beria quickly fell out of favor, reaching himself an enemy of the people and was executed. Glavlit returned to its baseline status and continued to operate under the USSR Council of Ministers. Perestroika initiated by Gorbachev affected censorial hierarchy only in April, 1991, when Glavlit becomes *Главное управление по охране государственных тайн в печати и других средствах массовой информации Министерства информации и печати СССР* - General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press and Other Media under the USSR Ministry of Information and Press. After a few months, the institution will disappear completely. On December 27, 1991, in the Russian Federation there was adopted the law "On Mass Media Information", in which censorship has been officially annulled.

After Stalin's death, a further important event that influenced the whole Soviet bloc was Nikita Khrushchev's speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU. While in some countries changes weren't too radical, in Bulgaria this event caused the closing of the recently established Glavlit. The activity of the Bulgarian censorship body was so short, that encyclopedias in the field did not mention it. After September 9, 1944, Bulgaria goes through several stages like those from Romania and other countries of the former Communist bloc. The Bulgarian censorship institution, *Главно управление по въпросите на литературата и издателства* - General Directorate for Literature and Press, was called Glavlit, as in the USSR, and founded in 1952. The first stage of the work of Glavlit was under strict supervision of the Deputy Director of the Soviet Glavlit, Viktor Katishev. The first employees, personally approved by Chervenkov, were named political editors (*politredaktory* – as in the USSR). In the Glavlit worked 200-300

censors, a number considered an exaggeration, as long as in 1956, the year of the closing, the Glavlit had 137 employees, including the technical, administrative staff and the editors from over the country.<sup>2</sup> Since its establishment until the dissolution, the new structure was coordinated directly by Vâlko Veliov Chervenkov, leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party. In 1956, Chervenkov himself falls under the blows of censorship. He made some references to the work of Beria, just when it was purged from libraries and Beria accused of crimes. From this year, the political career of the Bulgarian leader went into decline. The abolition of the Bulgarian Glavlit occurred as a reaction to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress from the Soviet Union.

After Stalin's death and Khrushchev's speech there begins a time of liberalization of the censorship in Czechoslovakia. Actually, the censorship in this country was the most affected one by the social events in comparison with other countries of the Soviet bloc. Once the communists took over power, between 1948 and 1953 there was party censorship in Czechoslovakia "and officials tended to delegate the responsibility to individual editors, who were given their position by the party".<sup>3</sup> Beside the section for Agitation and Propaganda of the Czechoslovak Communist Party the Ministry of Culture also had competence of censorship.<sup>4</sup> A decree from April 22, 1953, set up the Main Board of Press Control - *Hlavní Správa Tiskového Dohledu*, that was incorporated in 1954 into the Ministry of Interior. Like the other institutions from the Soviet bloc, the office controlled the mass media and all cultural and artistic activities. In the 1960s, a strong liberalization process causes the reorganization of the institution with 300 employees, 118 of them working in the central bureau from Prague. In 1966, the Main Board of Press Control was re-named Central Publication Office. It became a civilian institution with very limited competence and tasks, a unique instance in the Communist bloc. As an expert in this field noticed, "the process of late 1960s liberation left traces in the censor's office but was too short and too weak to radically divorce the cultural sphere from the practices of central control".<sup>5</sup> In June 1968, a new Czechoslovak government abolished the Central Publication Office. But after the Soviet invasion in August 1968 there's established a harsh regime and there are revived the methods of brutal censorship, that will function until the end of the 1980s. For a more efficient activity, there were created two new separate censorship offices: *Český úřad pro tisk a informace* (ČÚTI) - Czech Office for Press and Information and *Slovenský úrad pre tlač a informácie* (SÚTI) - Slovak Office for Press and Information. These were amalgamated in December 1980 into *Federální výbor pro tisk*

*a informace* – the Federal Office for Press and Information, an institution that functioned till 1990.

The Polish Censorship was closest to the Soviet model. At the end of 1944, two employees of Glavlit were delegated to the Workers' Party to help to set up a centralized office, which became known in July 1946 as *Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk* - Main Office for Control of the Press, Publications and Public Performances. Being considered from the very beginning as an instrument of Sovietization, the institution of censorship and its local organs didn't control only printings and published works, but also the production of seals, stamps and type molds.<sup>6</sup> The process of liberalization in the mid-fifties affected the mechanism of the Polish censorship so much, that "in September 1956, GUKP employees appealed for the abolition of censorship".<sup>7</sup> But this period was a short one, being followed by the repression of the liberal leaders and purges inside the institution of censorship. The 1960s are marked by protests and confrontations, followed by the consolidation of the authority of censorship and its bureaucratization. The popular discontent led to the appearance of the labor union federation "Solidarity" (*Solidarność*, full name: *Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"* - Independent Self-governing Labor Union "Solidarity"). Accountability and transparency of censorship were one of the 21 demands made by Solidarity in the Gdańsk Agreement of August 1980.

Among Solidarity's major, if short-lived, achievements was the new Act on Censorship of July 1981. A reduction in censorship had been one of the Solidarity's main demands and although the act survived only three months in its original form, before the imposition of the State of War in December 1981 cut it off short of a proper assessment, it introduced several revolutionary clauses.<sup>8</sup>

The period of liberalization and the Solidarity movement was abruptly cut off on December 1981, when a military government under General Wojciech Jaruzelski was imposed on Poland under Soviet order. Polish censorship body, renamed in 1981 as *Główny Urząd Kontroli Publikacji i Widowisk* - Main Office for Control of the Publications and Performances, intensified its power and all broadcasting media were proclaimed military institutions. The reaction of artists and writers was "to boycott the official media and devote their energies to a variety of underground ventures,

including publishing, educational courses, and clandestine cassette recordings".<sup>9</sup> The *GUKPW* was abolished in April 1990.

In Romania, *Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor* - General Department for Press and Publications activated 28 years (1949-1977) and had a very similar structure to Soviet Glavlit. The great changes in the Communist bloc in 1956 didn't have the same impact on the institution of censorship in Romania. One of the most notable peculiarities of *DGPT* was its deeply conservative character (without big changes, disorders, significant resignations). Even with the coming to power of Nicolae Ceausescu, in the period of relative liberalization in 1965-1971 the Romanian censorship body has not changed its way of activity. In 1975, the General Department for Press and Publications has been turned into the Committee for Press and Publications (*Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri*) and it was subordinated not only to the Council of Ministers, but also to the Communist Party. In 1977, when this committee was dissolved, the most important tasks for censorship of publications will be taken over by the Council of Culture and Socialist Education (established in 1971), which will continue to coordinate censorship activity until 1989.

## **Structure of the Censorship Institutions and their Main Tasks**

If we follow the structure of the Glavlit and of the similar institutions from the Soviet bloc over the years, we can see three stages of their evolution:

I. The first was the stage of training and experimentation. The ambitions of the institution were modest, including the control of books and media. In 1922, the year of establishment, Glavlit had four sections:

- 1) Literature: which carried out political and military censorship of all publications; made lists of Russian and foreign prohibited books (arriving in country).
- 2) Administration and Training: it had functions of the control of publishers, printers, booksellers, libraries, the training of the provincial departments; it sent orders and notes in the province, requesting activity reports from local authorities.

The other two departments, Secretary and Libraries and Archives, had secondary and bureaucratic duties.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Decree no. 218 (given in Bucharest on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, 1949) for organizing the "General Department for Press and Publications"

(DGPT), subordinated to the Council of Ministers of the Romanian People's Republic, the censorship institution had the following obligations:

- a) to edit the Official Bulletin of the Romanian People's Republic;
- b) to authorize the publishing of any publications: newspapers, magazines, programs, posters, etc., taking measures to meet legal requirements for printing;
- c) to authorize the printing of all kinds of books, in the Capital and the Province;
- d) to authorize the distribution and promotion of books, newspapers and any other publications, as well as the import or export of newspapers, books or art objects;
- e) to regulate the work conditions for bookstores, secondhand bookshops, public libraries, newspapers depositories, books depositories, etc.;
- f) to prepare and distribute for the press official communications of the Council of Ministers and to coordinate the work of press services of ministries, public departments and institutions.<sup>11</sup>

In 1949, the first year of its activity, the Romanian institution had the following central organs:

- Department of Periodical Press and Publications
- Department for Books Authorization
- Foreign Press Service
- Secretarial Service
- Staff and Learning Professional Service
- Administrative Service
- Accountancy Service.<sup>12</sup>

In the first years of establishing the censorship institutions the main difficulties laid in the training of personnel. The employees working in the beginning as censors were often lacking not only college, but even high school education. For example, in 1940 in the USSR out of five thousand censors (Glavlit plus local organs) only 506 had college education. The main requirement was to possess an irrefutable social origin, if possible a proletarian one. The chiefs of censorship were constantly complaining that they had no "qualified personnel". But gradually things changed and the requirements concerning the censors were growing. They had to possess "skills of analysis and synthesis of the reviewed material", the ability to draw conclusions concerning the general tendencies in a given

domain, the political experience of 10 years (or 5 years for the foreign group), and the employees from the department "Protection of State Secrets" – no political deviations whatsoever in the past.<sup>13</sup>

II. The extension of power and attributions, the second stage, follows very quickly. In 1927, Soviet Censorship institution was interested also in radio and television activity, having the task of approval of editorial plans and periodicals; statistical evidence of the import and export of literature; visa for the conferences, debates; authorization for establishment and dissolution of publishing houses; the advance and post-control of the literature, etc. In 1938, at the height of its activity, Glavlit included 15 divisions:

- "the division for the protection of the military and state secrets;
- the division for the control of foreign literature;
- the division for the control of shows and radio broadcasting;
- the division for the control of socio-political literature;
- the division for the control of artistic literature;
- the division for the control of scientific and technical literature;
- the division for the control of literature on agricultural and rural themes;
- the division for the control of newspapers;
- the division for the purge of forbidden works;
- the division for planning and finance;
- the commercial department;
- the personnel department;
- the special department;
- the general inspection;
- the office for general and legal affairs".<sup>14</sup>

In Romania, in 1961 there worked 317 employees in the central apparatus of the *DGPT*, other 109 were commissioners of the *DGPT* in the province, altogether 426. In this year, the Romanian censorship institution had the following departments:

Department I: Central Printing Press, Control of departmental and factory newspapers and other Printed, Radio Television, Science and technology;

Department II: Import-Export, Literature;

Department III: Control training, Theaters-Movies-Exhibitions;

Department IV: Ideology, Libraries-Antique store-Museums, Documentation and Information in Hungarian publications, Supporting Units, College Secretariat, Staff Department, Publications-Planning-Accounting Department, Administrative Service, Empowered Regions-Districts.<sup>15</sup>

Accumulation of functions by the Glavlit occurred in parallel with the organization of a union system, including and coordinating the censorship work of all Soviet republics. Moreover, all the similar institutions of the Soviet bloc had local bodies, as well as a department to coordinate them.

**III.** The last stage, specific for the institutions with longer life, was one of decline and crisis. The censorship decline was motivated also by an intense self-censorship after years of terror and repression and by the periods of political liberalization. In the case of the Soviet Union and Poland, the crisis lasted until the fall of the communist regime. In Romania's case, a brief crisis led to dissolution in 1977. This period is characterized by reducing the number of departments and employees, as well as of the censorship duties and tasks. Thus, in 1955, for the central apparatus and the local organs of the Soviet Glavlit worked altogether 6,708 employees, (alone) 305 of them in the central apparatus (in comparison, at the beginning of the century in Sankt Petersburg there activated only 13 employees in the field of censorship and in 1939, in the *Gublīt* from Leningrad, 119). In 1991, the Agency for the Protection of State Secrets in the Media under the USSR Ministry of Information and Press (the former Glavlit) has 120 employees, out of 435 shortly before.<sup>16</sup>

In 1991, in the last year of its existence, the Soviet censorship institution had two main sections:

**Department of Publications and Publishing Institutions**

The scientific and technical literature;

The economic and socio-political literature;

The Publications post-control;

Department for the activity with printing companies.

**Foreign Literature Department**

The U.S., Great Britain and countries of oriental languages

Department of the Roman-Germanic languages;

The preparation of normative documents;

Section of inter-republican coordinating;

The newspapers, radio and television;

The study of publications for export;

Department for advisory of press law and other mass media of the USSR.<sup>17</sup>

Even if the structure of the institutions suffered in time various changes, the principle of organization remained the same: the divisions were divided in sub-divisions or units, where activated employees specialized in certain domains: technics, natural sciences, agriculture, etc. The subordinated structures (the republican, the regional, the local censorship) mimicked the structure of the central institution. The establishing of the Glavlit and the similar institutions in the Communist bloc took place just before or immediately after a war (World War I and the Civil War in Russia, World War II) and that's why the structure of the institution imitated a military organization (in Romania too, the divisions of the censorship were called units). During World War II, the Soviet censors (from the Glavlit, the republics of the union, the regions and counties) were considered as active military service members (based on a decree from June 2, 1942).<sup>18</sup> The militarization of the structures of the state wasn't due only to the armed conflicts, but also to the dream of the leaders to amplify their power (especially in Stalin's era, when the devoted *nomenklatura* members obtained quite high military ranks).<sup>19</sup>

## **Some Aspects of the Activity of the Censorship Institution**

### **Purge of Books**

The first major action of censorship was the books and media purge, a process starting before the official establishment of the censorship institution. Thousands of authors and tens of thousands of books, including national and international classics, were declared enemies of the new regime and banned. The first ban criteria were in 1922, in Russia: a) publications containing agitation against Soviet power, b) disclosing the state secrets; c) disturbing the public opinion by communicating false information, d) the pornographic nature.<sup>20</sup> In the years 1945-1950, in Communist bloc countries the first ban criteria were: the fascist, Nazi, chauvinist, racist character of the publications. Of course, the Soviet criteria from the 1920s remained valid till the collapse of communism all over the Soviet bloc. In a short time, the criteria have multiplied, reaching the absurd. The books were banned or destroyed because they contained

sympathies for the West, idealistic philosophy, pessimism, unhealthy love, which aims incitement of the senses, books that do not evoke with enough enthusiasm the achievements of socialism, etc. After this stage, in Romania, for example, giving up the term “*defascizare*” (defascistization), the lists with books removed from circulation will reflect the evolution of political life. Over the years, there will be purged “papers, brochures, wrote by antiparty elements, exposed at the Plenary of CC of Romanian Communist Party”, “the papers of antiparty group exposed in the USSR”, “papers, brochures of the group of traitors from Hungary and counterrevolutionaries writers” (after the revolution in Hungary in 1956); “speeches of leaders of the CPSU, PMR and of fraternal parties, held during the festive days, imbued with the cult of personality”, “works including anti-Titoist citations or references”, “books and brochures devoted entirely to glorification of a leader and especially of Stalin”<sup>21</sup> (after his death), etc. The books of writers or scholars who fled abroad were also purged.

Alone by following the delicate themes from Polish history one gets a panorama of the excesses of censorship that could ban at discretion everything it considered necessary:

Among the taboo or falsified topics, called *białe plamy* (blank spots or areas of darkness), were the following: the history of aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the Catholic Church; the reign and person of Marshal Józef Piłsudski (1897-1935); the Soviet-German relations after the 1922 Rapallo Treaty; the history of the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP; 1948-90) and its predecessors KPP (1918-38) and PPR (1941-48); the history of the USSR and of Russian-and-Soviet-Polish relations (including the 1918 rebirth of Poland; the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1921; the secret protocols of the 23 August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact, officially denied by the Soviet authorities until February 1990; the Soviet annexation of eastern Poland on 17 September 1939; the massive deportation from Polish territories seized by the USSR in 1939-41; the 1940 Katyń Forest massacre; the Polish military effort on the western front, the Polish government-in-exile in London.<sup>22</sup>

In parallel with the purge of books there existed lists with authors who hadn’t the right to publish or to be mentioned in the media, in works of specialized literature. The communist regimes always had *personae non gratae* who had to disappear from the public’s conscience for some time or for ever. Thus, in Czechoslovakia names of authors that should not be

mentioned in connection with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party were of

those who have emigrated, those who have organized opposition against party, those who have taken up anti-party position and have been struck out or expelled from the party and have not yet changed their point of view, those who have been criticized.<sup>23</sup>

What we can not find studying documents from the archives is the number of purged books. According to some opinions, it results that in Romania

only in the period of 1944-1948 were removed from circulation 8,779 works, plus an unidentified number of works whose authors were only nominated between prohibited, which was equalized with the banning of all their creations.<sup>24</sup>

It is an approximate figure because, firstly, in many localities the libraries have been destroyed without taking into account any list and secondly, the censors were encouraged to ban books which were not on their list:

The purge after brochures was done previously, but I still blocked 160 volumes, susceptible to purge and other unforeseen in the list, that I have browsed and I found that they are harmful of all point of view.<sup>25</sup>

Or:

The purge was made by various commissions established by the Cultural Committee, to the extracted books me adding also some.<sup>26</sup>

There are hundreds of reports accompanied by the annexes of books removed from circulation (made by censors during the purges) and comparing these lists with official (published) lists of forbidden books, we can find dozens of authors and titles which were not listed anywhere as being banned.

Among the obligations of censorship entered also the establishment of special fund of books. The exact establishment datum of the special funds in Soviet Russia hasn't been yet determined, but documents and

testimonies reveal that these funds existed already since the beginning of the 1920s.<sup>27</sup> The books were divided into three categories: free fund, with access for all the readers; documentary and special funds with restricted access.

In Romania, such a fund was established in 1951, under the guidance of a Soviet counselor. In the archives there can be consulted "The Project for the Organization and Functioning of the Libraries Special Fund, Prepared Conformable to the Instructions of Comr. Soviet Counselor Maria H. Râtaia".<sup>28</sup> According to it,

the special fund of books from the libraries are founded to the end to preserve from destroying some copies of the purgeable books and put at the disposal of certain scientific researchers, well checked persons and eventually at the disposal of the prosecutor's office in case of ongoing investigations referring to a former high official, writer, journalist, etc.<sup>29</sup>

Similar processes took place in all countries of the Communist bloc, with variable intensity.

As an important task of the censorship, the purge of books will disappear only together with the institution. Though, the last period that closes this long and dramatic process is connected to the miserly and still mean decisions of the superior officials to reintroduce into the libraries some of the banned books, to republish some of the exile authors. If the lists with purged authors are inexhaustible over the years, at some moment there also appear a number of lists with "rehabilitated" authors who will be put back into libraries or republished. In the Soviet Union, in April 1988, after several instructions concerning the return to the free access fund of the Russian literature, there were also given some orders concerning the foreign literature; all instructions referring to the keeping and using of foreign literature will become invalid only on June 18, 1990.

Deposits of these special funds had reached gigantic figures: in 1987, the special fund of a library from the Soviet Union contained more than a million and a half of banned books and periodicals.<sup>30</sup> Arlen Bljum, one of the best analysts of the Soviet censorship, stated in a volume about the forbidden books in the USSR, that the politics of total "bibliocide" that was committed unflinching since 1917, over three quarters of the century, led to a devastation of the book funds so far unknown in history and the result of it was an essential diminution of the intellectual and spiritual potential of the country.<sup>31</sup>

The process of book purge in the Soviet bloc allowed the American secrets services to initiate a successful operation of book distribution that aimed to erode the communist system. Initiated in the midyear of 1956, the operation lasted till September 1991. There were sent over ten million books to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. The first recipients were the cultural and political elites, then the books were also sent to the research centers, cultural organizations, higher education institutions. The realization of this program implied several institution and beside the radio stations Free Europe, Radio Liberty and Voice of America there also contributed to the distribution of books the International Advisory Council (IAC), later transformed into the International Literary Center (both of them being structures of the CIA). John P.C. Matthews, the first researcher who wrote about this operation (in 2003), called it "the Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind".<sup>32</sup> This secret program aimed to influence the perceptions, beliefs and expectations of the political and intellectual elite that had directly or indirectly the capacity of decision in the communist regime.

Studying the situation in the Soviet bloc by reference to an American report written during the second half of 1957, the Free Europe Committee, one of the coordinating institutions of this program,

concluded that the main thing it was up against was not Marxist obstruction, but a vacuum. Instead of being taught how to fight back Communism and counter Party arguments, East Europeans "needed something that would compensate for the sterility of satellite cultural life [...] and the ban on encyclopedic education imposed by the Communists [...] and the lack of humanistic thinking". To combat frustration and stultification, the banned Western sources of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic life should be made available. To achieve this, the book mailing program had to concentrate on four main objectives: to correct thinking from intelligent speculation to simple logic and factual information; to promote a minimum of Western values through psychology, literature, the theatre, and visual arts; to achieve basic linguistic understanding by increasing the share of French and German material and translations, and by sending anthologies in national languages as well as means of learning English; and to send certain publications of current and paramount interest unavailable in Eastern Europe.<sup>33</sup>

The operation was to a great extent a successful one, it wasn't discovered by the secret services and the censorship of the Communist

bloc. The reading of the same books in the East and the West built up a strong spiritual bonding between the European intellectuals that led to a peaceful end of the Cold War. The distribution of books over 35 years was a decisive issue in the ideological victory of the West over communism.

### **State Secret**

Another aspect, common to all censorship institutions from the Communist bloc, also very important, was the protection of state secrets and its relation to censorship. In archival documents we will find, quite often, statements such as: "The general task of the delegates D.G.P.T. [Romania], and of instructors and lecturers is to defend state security on the ideological plan, strict preservation of the state and party secrets, defense of the party line purity";<sup>34</sup> "The Central Publishing Board [Czechoslovakia] will ensure that no material is published in the mass information media which contains facts constituting a state secret, economic secret or public service secret. The Board will suspend the publication or distribution of any material containing such facts."<sup>35</sup> Censorships attempt to monopolize the "State secrecy" must be explained by the influence which the Soviet censorship had on similar institutions from the Communist bloc. Thus, a Bulgarian specialist considered that the "Soviet officials were the main factors that have established data constituting state secrets for all Eastern bloc".<sup>36</sup> The main state structures, formed after the Soviet model and with the help of the Soviet specialists, have inherited also the Soviet system for safeguarding the secrecy. In Bulgaria, for example, "the *List of state secrets* has been elaborated by a commission consisting of El. Gavrilova,<sup>37</sup> V. Katishev, officials of the State Security, and of the Ministry of National Defense", Viktor Katishev being the deputy director of Soviet Glavlit.<sup>38</sup>

The operating system of state secrets was based on laws about espionage. In 1892, in Czarist Russia, spying was defined as a form of state treason, and in 1912 there was elaborated a new law, accompanied by the first lists of espionage and punishment for such acts. Lists of secret data were developed by the military authorities, police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, making the difference between the concepts of military treason and diplomatic treason. At that time, there was not used the notion of "state secrets", but "secret documents", "National defense" or "territorial defense" and there did not exist yet a centralized system that could be coordinated as a whole. The creation of the Soviet Union (December 30, 1922) led to the unification and reviewing of the legislation as well as of

the lists with secret data. The operating principles of secrecy have been made in the years 1920-1930, and, thereafter, the important documents were drafted and reformulated, only the names of organs for the protection of information being changed. One of the most important moments in the creation of state secrets was in 1924, when the definition of "military secret" was extended until it came to the concept of "state secret", which included economic data and of other nature. For the first time, secrecy was passed from military organs to civil authorities: from the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Republic to the security organs – OGPU (KGB), then to Glavlit.

These lists, elaborated for "proper arming of workers in defense of state secrets" do not contain, in fact, secrets, but only abstract concepts and general categories, for example: "military activity", "number and technical condition of locomotives and wagons", "number of planes, pilots and paratroopers", "indicators of depreciation", "establishment of the central fund for agricultural products", "complete distribution of income and budgetary spending", "real income per capita", "biological products for treatment of dangerous diseases", "amounts and persons who are granted financial support of the Red Cross", "the number of crimes and prisoners", "fatal collective accidents per enterprises and accidents dynamic",<sup>39</sup> etc. without specifying in what they consist, without providing concrete details or explanations. Because of this, censors faced many difficulties in their use.

Based on documents from the archives, we can see how Romanian officials from the D.G.P.T. regularly completed the statistics and tables about state secrets entered in the press. In "Statistics of Censorship During the Month February 1952", there is stated that the number of censorship performed was 642, of which 328 are censorship of state secrets.<sup>40</sup>

In 1964, according to the Council of Ministers Decision 310/1964, there is established the list of the most important data and documents constituting state secrets, which will be sent for approval to the Ministry of Interior: "A commission composed of delegates from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Armed Forces, the State Planning Committee, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and the General Department for Press and Publications, will analyze the lists, doing proposals for approval to the Ministry of Interior."<sup>41</sup> In this document, the secrets have been categorized in "Top Secret", "Secret", "Confidential" and they were divided into the following general categories ("several groups of matters subject to state secrecy"):

1. Military data and documents;
2. Mobilization in case of war;
3. State Material Reserves;
4. Transport and telecommunications;
5. Economical data and documents;
6. The standard of living;
7. Sanitary;
8. Science;
9. Foreign policy;
10. Other state secrets and documents.<sup>42</sup>

Until 1971, when the coordination system of state secrets was completed, about 60 institutions were obliged to send their lists of secret data to the DGPT: from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the State Planning Committee, the State Committee for Prices, the State General Inspectorate for Control of Products Quality, the Ministry of Electricity, the Ministry of Chemical Industry, the Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Geology, etc. to the Council for Culture and Socialist Education, the Union of Association of the Medical Sciences, the Romanian Radio Television, the Romanian Agency for Artistic Managing, the Religious Affairs Department, etc.<sup>43</sup> In the course of time, secret lists became longer: for example, the lists with information, data and documents which are “state secrets” issued by ministries and other central bodies from 1971 contain a total of 245 pages.

A category of prohibitions refers to “natural disasters, catastrophes (air, rail, etc..) serious accidents or explosions (in the national energy system, industrial installations, etc.)”, in their case it was not allowed to publish “statements and information on damage” or “other information than officially communicated”.<sup>44</sup> A few days after the earthquake of 1977 in Romania, the censorship institution issues, under “Restricted” status,<sup>45</sup> the following communiqué (No. S/476 of 9.III.1977):

Until new provisions, do not advise for publication or (broadcast) any data and information of physical or value balance sheet, on the evaluation of material losses caused by earthquake, on the country, branches of national economy, sub-branches, activity sectors, counties, localities (including sectors of the capital), economic and social units (buildings, destroyed or damaged houses, companies, machines, equipment, installations, transportation networks, railway, automotive, telecommunications, electric, of water, natural gas, shops, schools, hospitals, etc.). About the

victims (dead and wounded) there can be published only the official data of balance sheet.<sup>46</sup>

Also in Poland,

information on direct threat to the life or health of people caused by industry or chemical agents used in agriculture should be eliminated from works on the subject of environmental protection or the threats to the natural environment in Poland. The prohibition applies to concrete examples of air, water, soil, and food pollution which endanger the life or health of people. This prohibition above all covers information on contamination caused by pesticides.<sup>47</sup>

Referring to this type of ban that existed also in communist Bulgaria, researcher Vesela Chichovska emphasizes “the total indifference to the lives of ordinary citizens that guarantees in totalitarian society the peace of dominant elite” and notes that this “annulled the personal freedoms of citizens and their basic human rights. [...] In case of disasters, the citizen was deprived of the possibility of self-defense and survival.”<sup>48</sup>

The institution of censorship supported with all its actions the activity of the communist party. It was all over the Soviet bloc a faithful Cerberus of the state power, duplicating sometimes the competence of the security services. The repression of the freedom of thinking and creating led to revolts, to the appearance of dissidence and the samizdat. The abolition of the institutions of censorship along with the fall of the communist regimes unfortunately did not coincide with the abolition of the censorship system in the countries of the former Soviet bloc. But these bureaucratic and repressive institutions actually disappeared and represent a unique and miserable experience in the history of communism and censorship in general.

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