

**Promoting diversity. The Polonia Book Fund, Ltd. Transnational Network, 1958-1963**

**Paweł Sowiński,**

*Institute of Political Studies, Warsaw, Poland*

This article discusses the history of the so-called “book program”—a joint effort by the U.S. government, the East European diaspora, and readers of prohibited books behind the Iron Curtain. Between 1956 and 1989 the program purchased some 10 million copies of publications and delivered them to people in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe in order to undermine communist rule. Using the historical materials of the Polonia Book Fund, a U.S.–sponsored publishing project for Poland, this article contributes new insights on the transatlantic perspective of the cultural Cold War. This article focuses on the program’s early stages, and describes various elements of the transnational smuggling network. The program’s state-private partnership was a workable solution that helped to foster a diversity of opinions in post-Stalinist Poland.

**Keywords:** *Cold War, books, U.S. government, Polish diaspora, anti-communism*

**Acknowledgement:** This text was written with the support of the Polish National Science Center “Program książkowy dla Polski 1956-1989 (“The Book Program for Poland 1956-1989,” UMO-2016/23/B/HS/00445).

Author also would like to thank Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford University; Irma Stypułkowska; Marta Mauberg-Stypułkowska; Gwido Zlatkes; Ann M. Fernkel; Sylwia Szafrńska, Faith Bell; Ross Johnson; Jane Curry; Anna Mazurkiewicz; Jessie Labov and NEP4Dissent team – COST action (CA 16213). The oral version of the project was presented at the Seventh Congress on Polish Studies, Gdańsk, Poland, June 16, 2019.

**The Polonia Book Fund and its founders**

Not many tourists venture here, far away from city attractions<sup>1</sup>. The single-family house at 8 Queen Anne’s Gardens, a quiet West London street, built in the early 1960s, is the former residence of Andrzej and Irma Stypułkowski.<sup>1</sup> Today the old leafy trees, meticulously kept yards, and two-story red brick houses make this location, Bedford Park, an elegant neighborhood. In the past it was the home of the Polonia Book Fund, a joint Polish-American

---

<sup>1</sup> This research does not require a permission from the ethical review committee.

enterprise for broadening intellectual freedom in communist Poland. In 1958, the Polish section of the book program was entrusted to Andrzej Stypułkowski who together with his better-known father Zbigniew, had escaped from communist Poland to the West in the fall 1945.<sup>2</sup> The Polonia Book Fund, even if *de facto* financed by the U.S. government, required discretion and distance from institutions associated with American information policy. In quiet Bedford Park it operated for decades like a private publisher.

Recent scholarly literature attributes more and more importance to the initiatives that fostered contact between the East and the West during the Cold War. This essay is just another source-based illustration for the thesis on the migration of people, goods, and ideas in a divided Europe.<sup>3</sup> During the entire period of 1945-1989, different Western currents influenced the communist world. However, 1956 and subsequent years were particularly important as the Soviet bloc opened up.<sup>4</sup> This article focuses on the flow of ideas from the West to the East by smuggling publications that were prohibited in Poland. The literature often attributes the emergence of the independent book circulation in communist countries to grassroots protests and other local developments. However, this phenomenon seems to be closely connected with the action of giving away books by the Polonia Book Fund and other American political initiatives such as Radio Free Europe (RFE). Unlike the growing literature on the role of writers and their texts in this cultural war, this article focusses on lesser-known characters such as distributors, smugglers, and readers. It attempts to recreate the distribution model of émigré literature from a transatlantic perspective, and to trace the travels of banned books across the Iron Curtain.

Any organization needs tangible proof and generates evidence that its existence serves a purpose—this applies even to enterprises established explicitly for smuggling. Hence today we have sources that shed light on this little-known fragment of Polish-American cooperation. From its inception, the Polonia Book Fund sent monthly reports to the American government.<sup>5</sup> These reports provide an overview of the entire European distribution network directed by Stypułkowski, and have a clear and repetitive structure. They enable both narrative and statistical analyses although the set is incomplete. The available collection includes 40 reports. The first is for December 1958, and the last is for September 1963. 18 monthly reports for that period are missing, i.e. around 30%. Still, the extant reports provide good insight into the early stage of the book program (1959-1963). In addition to the monthly reports, there are other relevant materials, such as the weekly reports from the Publication Development Corporation (PDC), i.e. the institution that supervised the Fund's activities from 1960.<sup>6</sup>

The existing scholarly literature rarely mentions the Polonia Book Fund's monthly reports. Alfred Reisch only presented the initial stage of the Polish part of the program on the basis of just six reports (between December 1958 and May 1959).<sup>7</sup> Friederike Kind-Kovács mentions the monthly reports between September and December, 1959, but does not focus on them.<sup>8</sup> This article broadens the knowledge about the early stages of the program and the "person-to-person" (ptp, as it was termed in the reports) distribution by several more years than Reisch and Kind-Kovács. It also offers details that often skip the attention of authors who are covering a broader time period. The focus is specifically the distribution of Polish publications in major Western European cities, as the source material provides much insight into this topic. The Fund's reports primarily reflect the perspective of the distributors, and to a lesser extent that of the book smugglers and recipients.

The emergence of the Polonia Book Fund in 1958 was directly related to American ideas of psychological warfare against the Soviet Union and its satellite countries. Towards this end the Free Europe Committee (FEC) was a CIA front organization. Stypułkowski had worked for the FEC publication division, Free Europe Press (FEP) since 1953. It is not known why he decided to become politically active, or anything about his early career. He must have been an outstanding employee because after a few years when he was only 29, the FEC decided to assign him to coordinate a new project. Between January and November 1958 the Polonia Book Fund was a part of the FEC publishing arm. In December 1958 Stypułkowski was transferred to the FEP to work with Samuel S. Walker and become his representative in London. From December 1958 Walker had worked in New York as the head of the East Europe Institute (EEI) which he presented as a nonprofit organization.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the EEI was directly linked to the FEC, and its mission was the distribution of books to Poland. The EEI served as a middleman and cover for the pilot program of giving books directly to recipients. Poland was the first, and for several years the only country in which the Committee tested the possibilities of direct book distribution in Eastern Europe.

The secret financing of Walker by the FEC provided a better cover against suspicions about the Committee being funded with federal money.<sup>10</sup> The majority of exiles involved in the project did not see a problem with ties to the U.S. government. According to Hugh Wilford, most of those involved knew about the source of financing. They took the money because they believed in the same common cause; they were supporters of the U.S., or, like Walker himself, American patriots. Ideological affiliation with the U.S. removed potential doubts. Wilford suggests that some of the collaborators might not have given the issue much thought. They were grateful for being allowed to join the program, and focused on the work they had to do. Others

thought that they deserved the support because they were the best equipped for a cultural war against the Soviet bloc. They had the necessary connections, experience, and understanding of Polish affairs. Nonetheless, the American decision makers were aware that the image of both the U.S. and the émigrés would suffer from public accusations of clandestine service.<sup>11</sup>

These apprehensions likely prompted the decision to detach Stypułkowski's mission from the FEC. This was a far-sighted move. The American media revealed the Committee's financing by the CIA less than ten years later.<sup>12</sup>

It is striking that Walker's East Europe Institute, in spite of its name, dealt only with Poland. Setting up the Polonia Book Fund as a separate entity might have been motivated by the need to better coordinate its Polish activities. At that time Poland stood out in the Soviet bloc, in part because of its relatively liberal policy.<sup>13</sup> One of the features of this policy was the lessening of restrictions on traveling to the West, which created the greater opportunities to develop a direct book distribution program on a significantly larger scale than with other Eastern European countries. The new entity was created specifically to handle the ptp distribution. The Polonia Book Fund found a home in London where there were many opportunities to establish contacts with people from behind the Iron Curtain.

After a few months the Fund was transferred to the Publication Development Corporation (PDC) as a legacy from Walker's suddenly dissolved East Europe Institute. The PDC was established in spring 1959 as an ostensibly private organization with the same officer—Samuel S. Walker. Thus it was not a personal change, but rather the incorporation of the Polish program into a structure of wider scope and reach. The PDC supported publishing initiatives in Africa and South America which unmasked Soviet and Chinese methods and intentions. It also aided Pavel Tigríd's initiative in publishing and distribution of Czechoslovak materials.<sup>14</sup> The change in the Fund's institutional affiliation may indicate the development of an alternative model to coordinate activities directed towards Poland. The Polonia Book Fund formally remained within the PDC structure at least until September 1963, when knowledge about Stypułkowski's enterprise suddenly stops.<sup>15</sup> In 1963, the Fund's budget within the PDC structure was \$60,000.00.<sup>16</sup>

This prompts the question about Polish émigré elites during the Cold War. To what extent did their political activism mean that they were enlisted in the American plans for the Cold War, and to what extent was it a genuine partnership?<sup>17</sup> However, such dilemmas are seldom clearly determined in history. Probably these factors cannot be precisely measured, and particular instances can vary in degrees of dependence from American sponsorship. Stypułkowski's activities as someone on the U.S. payroll were undoubtedly determined by American policy.

Following A Ross Johnson concept of “chosen instrument” in U.S. information policy, this article proposes that Polonia Book Fund Ltd role was similar – autonomous and independent in the implementation of this policy<sup>18</sup>.

### **Distribution points**

The Polish diaspora in Western Europe carried out the distribution of the program’s publications. The diaspora’s ability to pass and receive information between the East and the West is best visible at the ptp level. The program adapted very well to preexisting conditions. Polish post-war diaspora institutions and organizations were not spread evenly, but they encompassed most of the important European cities. Paris and London had the greatest number of Polish community centers; these even included specialized bookstores and publishers. They joined the Fund’s book program at once. In 1960 Stypułkowski reported that he had 54 distribution points in Europe. His first collaborators were Tadeusz Parczewski in Paris, W. Drozdowski in Brussels, Stanisław Błaszczyk in Edinburgh, W. Jankowski in Vienna, and Witold Zahorski in Rome<sup>19</sup>.

These cities played a central role until the program closed in 1989, except for Edinburgh and Brussels which gradually lost importance. In 1960 the Fund expanded (although not without problems) to Scandinavia (Stockholm) and West Germany (Munich).<sup>20</sup> In the initial years the German segment was considered the weakest. Few travelers from Poland visited Germany, although this was to change in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>21</sup> Another obstacle was the fact that the employees of Radio Free Europe handled the Munich distribution. This made some Polish visitors uneasy as they were afraid to contact a radio station that was fiercely attacked at home.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, the distribution in Scandinavia thrived. After 1956, Polish cruise ships, yachts, and cargo ships frequently visited Swedish ports, most notably Stockholm.

54 distribution locations (supposedly 56 in 1962) seems inflated.<sup>23</sup> Apparently many were small and temporary. Some disappeared rather quickly, but new ones appeared. Some of Stypułkowski’s people developed into serious distributors, such as Andrzej Chilecki in Vienna (later in Cologne), and Jerzy Kulczycki in London. In 1962 these names were little known. The distribution points were scattered in many countries and towns, but did not use a common identifier. This provided a good cover for the ptp program, and made identifying its coordinators more difficult.<sup>24</sup> Between 1958 and 1963 Great Britain, France, and Italy had the largest number of distribution points. These countries also gave away the largest number of books. Scandinavia and Germany (which they counted together with Austria) distributed less.

The distributors worked on terms that were advantageous to the American side. The only other full time employee of the Fund besides Stypułkowski was Tadeusz Parczewski in Paris. Others worked part time: in Scotland, central Britain, Burgundy, St. Etienne, Metz, Calais, Rome, Naples, Florence, Turin, Munich, Geneva, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Vienna, Beirut, and the U.S.<sup>25</sup> Many worked as volunteers. Some received compensation for their expenses. The Polish distribution did not require dedicated locations. Books were given away in established emigration facilities such as churches, bookstores, libraries, and community centers. In large cities such as Rome or Paris, the distribution involved pro-active methods. The distributors sought contact with Poles in ports, train stations, hotels, tourist attractions, sport stadiums, etc.

By September 1963, the Fund had given away 101,000 copies of books to 37,000 visitors from Poland.<sup>26</sup> Three years earlier Stypułkowski assessed that his distribution network had reached two-thirds of Polish tourists travelling to Western Europe.<sup>27</sup> The actual effectiveness must have been much lower. This is evident by comparing the program's declared result (distributing books to 37,000 people between 1958 and 1963) with the number of Poles who visited the West during the same period (297,000)—which means that 12% received books from the program.<sup>28</sup> Stypułkowski sometimes was understandably overly enthusiastic, and he was prone to exaggerate the potential of his network.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, even 12% should be considered a great success for the early ptp program, especially in light of the political obstacles in traveling between the East and the West, as well as the fact that the program was still in pilot.

### **Mobilization: Vienna, Rome, and Helsinki**

There were three periods of mobilization during which the Fund's activities expanded beyond an established routine, and assumed unusual forms and a greater scope. During the Seventh World Festival of Youth and Students in Vienna in August 1959, a group of distributors, the so-called "anti-festival" group, gave away books.<sup>30</sup> A year later during the Olympic Games in Rome they did the same for the Polish athletes and sports fans. In 1962, the Fund gave away publications during the Eighth World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki. These events in Vienna, Rome, and Helsinki show the Fund's activities in their most aggressive form.

In his book Reisch mentions that the Free Europe Committee regarded the Vienna festival action as a success.<sup>31</sup> From July 26 to August 4, 1959 more than 500 participants from Poland attended the festival organized under the aegis of the Soviet Union. A 15 person-strong group of young émigrés led by Stypułkowski enticed the Poles to a distribution point set up in the center of Vienna at 128 Mariahilfer Strasse. Stypułkowski's people not only gave away books,

they also served snacks, coffee and wine (for free or for small fee). They provided information on Vienna's cultural life, and even handed out small sums of cash for movie or theatre tickets, or for LP records. Stypułkowski assumed that the Poles would arrive in Vienna with little or no pocket money, and would try to sell folk pottery or books brought with them from Poland. His people advised the guests where they could sell them, or they bought the items themselves thus helping the Poles to feel financially less constrained.<sup>32</sup> Stypułkowski's distributors moved around the town and found the Poles among the festival crowd. They talked with them and gave them books, and invited them to visit Mariahilfer Strasse.

The Fund similarly organized its activities during the Olympic Games in Rome in August 1960. The mission proper, i.e. the distribution of books and journals, was combined with strong economic incentives. The Fund set up its distribution point at the Fondazione Romana Marchesa Umiastowska at 117 Via Piemonte.<sup>33</sup> Stypułkowski's team bought 105 liters of Polish vodka, 56 cans of ham, 30 cans of caviar, 50 lbs. of sausage, and at least 100 other articles from the Poles. All of these were purchased by the distributors, or exchanged for books. These trade operations contributed greatly to the success in Rome, in which over 3,000 volumes were given away to 750 athletes and sports fans from Poland.<sup>34</sup>

The Fund also took care to meet the spiritual needs of the Polish visitors. It was well known that Catholicism, an important part of Polish identity, faced obstacles in communist Poland. Giving away tickets to papal audiences was an effective tool in the hands of the distributors, so were invitations to Polish holy masses, or organized tours of Roman churches. Polish Catholics could even take confession and then receive books directly from the confessional.<sup>35</sup> Stypułkowski's Roman agent Witold Zahorski drove sports fans to Monte Cassino where Polish soldiers fought against the Germans in 1944. Thus not only were books provided, but anything that was missing behind the Iron Curtain. In a sense, the Polonia Book Fund distributed freedom. This was a strong point not just of the book program, but of the western world in general. This was the main reason why many Poles traveled in the first place.

Little is known about the Fund's third mobilization during the eighth youth festival in Helsinki (June 28-August 6, 1962).<sup>36</sup> The Fund was just a part of a much larger "anti-festival" operation.<sup>37</sup> No detailed report from the Fund on this event has been found in any American archive to date. Stypułkowski's monthly report for August 1962 provides only the size of the Helsinki distribution—200 Poles received 649 books.<sup>38</sup> Therefore we know neither about the plans, nor about the Fund's activities there. Most of the Poles arrived in Finland's capital by sea. The Fund's group handed the bulk of publications to boy scouts from the "Zawisza Czarny" and "Iskra" tall ships, and to the group returning to Poland on the "Mazowsze" cruise ship.<sup>39</sup> A

barge rented by Stypułkowski for the anti-festival center was moored next to the “Mazowsze.” On board there was a club and reading room for young people from Poland.<sup>40</sup>

### **The smugglers—books on their way to Poland**

The Fund reports most often describe the book recipients as students, sailors, people on organized tours, athletes, foreigners visiting Poland, unidentified “cultural professionals,” and physicians. Other aspects also may have been relevant to smuggling strategies even if poorly reflected in the reports. People in organized groups had different opportunities to smuggle books than individual tourists. Sometimes women had greater possibilities than men. Young people might have had a different attitude towards smuggling than older people. Forms of transportation were also relevant, as well as the size and look of the smuggled books<sup>41</sup>. Of course the route was significant as well. Polish books were not available everywhere in the world, and customs officials in communist Poland were more or less suspicious of smuggling depending on where a person travelled from.

The results were influenced by the local climate and cycles of nature. In Scotland, the books would distribute well in winter when the North Sea fishing season began and the Polish fishermen landed in Edinburgh and Aberdeen to resupply, wait out storms—and take some books on board.<sup>42</sup> Cod rather than people determined the program’s success on the Scottish coast. Weather could disrupt a distribution cycle—and not just in Great Britain. In the Baltic October is the end of the season for small vessels; only the bravest would venture to Stockholm on yachts post-season, despite the obvious danger.<sup>43</sup> Winter storms made both cargo and passenger travel more difficult, whereas better weather improved the circulation of ideas. Stypułkowski appreciated the sailors for their qualities—willingness to take risks, and a strong character developed through struggle against elements.<sup>44</sup>

Sailors took an interest in the Fund’s offerings, even if many were not into reading books. As Reisch put it, they played a double role—of smugglers and entrepreneurs.<sup>45</sup> A black market for foreign books instantly developed in Poland. It became a very efficient venue for smuggling because it was profit-based. Already in 1959, prohibited books had become popular among crews of fishing vessels that arrived in Scottish ports. As the Fund’s representative in Scotland reported, this was “mainly for one reason—a best-selling product bringing high profits to the black market.”<sup>46</sup> Smugglers in this group were not necessarily anticommunists; rather their actions were motivated by the powerful forces of supply and demand. Ships flying the Polish flag visited ports in Scotland and Sweden often enough that the Fund treated their sailors as

stable and reliable suppliers, and put aside books for them to be sold on the Polish black market.<sup>47</sup>

In 1960, 80% of the Poles who visited Swedish ports were sailors. The passenger ferry between Poland and Sweden was not running yet. The sailors profited by bringing books to second-hand bookshops on the Polish Baltic coast. For instance, one ship crew thanked a Swedish distributor for a book on the 1940 Soviet massacre of Polish POWs in Katyn because it sold for the highest prices on the black market.<sup>48</sup> The sailors usually were not avid readers, but they must have understood both the inventory and the readers' preferences in order to maximize their profits. Sometimes they were better at this than the more intellectual distributors. In Stockholm in 1960, one mariner asked for *Rozmowy ze Światłą*, by Zbigniew Błażyński.<sup>49</sup> Stypułkowski's distributor said that the book was already outdated, and it would not be worthwhile to smuggle it over the border. But the man insisted. He said he could sell the book in Czechoslovakia for 50 korunas a copy, and he received 100 copies.<sup>50</sup>

A genuine interest in books was more common among athletes than sailors.<sup>51</sup> This may indicate that émigré books had a real impact in Poland at that time. Soccer players from Silesian clubs are reported to have read "Dr. Zhivago" by Pasternak, even if they only had an elementary school education and spoke in a Silesian dialect.<sup>52</sup> Some sport teams traveled to the West fairly frequently. At a tournament in France, Polish basketball players were so engrossed in the books given to them that they were reading until just before the beginning of the game.<sup>53</sup> In March 1960 in Chamonix (probably for winter sports—details were not provided) a grateful team handed the distributor their medal. This was extraordinary—what can be more valuable to an athlete than a medal? According to a report, Polish athletes astounded the other teams and event organizers because they read books and held discussions about them during sporting events.<sup>54</sup>

This picture of athletes enamored with books is undoubtedly an exaggeration. Instances of giving away medals must have been rare, and probably this is why the situation was recorded. Generally sports teams treated book distribution the same as sailors—as an opportunity (and a supplementary one to boot) to make extra money on the black market. The reports focused on books, and they did not reflect the full spectrum of business activities.<sup>55</sup> It is likely that the athletes mainly smuggled consumer goods such as clothing, (blue jeans, wash-and-wear shirts, nylon raincoats, brandy, cigarettes) vodka, ham, caviar, or photo cameras.<sup>56</sup> For the smugglers, the priority was demand.

Books as vehicles for information certainly mattered to students, scholars, and intellectuals, who would sacrifice a lot to acquire desired titles. Stypułkowski remembered a Warsaw University mathematician he met in London who starved himself for several days to save for

English handbooks on logic.<sup>57</sup> The intelligentsia were more willing to take greater quantities of books back to Poland. For this particular group, reading was a natural reflex as well as a professional obligation. It may be also true that this greater willingness may have been a result of their social status. It was much easier for intellectuals to explain such luggage to customs officers.

It was through conversations with the intellectuals from Poland that the distributors saw most clearly the impact of their efforts. While selecting books in the London bookstore, an unidentified scholar said that she was taking back to Poland “her most valuable intellectual luggage.”<sup>58</sup> Stypułkowski dubbed the musicians in the Warsaw Philharmonic “regulars.” During the orchestra’s return visit to Western Europe, more than 40 musicians were involved in smuggling.<sup>59</sup> After prior arrangement over the phone, Stypułkowski delivered books to their London hotel. One of the musicians told him, “You cannot imagine how many people are waiting for our return expecting a new supply of forbidden literature.”<sup>60</sup> Some intellectuals would read the books at night while still in London, and end up exhausted and inspired during the daytime, as happened to Warsaw architect Adolf Ciborowski.<sup>61</sup>

The Fund’s books reached the communist officials as well. They were the most privileged group. They did not encounter any problems at the borders or in securing passports.<sup>62</sup> The reports provide an overall positive image of the Polish communist party members. In their conversations with the distributors they were not interested in exacerbating divisions with the West; to the contrary, they were keen to build contacts as much as possible. They read émigré books, and on the whole they did not repudiate their contents. At least some open-minded Party-affiliated intelligentsia would not oppose relaxing censorship, or even publishing some émigré books in Poland.<sup>63</sup> Of course the officials could afford to be more open when abroad than at home. Still, these were likely their genuine opinions. The attitude of the Party members created a favorable air for the book program, so it could reach the people who were affiliated with the authorities. Sometimes this applied even to the elites of power such as Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz who received books in Rome.<sup>64</sup>

Still, there was a misapprehension in the contacts between the émigrés and the communists from Poland. The latter displayed ideological reservations towards the diaspora, and treated the distributors with caution.<sup>65</sup> They echoed the tenor of various communist directives, travel instructions, and propaganda accusations about the diaspora spying for the capitalists, etc. The Fund’s distributors also had their limitations in evaluating the motivations of the Party apparatchiks and officials who nonetheless would carry prohibited literature to Poland. Stypułkowski suspected that they reported to Warsaw, which sometimes was probably true.

One Fund report characterizes the Party recipients as opportunists, and their explanations as dishonest.<sup>66</sup> Even if these people reached for banned books, the distributors seldom discerned a longing for greater freedom. Nonetheless, the communist apparatchiks' behavior during their Western travels proved that the entire communist system in Poland remained relatively liberal—which was the *raison d'être* and principal objective of the book program.

### **Reading strategies in Poland**

The market value of smuggled books rose dramatically after they crossed the Polish border. These books drew immediate attention and interest. A regular recipient in Sweden wrote that every time he returned to Poland he was welcomed by a long line of eager readers.<sup>67</sup> Another traveler reported that when he brought a copy of the Paris-based journal *Kultura*, it was snatched from him by the very first person he met at the railway station.<sup>68</sup> There were queues for books, and the exchange grew. Some people overpaid, while others made money, sometimes even by lending for a fee. Sometimes books would never be returned, or they would come back after many months completely worn out.<sup>69</sup>

People with disposable income could try to purchase the smuggled literature in second-hand bookstores, consignment or antique stores—of course always “under the table.”<sup>70</sup> It was well known that prices on the black market were high. On the Baltic coast sailors sold émigré books wholesale to second-hand bookstores; and then a single volume could be priced at 200 to 400 zlotys.<sup>71</sup> Some foreign language books fetched even higher prices. Boxers from the Legia sports club enthusiastically reported that *Panorama des idées contemporaines* by Gaëtan Picon went for 600 zlotys in Warsaw.<sup>72</sup> Sometimes smuggled books were visibly damaged after crossing the Iron Curtain—pages ripped out and crudely sewn back, or torn off covers, or crumpled, half-torn pages. This did not dissuade the readers from buying.<sup>73</sup>

The Fund reports draw a picture of a reader “chasing” books that were prohibited in Poland. However, the reports usually do not provide names or much detail. It is well known in historiography that movements involving “secret books” do not leave many written traces.<sup>74</sup> As the collections of smuggled books grew, several more permanent initiatives emerged—home-based lending libraries. According to Stypułkowski, an unnamed *Życie Literackie* journalist in Kraków ran such a library from his home in 1960. He urgently needed replacement copies for books that were completely worn-out. Stypułkowski did not know if the journalist charged for his services or not.<sup>75</sup>

In the fall of 1962 the Fund listed seven or eight such establishments, and treated them as its own branches in Poland. These establishments worked in much more difficult conditions than in the West. The scope of re-distribution was likely small, and limited to friends and trusted circles. These “centers” should be regarded as home libraries rather than branches or distribution points. The report does not provide their names or addresses. Two were supposed to exist in Warsaw, two in Kraków, one in Łódź, Toruń, and Poznań respectively.<sup>76</sup> Another report mentions a library on the Baltic coast.<sup>77</sup> Each of these points had several hundred books. The organizers probably were people well-connected in communist Poland. Some of them might have been Party-affiliated journalists or writers, or people in executive positions. They developed their sizable collections during frequent trips to the West, and through black market purchases. These spontaneously created libraries can be seen as a kernel of the future second circulation in Poland.<sup>78</sup> The emergence of lending libraries was further proof that the Polonia Book Fund’s program fell on fertile ground.

State-regulated libraries also provided access to banned publications, albeit with restrictions. A librarian from Jagiellonian University in Kraków told Stypułkowski that under Stalin, émigré books were locked in a cage in a special room. Access was granted by the Minister of Culture. To gain access, one need to file a request and obtain a counter-signature/approval from a local Party cell. After 1956, these restrictions lessened. Banned books were moved to the rare books sections. It was enough to show the librarian a letter from a university department, or from another recognized authority.<sup>79</sup>

Stypułkowski’s books enjoyed a degree of tolerance under Władysław Gomułka’s rule. Many books could be read in the National Library in Warsaw. Following the authorities’ instructions, the Library placed émigré books in its Special Collections. The same situation occurred in Kraków. Access was granted to people authorized by their employer, such as a university or office. A librarian from the National Library told the Fund that the Minister of Culture had issued a directive on this matter.<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to locate this document in the Polish archives. Supposedly it justified the restrictions with the need to protect these rare materials (which was true in a way). It is unlikely that many people believed this justification. The fact is that the government of communist Poland maintained a policy of partial legalization of banned books by allowing them to be read in selected libraries.

### **The communists react**

The media in the communist Poland tried minimize the impact of the Fund. They placed its activities in the context of ideological warfare between the East and the West. A journalist from *Nowa Kultura* who participated in the 1959 Vienna festival, wrote that she appreciated the books, but immediately added that they were not a sensation in Poland. According to her, the anti-festival propaganda did not have much of an impact on the Polish groups who supposedly wholly supported the communist festival. They already had heard about Milovan Đilas—an allusion to *The New Class*, one of Fund's most popular titles.<sup>81</sup> The daily *Życie Warszawy* attacked Stypułkowski's operation (without mentioning him by name) taking off their gloves, as "a truckload of hatred, a rabid smear campaign, and crude propaganda."<sup>82</sup>

The next year the Polish propaganda was even stronger prior to the beginning of the Olympics in Rome in order to warn the fans and athletes away from the "dirty work" of the émigré information centers. *Sztandar Młodych* published two names of the organizers of the Fund's action in Rome, Witold Zahorski, characterized as an "agent for multiple intelligence services," and Tadeusz Parczewski, a "French police informer." They were supposedly paid in "CIA dollars," and supported by the Vatican.<sup>83</sup> The Italian communist weekly *Vie Nuove* published a photo of Stypułkowski's car and a picture of Zahorski.<sup>84</sup> The communists watched Fund's actions and gathered information. The program found itself under siege. Somewhat scared, Stypułkowski discussed with the RFE leadership whether to respond to the attacks, but eventually they decided that such a response on the radio would expose Stypułkowski's work being sponsored by the Americans. Polish groups were more tightly controlled, and the distribution was more difficult than in Vienna.<sup>85</sup>

According to Stypułkowski, during the Helsinki youth festival in the summer of 1962, Polish media largely ignored the Fund. Critical commentaries appeared only at the end of August, i.e. after the festival. The activities of Stypułkowski's group were described as hooliganism and as a provocation doomed to failure. The group distributed a pamphlet *Finlandia z daleka i bliska* ("Finland far and near").<sup>86</sup> Polish media called this pamphlet an ideological provocation.<sup>87</sup> Stypułkowski regarded this reaction as delayed, and claimed his activities surprised the communists. Yet it seems that Warsaw was not surprised by Stypułkowski's group to the same degree as three years earlier in Vienna. The Polish authorities had prepared for the return of the youth from Finland, which was indicated by intensified searches for books at the border.<sup>88</sup>

This illustrates the change between 1958 and 1963. At the beginning of the program, the Polish custom officials at the border rarely took an interest in books.<sup>89</sup> It is not known if there was a law that prohibited bringing books to Poland at that time.<sup>90</sup> The relaxed attitude on the border might have encouraged travelers even if they were aware that bringing such materials

could invite trouble. They would hide the books, or give them to people with foreign passports.<sup>91</sup> The fact that the authorities disapproved of these books was clear in Poland's political climate—censorship, inaccessibility of émigré literature, hostility towards the Polish diaspora and its Western allies in the official propaganda, etc. The distributors on their end also employed safety measures. They did not advertise giving away the books in the émigré press in order to prevent the impression of an organized action.

The distributors tried to keep track of the Polish authorities' policies and take into account periods of loosening or toughening controls on the border. They did not have direct insight into the Polish control agencies. They mostly recorded travelers' impressions. The barometer of social moods was relatively sensitive to repression. During the court trials of Hanna Rzewska (1958) and Anna Rudzińska (1961-62) who were accused of collaboration with the Paris-based *Kultura* monthly, some travelers became cautious and feared the consequences of smuggling.<sup>92</sup> The Berlin and Cuban crises also affected the book smugglers' attitudes to the lesser extent.<sup>93</sup> Conversations with people from Poland are interesting, but one-sided and insufficient to reconstruct the policy of communist Poland towards smuggling books. Alas, it is hard to find even sporadic mentions of book smuggling in the police and customs' archives for that period.

The Fund's reports only allow a hypothetical reconstruction of the control and confiscation of undesirable materials at Polish borders. The initial anti-smuggling measures were likely implemented in response to the Vienna youth festival in the summer of 1959. Echoes of Stypułkowski's activities soon reached Warsaw. Even before the festival ended, the authorities sent a group of 40 censors to the Polish-Czech border in Cieszyn to help the border guards to confiscate prohibited books. However, the foresighted festival participants chose not to expose themselves to danger. They placed the books in cargo cars together with the festival equipment, and not in their personal luggage. The most cautious passed the books to a folk dance group that travelled to Yugoslavia from Vienna, and was scheduled to return to Poland a few weeks later when the border alert had passed.<sup>94</sup>

During the following months the authorities' offensive indeed abated, but it did not cease altogether. The Fund's distributors noted that the communist media had started warning against Western propaganda more than previously.<sup>95</sup> In 1959 and during the following years, the Polish authorities also significantly reduced travel to the West. Only 45,000 people went to Western Europe in 1959, i.e. 32,000 less than in 1957.<sup>96</sup> The authorities regained control by increasing the isolation of the Poles. New distinct assaults against book smugglers happened in May and June of 1960. Stypułkowski only vaguely mentioned the increased searches.<sup>97</sup> Later the wave of repression receded again. No increased control was noticed during the return from the

Olympics in Rome.<sup>98</sup> The next high-tide of repression at the border came in winter 1962, only to recede again.<sup>99</sup> These phases of intensification and lessening of border controls can be viewed in terms of a clash within the communist party of two attitudes toward smuggling books—a hard line, and a soft line.

Over time the Polish authorities tried ever harder to undermine Stypułkowski's efforts. In the period covered by this study, the culmination was the previously mentioned roundup in Gdynia of youth returning from the Helsinki festival in 1962. The sense of fear and pressure grew among Polish travelers. This was evident in the preventive warning meetings between the security officers and the captains of sports teams and tour organizers, and in the increased activity of secret agents embedded in teams during organized travels.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, both true book aficionados and professional smugglers found ways to evade supervision. The smuggling methods improved with the growing pressure from the authorities. Books were often hidden in the recesses in trains, ships, buses, or placed among the cargo, or carried in one's clothes (in a sleeve or pocket).<sup>101</sup>

\*\*\*

The nearly 600 pages of monthly reports amply demonstrate the effectiveness of the Polonia Book Fund during its initial years. The alliance between the Polish diaspora and the U.S. government made smuggling books to Poland systematic. The personal connections between the distributors and the repeat visitors from Poland strengthened. A smuggling community—a genuinely social network—developed around the distribution of banned books. This group created strategies to bypass the restrictions, and developed the black market exchange. Due to the book distribution, the prohibitions of the communist authorities were more and more out of pace with the social reality. The methods developed by Walker and Stypułkowski, and the direct distribution network continued under the leadership of George Minden for the 27 more years.<sup>102</sup> The activities initiated by the Polonia Book Fund proved to be one of the most brilliant and long-lasting smuggling actions in cold war Europe.

Translated by *Gwido Zlatkes and Ann Frenkel*

Graphic design in charts section by *Sylwia Szafrńska*

---

<sup>1</sup> The author's visit to Irma and Andrzej Stypułkowski's home, November 17, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Andrzej Suchcitz, "Andrzej Stypułkowski", *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* 45, 2, (2008): 209-211.

- <sup>3</sup> Anette Vovinckel, Marcus M. Payk, Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Cold War Cultures. Perspective on Western and Eastern Societies* (London: Berghahn Books, 2012); Robert Brier, ed., *Entangled Protest: Transnational Approaches to the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, (Fibre Verlag, 2013), Lars Fredrik Stöcker, *Bridging the Baltic Sea. Networks of Resistance and Opposition during the Cold War* (London: Lexington Books, 2018); Gyorgy Peteri, ed., *Nylon Curtain: Transnational and Trans-Systemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe*, (Trondheim, 2006).
- <sup>4</sup> Simo Mikkonen, Pia Koivunen, "Introduction" in *Beyond the Divide. Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe*, ed. Simo Mikkonen, Pia Koivunen (London: Berghahn Books, 2015), 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty corporate records (further: RFE/RL), Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Reports for December 1958-September 1963, box 262-264, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, 2000C71.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibidem, box 262-264.
- <sup>7</sup> Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War. The CIA-Funded Secret Book Distribution Program behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2013), 233-254.
- <sup>8</sup> Friederike Kind-Kovacs, *Written Here, Published There. How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014), 229-234, 236. Kovacs' book barely touches upon Polish issues.
- <sup>9</sup> Samuel S. Walker's letter to Georg Furstenberg (March 26, 1959), Samuel Sloan Walker collection (further: Walker collection), box 2, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, 2001C58. Between 1950 and 1959 Walker was deputy head of the Free Europe Committee responsible for publication projects. More about him in: John Matthews, "The West's Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 16, (2003): 409-427.
- <sup>10</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 233.
- <sup>11</sup> Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer. How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 249-250.
- <sup>12</sup> Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 236-241.
- <sup>13</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 255.
- <sup>14</sup> More on Tigris's activities, see Reisch, *Hot Books*, 60-61.
- <sup>15</sup> In 1963, the Polish ptp program was transferred back to the Free Europe Committee under George Minden. His Press and Special Projects Division at the FEC coordinated all the projects directed towards the Soviet Bloc countries (excluding the Soviet Union). The Polonia Book Fund continued as a publisher and distributor, and supported Minden's activities.
- <sup>16</sup> Publication Development Corporation. Report on Operations, November 1960; Polonia Book Fund Ltd., March 4, 1963; PDC – Budget Request FY 63/64, March 15, 1963, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>17</sup> Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948-1954* (Warszawa-Gdańsk: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej; Uniwersytet Gdański, 2016), 472-474, 478-479.
- <sup>18</sup> Johnson A. Ross, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The CIA Years and Beyond* (Washington D.C.; Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2010), 228-229.
- <sup>19</sup> Undated and untitled document [1959?], Walker collection, box 9.
- <sup>20</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for June 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>21</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1960, ibidem. Between 1959 and 1960 fewer books were distributed in Germany than in Belgium, a much smaller country.
- <sup>22</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 240.
- <sup>23</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. List of contacts and outlets in the operation, Autumn 1962, RFE/RL, box 263. These data are hard to corroborate. The estimates for the second half of the 1960s give only 30 main distribution points. See: Zob. Reisch, *Hot Books*, 270.
- <sup>24</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 21-22.
- <sup>25</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd., March 4, 1963, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>26</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for September 1963, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>27</sup> Publication Development Corporation. Report on Operations, November, 1960, RFE/RL, box 263. The results of the program already were questioned at the PDC level, where the numbers submitted by the head of the Fund were lowered by 50%. Even this would have been a fantastic result.
- <sup>28</sup> Dariusz Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski 1949-1989* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2010), 486.
- <sup>29</sup> PDC weekly report, September 10-16, 1960, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>30</sup> More on communist youth festivals, see Pia Koivunen, "Overcoming Cold War Boundaries at the World Youth Festivals" in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed. Autio Sari and Katalin Miklóssy (New York, London: Routledge, 2013); Pia Koivunen, "Friends, 'Potential Friends,' and Enemies: Reimagining Soviet Relations to the First, Second, and Third Worlds at the Moscow 1957 Youth Festival" in *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold*

---

*War. Exploring the Second World*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 241-242.

<sup>32</sup> Undated preliminary report on the activities of the ptp Polish program at the Vienna Festival of Youth and Students, box 4, Walker collection.

<sup>33</sup> The Fondazione Romana Marchesa Umiastowska, established in 1944, documents Polish-Italian relations and the history of Poles in Italy.

<sup>34</sup> PDC weekly report, September 12-16, 1960, RFE/RL, box 263. The distributors also handed out museum and movie tickets.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem. A writer and historian from Poland, Olgierd Terlecki visited 117 Via Piemonte on September 5, 1960. He was a secret informer of the Polish secret service. In Rome he had a long conversation with Andrzej Stypułkowski. Terlecki's report from Rome, September 14, 1960, the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (henceforth: AIPN), IPN Kr 009/5288, p. 1-5.

<sup>36</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 258-259.

<sup>37</sup> Joni Krekola and Simo Mikkonen, "Backlash of the Free World: US presence at the World Youth Festival in Helsinki 1962", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36, no 2, (2011): 230-255.

<sup>38</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for August 1962, RFE/RL, box 263.

<sup>39</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for September 1962, ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> Terlecki's report from his conversation with Andrzej Stypułkowski in London, October 1962, AIPN, IPN Kr 009/5288, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1960 and May 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>42</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February 1961, RFE/RL, box 263.

<sup>43</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1961, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>44</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for August 1963, ibidem.

<sup>45</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 247.

<sup>46</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February 1959, Walker collection, box 9. See: Kovacs, *Written Here*, 232.

<sup>47</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for September 1961; Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for December 1961, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>48</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1960, RFE/RL, box 263.

<sup>49</sup> Józef Światło (1915-94) was a high-ranking officer in the security apparatus in communist Poland who defected to the West in 1953. His revelations on torture, politically-motivated executions, and infighting in the Polish communist party were broadcasted by Radio Free Europe, and then published in a book, edited by Błażyński.

<sup>50</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>51</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February 1960, ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for December 1959, ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1961, ibidem.

<sup>54</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for March 1960, ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> This was only acknowledged in side remarks. For instance, Stypukowski's collaborator in Paris reported that the basketball players had carried the books over the border safely, and that the customs had discovered just smuggled clothing. Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>56</sup> Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia*. 287.

<sup>57</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>58</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for August 1962, RFE/RL, box 263.

<sup>59</sup> Earlier they received books in 1960 during a tour in Brussels and Paris. Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.

<sup>60</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for March 1963, RFE/RL, box 264.

<sup>61</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for July 1960, RFE/RL, box 263.

<sup>62</sup> On the travelling obstacles at that time, see: Dariusz Stola, "Opening a non-exit-State: The Passport Policy of Communist Poland, 1949-1980", *East European Politics and Societies* 29, 1 (2015): 96-119; Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80-86.

<sup>63</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Reports for April, September and November 1960, RFE/RL, box 262. Zob. także Reisch, *Hot Books*, 246.

<sup>64</sup> The lists of books handed out in Italy in October 1960 and March 1963, The Witold and Elżbieta Zahorski personal archive, Rome.

<sup>65</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for July 1960, RFE/RL, box 263; Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February 1959, Walker collection, box 9.

- <sup>66</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February and April 1959, Walker collection, box 9. Zob. też Reisch, *Hot Books*, 252.
- <sup>67</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for March 1962, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>68</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for November 1961, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>69</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1960, *ibidem*.
- <sup>70</sup> Kovacs, *Written Here*, 233.
- <sup>71</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1959, RFE/RL, box 262. An average monthly salary in Poland in 1959 was 1,437 zlotys. *Rocznik Statystyczny* 20, (1960): 390.
- <sup>72</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly report for October and November 1961, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>73</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1959, *ibidem*.
- <sup>74</sup> Roger Chartier, *Les origines culturelles de la Revolution francaise* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990).
- <sup>75</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for February 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>76</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. List of contacts and outlets in the operation Autumn 1962, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>77</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1961, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>78</sup> Siobhan Doucette, *Books are Weapons. The Polish Opposition Press and the Overthrow of Communism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017). Doucette only briefly mentions the book program.
- <sup>79</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for June 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>80</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1963, RFE/RL, box 264.
- <sup>81</sup> Magda Leja, “Ambasador króla Ubu ustępuje placu”, *Nowa Kultura*, August 23, 1959, 1.
- <sup>82</sup> J. Kasprzycki, “Wiedeńska zła krew. Dyskusja czy wyzwiska?”, *Życie Warszawy*, August 1, 1959, 3.
- <sup>83</sup> Kibic, “Dolar dolarowi nierówny”, *Sztandar Młodych*, August 22, 1960, 6.
- <sup>84</sup> *Vie Nuove*, 1960, no 35 and 37.
- <sup>85</sup> PDC weekly report, August 22-26, 1960, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>86</sup> It was signed by the Polsko-Fiński Komitet Zbliżenia. Biblioteka Narodowa, Magazyn Druków Ulotnych, DŻS, IV 4.
- <sup>87</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for August 1962, RFE/RL, box 263. This author was not able to locate texts with these exact quotations in the Polish media. The anti-festival activities in Helsinki were described in Jerzy Feliksiak, “Kierunek rozwoju świata,” *Sztandar Młodych*, August 22, 1962, and *Trybuna Ludu*, August 1, “Dyskusje i seminaria młodzieży na Światowym Festiwalu Młodzieży w Helsinkach.”
- <sup>88</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for June and July 1963, RFE/RL, box 264.
- <sup>89</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 263-64.
- <sup>90</sup> On July 1, 1960 the so-called Article 30 of the customs law was introduced, “the regulations on items not permitted in the territory of the People’s Poland.” This regulation was active until the end of the People’s Poland. The Main Office of Censorship was to evaluate the contents of foreign publications; practically in most cases this was done by customs officers at the border. See the memo of the Minister of Foreign Trade to Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz regarding the application of Art. 30 (14 December 1961), Archiwum Akt Nowych, Centralny Zarząd Ceł, 218, k. 66-67.
- <sup>91</sup> Reisch, *Hot Books*, 247.
- <sup>92</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for December 1958, Walker collection, box 9; Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1962, RFE/RL, box 263. Zob. też Reisch, *Hot Books*, 244.
- <sup>93</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for September 1961, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>94</sup> Letter to CD [?], July 31, 1959, Walker collection, box 1.
- <sup>95</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for October 1959, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>96</sup> Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia?*, 486.
- <sup>97</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>98</sup> PDC weekly report, October 10-14, 1960, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>99</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for January 1962, RFE/RL, box 263.
- <sup>100</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for September 1962, *ibidem*.
- <sup>101</sup> Polonia Book Fund Ltd. Monthly Report for May 1960, RFE/RL, box 262.
- <sup>102</sup> On the continuation of the book program, see Reisch, *Hot Books*.

### Selected bibliography

- Doucette, Siobhan. *Books are Weapons. The Polish Opposition Press and the Overthrow of Communism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017.
- Jones, Seth G. *A Covert Action: Reagan, the CIA, and the Cold War Struggle in Poland*. New York-London: W.W Norton, 2018.

- 
- Kind-Kovács, Friederike. *Written Here, Published There: How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain*. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2013.
- Labov, Jessie. *Transatlantic Central Europe. Contesting the Geography and Redefining Culture beyond the Nation*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2019.
- Reisch, Alfred A. *Hot Books in the Cold War: the CIA-Funded Secret Book Distribution Program behind the Iron Curtain*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013.
- Saunders, Frances S. *The Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: New Press, 2000.
- Stöcker, Lars Fredrik. *Bridging the Baltic Sea. Networks of Resistance and Opposition during the Cold War Era*. London: Lexington Books, 2018.
- Wilford, Hugh. *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008.