

Research

BORDERS AND BORDER ZONES: DIFFERENCES AND EQUALITIES

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BORDERS IN LIBRARY

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Abstract. Libraries are fundamental institutions for the life under socialism in Bulgaria (1944-1989). They provide studies and readings for big part of society. This is time when television was very rare in Bulgarian homes and the newspapers were totally controlled by Communist party. This way a library served as the main source of information. Seemingly ordinary cultural centers, they become a powerful tool in the hands of the communist state. They are the ones who are actively worked to impose new socialist thinking through setting limits on access to readers and therefore control the flow of information. The aim of this article is to trace the influence of restricted by communist censorship institution *Glavlit* literature. Or to put it another way – what was the role of censorship in the process of establishment of borders created by prohibited access to scientific information.

Keywords: borders, Bulgaria, censorship, libraries, socialism

Libraries are fundamental institutions for the life under communism in Bulgaria (1944-1989). They provide studies and readings for big part of society. This is time when television was very rare in Bulgarian homes and the newspapers were totally controlled by Communist party. This way a library served as the main source of information. Seemingly ordinary cultural centers, they become a powerful tool in the hands of the communist state. They are the ones who are actively worked to impose new socialist thinking through setting limits on access to readers and therefore control the flow of information. The aim of this article is to trace the influence of restricted by communist censorship institution *Glavlit* literature. Or to put it another way – what was the role of censorship in the process of establishment of borders created by prohibited access to scientific information.

The study is limited in the period from 1944 to 1971. Emphasis is placed mainly on the 50s and 60s of the 20th century, as it is the active period for the formation and establishment of secret book stocks. There are used archive records and 3 informal interviews with librarians. Informants were women in the age group between 50 to 60 years, with a bachelor degree.

Problems for the supplying of special library book stocks in the period 1944-1989 is subject that draws more and more attention recently. Creation of these book stocks was legalized with the Decree № 12 of Council of Ministers from 6th of October 1944 (SN, 225, 1944). In this Act are listed 701 titles which must not reach the public. This act provides "arrest" for all "pro-German and even fascist, racist, and books written against the Soviet Union..." The third chapter of the document is about creation of special book stocks. "Books from the National Library or the University Library and the libraries of universities and cultural institutions must not be destroyed. Shall not be subject to seizure and religious books," (SN, 225, 1944) the text logically excludes all other libraries, whether school, community centers, libraries in military units.

Immediately after September 9th 1944 censorship functions were executed by service in Ministry of Propaganda titled "Propaganda in the country and abroad research." Since early November, in Bulgaria starts to work Allied Control Commission (ACC), which included missions from Great Britain, USSR and USA. ACC worked under the direction of the Soviet leadership. The Commission monitored the entire national life - political, economical and cultural, as well as international events too. One of its tools was the censorship. As a result, by the summer of 1945, were banned and destroyed books and periodicals, the content of which were noted as "fascist". Many cultural and political figures were labeled as "fascists" and suffered cruel persecutions. Soviet mission was able to impose the principle that materials dedicated to the Soviet Union and Russian culture should be only from Soviet sources. This principle with a few exceptions remains until the mid-80s. Censorship control in political sphere was moved to the cultural field too. With the creation of Committee of Science and Culture (CSC), under Valko Tchervenkov (Party leader) management of culture began merging of state agencies and the Communist Party. CSC proposed and the Grand National Assembly passed the prohibition of private initiatives in cultural life. Later was introduced a state monopoly in publishing and cinematography businesses. Through the Higher Education Act in 1948 CSC were terminated last autonomous places - Bulgarian academy of Sciences, University of Sofia and other institutions. This Act practically conducted political control over literature, science, art, education, import of movies, documentaries and weekly newsreels. CSC was deciding which author may be issued, whose paintings and what topics can be identified and which ones can be redeemed, what to produce, rather than producing a documentary that theatrical and musical formations subsidize.

This period is of great importance for the principles of the formation of the book stocks and general classification of the literature. Implementation of this policy of full control establishes a special authority "Directorate General

of literature and publishing" (*Glavlit*) which to a large extent dictates the way the Bulgarian literature is developed and the access to foreign literature is controlled.

Glavlit became an influential authority of the socialist government in the 50s. General Directorate of publishing, printing industry and trade publications is created in 1952 in the image of the Soviet Glavlit [Main Department of literary and publishing]. Bulgarian Glavlit holds the functions of a ministry, reporting directly to Valko Tchervenkov and free form state censorship between 1950 and 1956. Its main task was the ideological control of print, radio, photographic and television productions. At the end of 1952 the head - Politburo of the Communist Party appointed a commission which includes Encho Staikov, Reuben Levy (Avramov), Carlo Lukanov, Georgi Mihaylov and George Kumbeliev. It had to prepare a concept for the institution patterned as Soviet Glavlit, to regulate ideological control. This organization is designed to work under the jurisdiction of the Party. The main chief of the apparatus is appointed Elena Gavrilova, which enjoys the reputation of a confidant to Valko Tchervenkov. Its structure consists of seven sections: "Monitoring of central Sofia newspapers, radio and photo information", "Management of books and magazines," "Management of libraries, museums and exhibitions," "Guide to the local authorities," "Import and Export References", "Personnel" and "Administrative - Financial Department".

Glavlit actually began to work in 1953 and was disbanded in 1956. For its relatively short existence, the government sets the course of propaganda and restrictive activities in terms of publishing and journalism until late 80s. It affirmed the principles of "harmful" and "recommended" literature, which apply throughout the whole period of socialism. A particularly strong influence it had in the libraries. We can say that libraries were the main victims of *Glavlit*.

The fate of books that fall into special book stocks is very different. The books in libraries are one of the main problems for the newly created *Glavlit* that do not have experience to make a selection. To transfer experience from USSR was sent Victor Katishev. Under his leadership *Glavlit* became fully operational institution. Katishev in fact is the person who gave instructions and defined basic principles of *Glavlit*. Before arrived in Bulgaria, he was a deputy head of Glavlit in the USSR. His work concerned libraries, community centers and antique bookstores. He works together with the chief of the Bulgarian *Glavlit* Elena Gavrilova. She is a relatively unknown figure in Bulgarian history, but has a huge impact on the policy of censorship conducted in this period.

Although most of her orders concerning Bulgarian libraries were lost, there are still kept some of her comments on the matter. She was struck by "the vast number of old and archaic books and all sorts of Bulgarian language and a relatively small number of Bulgarian and Soviet literature in ratio is 10:1, but somewhere worse" (CSA, p 112, Op . 1. Makes 29 1 2.1.). In the early years of the socialist system, as prescribed by the Allied Control Commission they were confiscated and melted a large number of books (CSA, F.2, Op 1, No. 23, L 44, 82.). Glavlit noted that in Burgas were collected 10 120 books, in Sofia – 8910 books, in Pleven - 28,000 volumes. Total numbers of volumes seized are 382085 (CSA and. 2, list. 1 a.e.4, s. 42.). At first glance it seems that the content of those books is not the real problem. More important seems to be the space occupied by them in storage instead of "progressive" Soviet literature. New structures in the state must ensure and provide such books. And right here is a problem - where to save it? Creating secret funds was a good way to keep away people from so called 'bourgeois' era and its ideals. This restriction had to hide any book or manual showing the financial state of Bulgarian Kingdom (1878-1944). Another category of unsuitable books are those associated with the royal family. Although their amount is

relatively small they are potentially dangerous to a socialist society which should be based on the principle of republican values and social equality. In this regard, the Royal Institute is in deep conflict with the new ideology. Secondly, Socialists meet two objectives: to reduce the old "pernicious" literature and to free some physical space for the new "modern" literature.

Here we will take some time to review specialized periodicals ("Librarian" magazine) from this period. If we make an overlook of issues at the beginning of 50s and end of 60s we can observe the progression of the state policy in the field of libraries and methodology of their work. Naturally, censorship and *Glavlit* never mention it, but there can be seen some "target groups", which should be considered in their visit to the library. In the first decade dominant groups are children and students. There were edited clear and precise instructions for working with them in relation to reformed educational system. Another group of interest is rural population and especially those who work in agriculture. Here the approach is different. The emphasis is on modern literature, which is a guide for improvement the performance of the sector. It is understandable why the focus has shifted to these groups. Children are the ones who could be easily manipulated. They are important, because they must build a new "proper" socialist thinking. The second case is different. Leading role has level of education. The fact is that the population in rural areas is less educated than the urban population. In general we can say that in this period, a group of the population over sixty years has predominantly primary education. The next group of 45-60 had mostly high school. Young people respectively have higher education and traditionally they move out from village to city. Here, can be concluded that these groups began to lay the foundations of a new socialist society. It would be extremely important, in this way inappropriate literature to be restricted to them. This would weaken their beliefs, which is itself very clearly to distinguish between subsequent correct or incorrect behavior in society. Namely library, respectively community cen-

tre is an institution that should guide and supervise the "correct" political assessment and training. The magazine published a list of "Recommended reading ". Respectively, can be seen again selected literature, poetry and newspapers which are necessary to be read. Again this is a tool for control of the masses.

Censors in *Glavlit* were guided by the principle that "all books which glorify bourgeois morality, private property, and mention the God are "harmful" (CSA, p. 112 § 1 op 12 L 116). Religious literature is one field of knowledge, severely affected by the selections. Soviet instructor stated that by one hand Glavlit will not deal with religious literature, because "in a socialist countries there is freedom of religion" (CSA, p. 112, op. 1 § 35 l 13-17 l 25 - 56), but on the other hand such literature must be banned.

There is an interesting case in the library of the University of Sofia, where in the public directory "are found total six drawers with 6000 index cards - all Gospels, hagiographies of saints, monographs on churches, monasteries," all this religious literature to fill racks and El. Gavrilova ironically asks: "Who needs these publications, whether the university library was not created for the Bulgarian priests and church workers ". There was a different policy regarding libraries in monasteries. They do not fall under the jurisdiction of *Glavlit* and remained under the "discretion" at the regional level. In the monasteries the titles must be selected by commission consisting of the party secretary, the chairman of the municipal council, a teacher of literature, the chairman of the Patriotic Front, secretary or librarian from local community center. This committee examines the available literature, taking into account the list of prohibitions. At their discretion, they can bring literature outside the list, if it is decided not to meet the socialist morality.

Supplying of the book -stocks is a direct reflection of the state policy. On the one hand, the official book stock is filled with new titles that should meet conditions on the course of political events and represent the public

opinion. Special books stocks must regulate usage of literature by limiting and correcting “mistakes” committed earlier by regime. In this sense, they control public opinion in one or other direction. Proof for this is the restrictions of many communist leaders’ works. It can be given a number of examples in this regard. After depose of Stalin’s personality cult at the XX Party Congress was held in February 1956, many of the volumes of the “socialist giants” fell in restrictive lists. Among them are works of Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Joseph Tito, Nicolae Ceausescu and others. By putting these works in a secret book stocks, they became inappropriate and “wrong”. Accordingly this inevitably reflected in the community, these people are not considered as persons, but as a personification of the states they represent. In this sense, the border raises the inevitable "we - they". Naturally no Bulgarian political leader or ideologist is included in this list. That is very smart way to strengthen and promote idealization of Bulgarian socialism as it comes out clean, correct and perfect. Accordingly this creates limited view of the irregularities and even ugliness. Special book stocks absorb most of the books related to the period prior to 9th of September, 1944. Very often they are classified as "bourgeois, fascist, not progressive, reactionary and anti-Soviet." This is especially true for publications related to the royal family and government ministers before 1944. In 1953 and 1957 are published booklets which officially bear the name "List of harmful literature". They represented all the titles that do not have to reach the public. It should be clarified that the censors appointed in place in departments also complement prohibitive lists.

Here is a tentative classification of books made by literary historian Radka Pencheva, who gives an indicative list of banned literature:¹⁾

I. Books related to King

1. К. Абаджиев. *За величието на царя и родината. Търново, 1940.*

2. Г. Александров. *Заветите на Царя-обединител и задачите на българската интелигенция в наши дни.*
3. Н. Атанасов. *Царят пред своя народ.* София, 1942 г.
4. И. Бобчев. *Води ни, царю.*

II. Situation in Soviet Russia

1. Г. Агабеков. *ГПУ: записки на чекиста.* София, 1931.
2. Ф. Адлер. *Сталиновият експеримент и социалистическото строителство.* София, 1932.
3. С. Атанасов. *Большевизмът в Русия и какво ни носи той.* София, 1921.
4. М. Арцибашев. *За опазване на Съветска Русия.* София, 1923.
5. А. Шалом. *Роман из руската революция.* София, 1931.
6. О. Бауер. *Борбата на Сталин срещу троцкизма.* София, 1937
и Съдът на съветските генерали. София, 1937.
7. А. Боро. *Що видях в Москва.* София, 1927.
8. Г. Беседовски. *Из спомените на един съветски дипломат: дейността на Коминтерна и ГПУ.* София, 1938.
9. *Большевизмът и разрушителната му сила.* София, 1928.
10. В. Бурцев. *Бъдете проклети, болшевици.* София, 1928 и
Предателството ни Ленин. София, 1921.
11. Ф. Бутенко. *Как избягах от болшевиките.* София, 1938.
12. А. Ваганов. *Как е дошъл в Русия "съветския рай".*
13. Н. И. Вознесенски. *Зверствата в болшевишка Русия.* София, 1925.
14. Виндекс. *Сталинизмът: съветската политика през Втората световна война.* Прага, 1944.
15. Волин. *Писма върху руската революция.* Казанлък, 1923.
16. *Просветното дело в СССР.* София, 1942.

17. С. Денев. *Болшевишка Русия и бъдещата всемирна война*.
София, 1931 и *Червеният звяр - болшевизмът*.
18. Есад, Бей. *Сталин*. София, 1932.
19. М. Есив. *В подземията на Одеската ЧК*. София, 1942 и *Как живеят в Съветска Русия*.
20. П. Жиляр. *Избиването на руското царско семейство*.
21. *Червеният звяр - болшевизмът*. Търново, 1923.
22. *Разколников до Сталин: отворено писмо до Сталин*). София, 1941.

III. Church and clergy

1. Антим Шивачев, митрополит Ловчански. *Църквата и социалистическите учения*. Ловеч, 1929.
2. Евтимий, архимандрит. *Младежът комунист и младежът християнин пред социалния въпрос*. София, 1933.

IV. Law and legal studies

1. В. Алексиев. *Основи на историята на българското право*.
София, 1940.
2. Б.М. Бончев. *Административно право*. София, 1940
и *Полицейски наказателни заповеди*. София, 1938 .
3. Г. Ватев. *Военно-наказателно право: обща част*. София, 1942
и *Коментар и ръководство по закона за гражданската мобилизация*. 1941.
4. Л. Владикин. *Записки по държавно право: общо държавно право*. 1929, *История на Търновската конституция*.
София, 1936, *Курс по общо държавно право: ч. I - общо учение за държавата, ч. II - Организация на*

демократичната държава - общо 35 книги от проф. Л. Владикин.

5. В. Ганев. *Записки по търговско право: ч. I*. София, 1932, *Записки по обща теория на правото - в две части*. София, 1937, *Курс по търговско право*. Варна, 1923 - общо 12 книги от проф. Венелин Ганев.
6. Г. П. Генов. *Междудържавно право - в две части: увод в правната наука* - общо 15 книги от проф. Г. П. Генов.
7. А. Жабински. *Обща част на военно-углавното материално право*. София, 1943 - общо 4 книги.
8. К. Григоров. *Военно-наказателно право*. София, 1941.
9. Н. Долапчиев. *Наказателно право* - общо 12 книги.
10. Л. Диков. *Кооперативно право*. 1930.

V. Philosophical and political teachings

1. Епископ Алексей. *Християнство и комунизъм*. София, 1937.
2. А. Амон. *Психология на анархиста - социалист*. София, 1924.
3. Кървавият Велики четвъртък: *атентатът в храма "Света Неделя"*. 1925.
4. Ж. де Африк. *Бошевизъм, национализъм и земеделска България*. 1935.
5. К. Байтошев. *БЗНС и комунистите*. София, 1933.
6. М. Бакунин. *Федерализъм, социализъм, антитеологизъм*. Враца, 1928.
7. Ж. Бастиян. *Безвластие и кооператизъм*. София, 1932.
8. К. Башулков. *Юридическите и социаликономическите устои на фашизма*. София, 1929.
9. А. Бергсон. *Въведение в метафизиката*. София, 1928; *Душа и тяло*. 1927.; *Съзнание и живот*. 1927; *Тайнствените*

- явления и науката*. 1928; *Философската интуиция*. 1929.
10. Н. Бердяев. *Духовното състояние на съвременния свят: християнството и класовата борба*. София, 1932; *Социализмът*. София, 1935; *Съветската философия и воюващият атеизъм*. София, 1933.
 11. Д. Воденичаров. *Фашизъм, болшеvizъм и социализъм*. София, 1933.
 12. Ж. Георгиев. *Защо българинът е против комунизма*. София, 1943.
 13. Гьобелс. *Духът на днешното време*. София, 1943.
 14. П. Джидров. *Безпартийната власт и партиите*. София, 1928; *Войната и преустройството на Европа*. 1940.; *Демокрация и фашизъм*. 1933.
 15. О. Дитрих. *Философските основи на националсоциализма*.
 16. Б. Исаев. *Въведение в психоанализата на Фройд; Фройд, Ницше, Толстой*. София, 1931.
 17. Б. Ивински. *Кой е виновен за нещастията в Русия*. София, 1923.

VI. Macedonia and its struggle for liberation

1. Л. Антонов. *Духът на Македония*. София, 1943.
2. Й. Бадев. *Трите македонски организации*. София, 1921.
3. Г. Баждаров. *Македонският въпрос вчера и днес*.
4. В. Бобошевски. *Надлъж и шир в Македония: видено и чуто*. Враца, 1944.
5. Х. Божков. *Македонското освободително движение*.
6. С. Бояджиев. *Съществува ли македонска нация?* София, 1940.

7. К. Велянов. *Днешната политическа обстановка на македонския въпрос*. София, 1928.
8. Веритас. *Македония под игото*. София, 1931.
9. П. Джидров. *Единството в македонското движение*. София, 1931.
10. И. Дуйчев. *Македония в българската история*. София, 1941.
11. Й. Иванов. *Македонските славяни са българи*. София, 1939.

VII. Literature and humanities

1. Д. Бабев. *Критика на един поет*. София, 1923; *Наши писатели*.
2. И. Арнаудов. *Народна песен и национално възпитание*. София, 1932; *Народонаука и народна песен в Германия*. София, 1941.
3. М. Арнаудов. *Психология на литературното творчество*. София, 1931.
4. Й. Бадев. *Животът и изкуството*. София, 1928.
5. П. Горянски. *Бунтът на масите в българския роман*. София, 1933.
6. С. Данаилов. *Литературата на днешна Германия*. 1938.
7. Е. п. Димитров. *Златни ниви и бойни полета: песни за родната земя*.
8. Д. Добрев. *Нашата земя в художествената литература*. София, 1941.
9. К. Ерберг. *Целта на творчеството*. София, 1929; *Красота и свобода*. София, 1928.
10. В. Златаров. *Българите в Украйна*. Ямбол, 1942.
11. Цвети Иванов. *Златотърсачи*.
12. Змей Горянин - 17 книги.

VIII. Books by/for ministers in various cabinets before 9th September 1944

1. А. Буров (и др.). *Андрей Ляпчев: човек, държавник, общественик*. 1936.
2. А. Буров. *Църква и политика*. София, 1933 и много речи от същия автор.
3. П. Габровски. *Реч по законопроекта за защита на нацията*. София, 1940.
4. К. Георгиев. *19 май и новата държава*. София, 1934.
5. А. Гиргинов. *Огнен меч*. София, 1937.
6. Д. Гичев. *Българската земеделска банка - крайъгълен камък на народното стопанство*. София, 1933.
7. Н. Искров. *Управлението на Георги Къосеиванов*. София, 1939.

Access to these books was severely restricted. Once classified as "harmful" these books got a different fate in different places. Theoretically, according to the decree in 1944, they should be brought to the special book stocks, but they almost never reached them, or if it was managed in there were saved only one copy. In Peoples library Vassil Kolarov [National Library] they should be in triplicate. This was especially true for magazines. Very often they were not entered in the special book stocks and were directly shipped for recycling. In the early '50s in Peoples library are hired workers, who must sort harmful literature and send it for recycling.

Follows the question: who has access to those special book stocks? This is not so easy to answer. Once the book is classified as "harmful," it must be marked on its title sheets. Different libraries have done it differently. Often these books got marked on the cover page or contra title page „Only for service use“ but vary depending on the institution. Quite possible those books to be stamped with the mark of "Single (only) copy" or "Not for export", "Not to

be exported". Repositories should be placed in the stores, which are with limited access. Relying on older library workers descriptions, often these separate repositories were locked and restricted to library staff. The key was held by the director of institution who actually can access this book stock. Here is an interesting story: "There was a key which was always with the director. We did not know where they are. He provided books to whom he wanted. I still think that it was based on personal arrangements. We did not know exactly what contain this book stock".

With regard to supply of "forbidden books" in the library catalog were considered differently in different places. Those titles were never placed in the public catalog. In those cases which they were inserted the librarians were instructed that the book is not available in the public domain. Elsewhere the practice was the index card in library catalog to be marked with a red stamp "Special Book stock" or with special mark in same color. These names should appear in the official catalog, together with the associated indicating of their affiliation to the book stock. A librarian said "We look at the mark. When we saw that book is in special book stock we just refuse it. We did not know where the books are and do not dare to ask". In large libraries such as the National Library "Vasil Kolarov" the special book stock was divided into several sub-book stocks. By 1957 two special book stocks: "Confidential" and "Special" were organized. Later they become three - "Military", "Bad literature" and "Confidential" (Пенелов, 2006). Accordingly, the level of secrecy is different. Access to these book stocks basically got checked by the people with high Party affiliation. Fairly access was assured to professors from universities teaching ideological disciplines. For them was issued a special newsletter. At the end of 1958 used materials from this book stock reaches nearly 3,500 library items, and requested reports were 223 (Пенелов, 2006).

More complicated, however, is the question of periodicals. Many of the old magazines, appearing before 1944 were severely censored or removed

from the library. Western publications also were subjected to harsh restrictions. Book exchange was created a year later by other departments of *Glavlit*, due to insufficient staff. In fact, the biggest problem of this section was to find people who read and speak languages and that have "the right political persuasion". Work of this department is relatively more complex than the others, as well as they were working directly with postal services and e border police. Loads of printed materials were precisely checked. The border police performed "input – output" control and exchange of books between libraries in this period. Retained literature was covering all areas of science, including medicine, technology, advertising brochures. It was virtually "protected" the country from western influences that limit Bulgarian everyday life and delayed to a large extent the scientific and technical progress. In this sense, we can see again the border which reflected on public life.

In conclusion: special book stocks acted as a barrier between the old and the new invented rules for accessing information. *Glavlit* postulates the meaning of a state secret. Definite conclusion is difficult to be made, because archives were destroyed or still are under regulations. This makes difficult to study this institution and its functions. Old librarians still fear of talking about it. It should be noted that the vast majority of active library users under socialism categorically refuse to discuss this topic and they were scared even to remember those times. The problems related to access to information in libraries and mechanism of allowance of usage of "arrested" books during communist regime remains a difficult issue.

NOTES

1. http://liternet.bg/publish9/r_pencheva/vredna.htm

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