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Treści propagandowe w miesięczniku „Poznaj Swój Kraj” w latach 1958–1989

Propaganda content in the “Poznaj Swój Kraj” monthly (1958–1989)

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ABSTRAKT
Czasopismo „Poznaj Swój Kraj”
od początku powstania do końca 1989 roku
zamieszczało treści propagandowe.
Często wiązały się one z kolejnymi zjazdami PZPR
oraz świętami państwowymi. Najsilniejsze natężenie
propagandy sukcesu przypadło na dekadę lat 70.
Po 1981 roku treści promujące ustroj socjalistyczny
były nieco mniej widoczne, za to coraz wyraźniej
wskazywano na konflikt pomiędzy rozwojem przemysłu
a ochroną środowiska.

ABSTRACT
From its inception in 1958, the tourist and educational
magazine “Poznaj Swój Kraj” [Discover Your Country]
was never free from propaganda. Materials of this kind
were usually included to mark congresses of the ruling
Polish United Workers’ Party or national and state
holidays. The official propaganda of success reached its
climax in the 1970s. After 1981 eulogies of the
socialism system receded and the focus of attention
turned to tensions between industrial development and
conservation.

Streszczenie

Zgodnie z regułami rządzącymi prasą w państwie totalitarnym czasopismo turystyczno-krajoznawcze „Poznaj Swój Kraj” w latach 1958–1989 zamieszczało liczne treści propagandowe. Ich specyficzny rytm wyznaczany był istotnymi datami kalendarza, takimi jak zjazdy PZPR, rocznice państwowe oraz komunistyczne święta. Tendencyjność informacji wiązała się także z promowaniem gospodarki uspołecznionej, opisem wielkich kombinatów przemysłowych oraz patriotycznym przekazem dotyczącym Ziemi Odzyskanych. Teksty propagandowe były eksponowane na pierwszych stronach pisma, elementy symboliczne pojawiały się także na okładkach. Najsilniejsze natężenie propagandy sukcesu przypadło na dekadę lat 70. Informowano wówczas o wielu nowych zakładach przemysłowych i produkcyjnych. Po 1981 roku treści promujące ustrój socjalistyczny były nieco mniej widoczne, za to rozwijał się nurt ekologiczny, który niekoniecznie z entuzjazmem odnosił się do przyrodniczych skutków funkcjonowania przemysłu ciężkiego.

A characteristic feature of totalitarian states consists in subjecting all areas of life to the superior political aim in line with the ideology of the group in power. Within the period of the People's Republic of Poland (the PRL) a number of propaganda measures were taken to achieve that aim. They would appear not only in spaces close to the then contemporary *raison d'état*, but ones pervading the whole life of the society. In that period propaganda served, among other things, the spreading of opinions expected by the governing power, by means of pressure and manipulation, creating the expected reality in every sphere of life¹. The ideological content appeared commonly in all social mass media (media “for the society”)². Propaganda in the countries of people's democracy was, at least theoretically, bound to a strong engagement of ordinary citizens in the political life³. This dictated the fact that the expected content was included in the discourse pertaining to everyday activities, especially those which aroused strong emotions.

Published from 1958, a tourism and society monthly “Poznaj Swój Kraj” was not an exception. Although it went back to the historical traditions represented by Stanisław Staszic, Wincenty Pol, or Aleksander Janowski, and when it came to editorial solutions, to the pre-war touring journals, such as “Orli Lot” (1920–1950), or “Ziemia” (1910–1950; 1956–1958)⁴, it also included the then contemporary propaganda content. A research thesis has been put forward that, owing to its mission, encapsulated in the motto “knowing a country leads to loving it, and loving a country leads to sacrifice for its sake”⁵, the monthly, targeted at young people, was an important element of socialist up-bringing. Despite a relatively high content quality, it was obliged to fulfil ideological functions related to the socialist political system⁶.

The analysis of the content of particular issues has led to a review of propaganda themes revealing the most important motifs and ways of expression, including forms

¹ See A. Chłosta-Sikorska, *Między propagandą a rzeczywistością. Mieszkanki Nowej Huty w latach 1956–1970*, Kraków 2019, p. 19.

² See K. Nowakowski, *Ewolucja debaty publicznej — od propagandy do komunikacji społecznej*, „Oblicza Komunikacji” 2009, nr 2, pp. 67–82.

³ M. Szulczewski, *Propaganda polityczna*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 8–9.

⁴ J. Kłysińska, *Służyć turystyce i krajoznawstwu*, „Poznaj Swój Kraj” (further: PSK) 1983, no 1, pp. 2–3; R.M. Zając, *Czasopisma popularnonaukowe w Polsce w latach 1945–1989*, Kraków 2016, pp. 199, 206.

⁵ From *Odezwa ministra oświaty Władysława Bieńkowskiego* in PSK 1958, no 1, p. 1.

⁶ It is not to be excluded that it was a kind of bribery which allowed the normal activity of the journal. See H. Prószyńska-Bordas, *Krajoznawstwo. Tradycja i współczesność*, Warszawa 2016, p. 108.

and symbolism used. It was also intended to answer the question whether the journal evolved in time, being, perhaps, subject to some periodisation, and whether it was related to the political changes occurring in our country.

Despite the fact that the central research problem has been the political propaganda of the socialist system, it is worth remembering that marketing is an imminent feature of tourism⁷. Glorification of the tourist values of particular places and advertising of selected base objects or commercial products is part and parcel of business activity in tourism not only in free market economies.

According to the rhythm of the calendar

Propaganda texts created autonomous motifs, frequently only partially related to the main theme of the journal. Within the first 30 years of its publishing, "Poznaj Swój Kraj" used a similar framework (table 1). It referred to the calendar of the events which were important for the then contemporary ideology. A characteristic element of this framework was reporting the successive conventions of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), from the 3rd to the 10th convention, completed with information from the party general meetings, whenever any tourism related decisions were taken. The meetings took place every four to five years, and their results were often suggestions for the country's development plan for another several-year period. In the years 1958–1989, only the 9th extraordinary convention of the PZPR (July 1981) was not in any way mentioned in the journal⁸.

As it was customary to report the convention resolutions, every issue following the convention included respective information. For this reason, the 6th and the 7th conventions, for example, which were held in December, were duly described in the January issues, and the 4th convention of July 1964 was discussed in the September issue.

The last, 10th convention held at the end of June and beginning of July 1986 was featured in an article in the June issue, that is still before the beginning of the meeting, surely with a propaganda aim⁹. The descriptions of the meetings were

⁷ About the difference between propaganda and persuasion see A. Pratkanis, E. Aronson, *Wiek propagandy. Używanie i nadużywanie perswazji na co dzień*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 17–22.

⁸ The July 1981 meeting focused on the social crisis in Poland and the party itself. The decisions taken during that meeting were not actually related to the central economy but referred to some strategic issues of the contemporary political situation. See E. Duraczyński, *PZPR w kryzysie — kryzys w PZPR (summer 1980 – summer 1981)*, „Dzieje Najnowsze” 1997, no 4, pp. 73–92.

⁹ *Przed X Zjazdem PZPR*, PSK 1986, no 6, pp. 2–3. Apart from a short description the issue showed, in a touring mode, all conference centres in Warsaw which has sat meetings of the "proletariat parties".

Table 1

The most important events, speeches and interviews with a strong propaganda potential on the pages of “Poznaj Swój Kraj” in the years 1958–1989

Year	Events	Year	Events
1958	Harvest feast	1974	Speech of the vice-minister of education Zygmunt Huszcza; 30-years of PRL
1959	3rd PZPR Convention	1975	New administrative division of the country
1960	40-years of the touring movement; a nuclear reactor built in Świerk	1976	7th PZPR Convention; 1971–1975 revised; speech of vice-minister of education Zygmunt Huszcza: opening of the Central Railway Station in Warsaw
1961	–	1977	–
1962	20th anniversary of PPR	1978	20th anniversary of “Poznaj Swój Kraj”
1963	100th anniversary of the January Uprising	1979	35 years of PRL; interview with Henryk Moroz, the Deputy Head of the Department of Sport and Tourism; interview with the secretary of the General Meeting of TPPR [Polish-Soviet Friendship Society], Ryszard Polkowski
1964	20th anniversary of PRL, death of Aleksander Zawadzki; 4th PZPR Convention; Edward Ochab elected the Chairman of the State Council	1980	8th Convention of PZPR
1965	Sitting of the new Parliament	1981	60th Anniversary of the Silesian Uprising
1966	1000 years of the Polish state, 100 issues of the journal	1982	–
1967	25th anniversary of PPR (Polish Workers’ Party); a cellulose factory built in Świecie; exhibition of the October Revolution; beginning of a new five year economic plan	1983	25th Anniversary of “Poznaj Swój Kraj”; interview with the head architect of Warsaw, Andrzej Jaworski
1968	25 years of the People’s Army of Poland (LWP), propaganda wall opening in the Zabrze coalmine; 5th PZPR Convention	1984	A debate over organisational changes in school tourism associations
1969	25 years of PRL; RWPG [Council For Mutual Economic Assistance]; 50 years of the touring movement	1985	–
1970	25 years of the PZWS [Polish School Publishing House]	1986	10th PZPR Convention
1971	–	1987	–
1972	6th Convention of PZPR; 90th Anniversary of the Great Proletariat	1988	30 years of “Poznaj Swój Kraj”; interview with Zygmunt Huszcza
1973	Speech of Edward Gierek; 30 years of Peoples’ Army of Poland, Centrum Zdrowia Dziecka [Center For Children’s Health] erected in Warsaw	1989	–

Source: own analysis of the particular PSK issues’ content

coupled with socialist slogans¹⁰ and citations from the party speeches¹¹. The content itself consisted in the forecast of the country's development and all kinds of economic and social predictions. These were fixed formulas and nothing more than lists of successes to be achieved within the coming period of time. Most of these predictions were void and consisted in frequently repeated *bon mots*:

A creative participation of young people in the socialist development depends on their professional skills as well as their sense of responsibility for the present and future of the nation, their effective work and putting into effect the humanist ideas of socialism in everyday activities¹².

We will not achieve a satisfactory rise in effectiveness without eliminating the obstacles which impede progress, or without a thorough improvement of the work culture. We need to increase our responsibility for the use of working time, machines and other equipment, as well as for the rational energy, fuels and raw materials' economy by fighting wastefulness and all kinds of careless use of the above. [...] This is a sine qua non of an effective use of the production potential, which took a lot of manpower to be created, and of freeing the reserves sleeping in human activity and initiative¹³.

The messages had a purely speculative character. Sometimes the arguments involved some statistical data (current or prognostic). The text were often accompanied by a series of photos in a strongly formalised style. They showed the convention members crowding the meeting rooms, the VIPs of the state, as well as the soviet secretary general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev. Additionally, successive photos exhibited the prides of the socialist state, such as huge industrial factory groups, automated factory halls, people at work, and people at leisure. The most widely commented event was the 7th convention of the PZPR (1975) held in the peak of the success propaganda. This topic was also related to the biggest investments' reports of the five years period 1971–1975, which showed the dynamic development of the country and far-reaching decisions of the governing party.

Talking about political events, the journal also showed the first sitting of the new Parliament (the Sejm) in July 1965, informing about oath taking and other procedures conducted with the aim of electing the presiding board and the State Council (Rada Państwa), which had a function of the socialist government. The article finished with

¹⁰ „Budujemy lepsze jutro naszej ojczyzny”, PSK 1959, nr 6, s. 24; „Aby Polska rosła w siłę a ludzie żyli dostatniej”, PSK 1972, nr 1, pp. 2–3; „O dalszy dynamiczny rozwój budownictwa socjalistycznego, o wyższą jakość pracy i warunków życia narodu”, PSK 1976, nr 1, pp. 2–5.

¹¹ From the speech of 1st Secretary of PZPR Central Committee, W. Gomułka opening the 4th Convention of the party, S. Markowski, *Polska w 1970 roku*, PSK 1964, no 7, pp. 2–3.

¹² PSK 1972, no 1, pp. 2–3.

¹³ PSK 1976, no 1, pp. 2–5.

an ambitious formula "And this is how it is going to be for the next four years. Whenever the national flag flutters over the Sejm building, debates will proceed inside it over the ways of further development of the country, over the wellbeing of all the citizens and the great idea of peace among the nations"¹⁴.

Many a time "Poznaj Swój Kraj" mentioned the names of the party VIPs, which appeared in the state events reports and successive conventions of the PZPR. Frequently, the journal published fragments of speeches and interviews related to the touring movement and various popularising projects. The year 1973 starts with an article devoted to the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the PZPR, which ended with a quotation from the speech of Edward Gierek¹⁵. The vice-minister of Schooling and Education, general major Zygmunt Huszcza, involved in the work of the Polish Association of Youth Hostels, appeared several times on the pages of „Poznaj Swój Kraj”.

The journal also published interviews with the deputy head of the Department of Sport and Tourism, Henryk Moroz, and the secretary of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society (TPPR) Ryszard Polkowski¹⁶. In 1964, the journal mentioned a late member of the Political Bureau of the PZPR, Aleksander Zawadzki. The front cover of the September issue featured a photo of him among a crowd of young people and the inside housed a laudation similar to a hagiographic text.

[...] All his days, starting from early adulthood until the very last hours, embodied zealous ideas of freedom, justice, socialism, struggle, work, and sacrifice.

His way of life, from a miner's sweat up to the highest offices in the State, remains a noble example, a testimony of what can be achieved with strong will and a clearly nominated, big goal. He cared about the needs of the whole nation. Beside great issues, he would remember about the small ones as well. Among his many activities he devoted time and effort to young people. He met them with an open heart, and a good-natured, fatherly smile¹⁷.

The same year the journal published, as special content, the information that Edward Ochab was elected to the office of the President of The State Council. A short curriculum vitae and wishes from the Polish youth were added to the note. Special emphasis should be put on the fact that making such content special was not consistent at all. Other events, such as the death of Leonid Brezhnev, election of Stanisław Kania to the office of the First Secretary of the KC PZPR etc., were not in any way mentioned in the journal under study.

¹⁴ *Nowy sejm obraduje*, PSK 1965, no 7, pp. 2–3.

¹⁵ *Dla przyszłości Polski*, PSK 1973, no 1, pp. 2–3.

¹⁶ R. Polkowski, *W imię przyjaźni*, PSK 1979, no 9, pp. 14–17.

¹⁷ PSK 1964, nr 7, p. 1.

Beside the event-related messages, the journal devoted numerous sightseeing and touring texts to the socialist heroes, such as Vladimir Lenin. It was emphasised that the leader of the October Revolution was a great friend of our nation, which could be seen from his 1918 act announcing the partitions of Poland null¹⁸. The journal published information about a tourist route in the Tatra Mountains named after Lenin, the Lenin tour¹⁹, devoting a lot of space to the museums of Lenin in Warsaw²⁰ and Poronin²¹ in Podhale region. It was a good occasion to write:

The local people liked and respected the jolly and energetic Mr. Uljanov, dressed in a grey sports uniform, a straw hat, with a walking stick in his hand. He would observe the life of the Highlands, talk to the locals. He will be remembered as a good man, always ready to let a hand to those in need. A jolly fellow, and a good master. He liked to look to the meadows and often went there — old citizens of Poronin would say²².

Lenins' mountain hikes to Babia Góra and Rysy²³ were described in the articles along with the things which had very little to do with the theme of the journal, namely, his young years in a gymnasium in Symbirsk upon Volga²⁴. Historical articles with no links to touring were published to tell about Polish activists of the international communist movement²⁵. The soviet October Revolution was treated as a Polish issue, which can be supported with the title *Październik polskich życiorysów*²⁶. A "tradition" of the revolution was arresting and sending deep into Russia such figures as Marcei Nowotko²⁷, Marcin Kasprzak²⁸, Marian Buczek²⁹, Janek Krasicki³⁰, Hanka Sawicka³¹, Julian Marchlewski³², Feliks Dzierżyński³³, or Paweł Finder³⁴, who were glorified equally to the heroes of the independence movement.

¹⁸ *Przyjaciel naszego narodu*, PSK 1970, no 3, pp. 2–7; Z uchwały Biura Politycznego KC PZPR, *Wielki Październik*, PSK 1977, no 9, p. 2.

¹⁹ A. Czarnowski, *Rajd leninowski*, PSK 1977, no 7, pp. 24–25.

²⁰ H. Adamczyk, *Warszawskie Muzeum Lenina*, PSK 1977, no 9, pp. 6–7.

²¹ C. Błajda, *Młodzież w holdzie Leninowi*, PSK 1962, no 8/9, p. 19.

²² *Przyjaciel naszego narodu*, PSK 1970, no 3, pp. 2–7.

²³ Z. Tomkowski, *Górkimi ścieżkami*, PSK 1967, no 7, pp. 2–4.

²⁴ Idem, *Symbirski gimnazjalista*, PSK 1967, no 4, pp. 2–3.

²⁵ *Polacy w obronie Komuny Paryskiej*, PSK 1971, no 7, p. 24.

²⁶ PSK 1977, no 7, pp. 18–19.

²⁷ M. Sobański, *Ciechanowskie ścieżki*, PSK 1969, no 3, p. 11.

²⁸ R. Pogonowski, *Marcin Kasprzak*, PSK 1960, no 3, p. 18.

²⁹ G. Gołacka, *Tu zginął bohater*, PSK 1968, no 8, p. 14.

³⁰ M. Lewandowska, *Janek Krasicki*, PSK 1971, no 4, p. 24.

³¹ *Hanka Sawicka*, PSK 1973, no 3, pp. 22–23.

³² B. Krzywobłocka, *Nade wszystko miłowałem Wisłę...*, PSK 1977, no 6, pp. 12–13.

³³ Eadem, *Więzień cytadeli*, PSK 1977, no 7, pp. 20–21; eadem, *Na drodze do października*, PSK 1977, no 9, pp. 8–9.

³⁴ B. Hillebrandt, *W XX rocznicę Polskiej Partii Robotniczej*, PSK 1962, nr 3, pp. 2–3.

They were fit into the traditional martyrological view of Poland. In accordance with a quote from Fryderyk Engels: "The revolutionary country which was torn apart and deleted from the list of nations, could not seek salvation elsewhere but in a revolution"³⁵. The list of the famous figures would gradually change, consisting, however, always in those matching the socialist ideology of the then contemporary governments.

At the market square of today's Sieradz there is a monument of Antoni Cierplikowski, a pre-war Paris king of barbers, who served movie stars and took part in a barber's marathon during the crowning of the King of England, George VI. Toward the end of his life, Cierplikowski returned to his family town, and died there inconspicuously in 1970. It comes as no surprise that in the PRL it was impossible to mention the talented craftsman who became famous in the West in a profession which did not fit into the framework of "communalised economy". In 1986, the information block devoted to Sieradz (issue no. 8) featured a text about Władysław Reymont, and astronomer Ary Sternfeld, who made himself known while emigrating to the USSR³⁶. There were, however, certain exceptions. It is worth noting that the February 1989 issue mentioned the Pope, John Paul II in an interview with the president of the Polish Apiarists' Association, priest (sic!), Henryk Ostach.

The Pope, John Paul II, whom we respectfully presented [...] with a barrel of Polish honey from Kamianna, is considered a big friend of bees. [...] After the infamous assault on his life, the Pope should indispensably have honey in His menu, and because His Holiness is a Highlander, His system needs honeydew honey, which is specific to this region of Pogórze. The Pope blessed the whole bee-keeping community while accepting the gift.

An important element of the propaganda message in individual issues of the journal was celebrating anniversaries. These were considered as milestones in the development of the country, and served as good occasions for presenting reports and prognoses. It was the case especially during the first five-year periods after the end of the war. As the beginning of the Polish post-war state the famous PKWN Manifesto of 22nd July 1944 was usually considered. Alternatively, it was 1945, the end of WWII, because of the fact that different regions of Poland were liberated at different times. Due to this difference, the anniversary period could be prolonged, and a larger number of relevant texts could be published.

The 20th anniversary of the PRL was marked with several competitions referring to the achievements of the state after the war. Some positive evaluations of the first

³⁵ I. Micińska, *W rocznicę powstania Wielkiego Proletariatu*, PSK 1972, no 10, p. 22.

³⁶ T. Mrozowski, *Wyliczył drogę do gwiazd*, PSK 1986, no 8, pp. 18–20.

20 years of the PRL in different regions of Poland were also published³⁷. Special attention was paid to Warsaw, rebuilt from the war bombing damage. What was stressed was the territorial expansion of the capital city, new factories, and the improvement of the standard of all community services: living conditions, transport, or schooling³⁸. The topic was used even more extensively on the occasion of the 30 years of the PRL. One of the front covers showed a high-rise housing estate built after the war in the centre of Warsaw, named “Behind the Iron Gate”. The September issue of the journal carried special character and was entirely devoted to the anniversary. There was a lot of self-praise because of the appearance of big industrial complexes (a photo report) and improvements in schooling and culture. When it comes to the latter, a lot was written about preservation of historical places. It was emphasized that the previous gentry manors were now freely accessible to the general public as museums³⁹. Almost equal attention was paid to the 25th and 35th anniversaries of the PRL. The anniversary celebrations of different institutions and organisations: the proletariat Party, the People’s Army of Poland, the State School Publishing House etc. were duly reported.

It can be assumed that the topic of many issues was actually subjected to different anniversaries, i.e. the April 1964 one was devoted to the city of Cracow, mainly to the Jagiellonian University, which celebrated the 600th anniversary of its foundation. A crucial jubilee was also the millennium of the Polish state. The year 966 marked a clearly religious historical event, the christening of Poland, but the communist propaganda tried to belittle this fact and link the anniversary to the founding of the People’s Republic of Poland and to the day of 1st May, which symbolised the tradition of class struggle⁴⁰. It comes as no surprise that the issues featured archaeology and the pagan culture of the early Slavs, with only a single church reference, a photo of the Gniezno cathedral.

The socialist calendar of events gladly accepted also reports of harvest⁴¹, Miner’s Day (Barbórka)⁴², the celebrations of 9th of May, the Victory Day⁴³, or the October Feast of the People’s Army of Poland⁴⁴ as well as the Marches of the 1st Day of May. The 22nd of July took slightly less attention due to the journal’s calendar (no issues

³⁷ T. Gwardak, *Lublin w XX-leciu*, PSK 1964, no 6, pp. 4–5, *Ziemie zachodnie i północne*, PSK 1965, no 1, p. 3; J. Raczyńska, *Po dwudziestu latach* (o Opolszczyźnie), PSK 1965, no 4, p. 2–3; *W dwudziestolecie* (photo report), PSK 1965, no 5, pp. 12–13.

³⁸ J. Wołczyk, *7 wieków i 20 lat Warszawy*, PSK 1964, no 10, pp. 2–3. The author of the article was the then vice president of Prezydium Rady Narodowej of the capital city, Warsaw.

³⁹ *Dobro powszechne*, PSK 1974, no 7, pp. 18–21.

⁴⁰ PSK 1966, no 5, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Plon niesiemy plon*, PSK 1958, no 10, p. 10.

⁴² *Dzień Górnika* (fotoreportaż), PSK 1984, no 10, pp. 16–17.

⁴³ *Rocznica zwycięstwa*, PSK 1970, no 5, p. 2.

⁴⁴ PSK 1973, no 8.

during the summer vacations). The occasions of this type allowed for sending a message which solidified a particular worldview.

The struggle against the Nazi ally, Japan, was still going on in the Far East with no direct impact on Europe. This changed after the explosion of the first nuclear bomb, which the imperialist circles of the United States attempted to use as blackmail against the Soviet Union and all peace loving nations⁴⁵.

All these events carried a big propaganda symbolic significance, as shown by numerous front covers of monthlies referring thematically to the celebrations, showing mainly the pompous marches along the streets of town and cities, scouts and girl scouts beside soldiers and veterans of the war⁴⁶, as well as poems of panegyric style⁴⁷. 1st of May was celebrated the most often, becoming a pretext for presenting information which referred to the development of other fields of economy⁴⁸. In 1964, the journal published an article discussing the future directions of the economic development of the country. The development of industry was backed with the argument of the increase of national income, growing specialisation of production and demand for work in the fast growing society. Statistical data referring to the pre-war Poland were juxtaposed with the present state.

We can finally witness the end of the deplorable dependence of our country on the foreign capital, which in pre-war Poland meant welcoming foreign capital governing Poland as if it were their own farmstead. Now Poland is developing based on its own potential, cooperating with countries of the socialist block⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See PSK 1970, no 5 and PSK 1973, no 5.

⁴⁷ W. Broniewski, *Pochód*, PSK 1961, no 5, p. 2.

⁴⁸ See A. Dytman-Stasieńko, *Święto zawłaszczonych znaczeń. 1 maja w PRL. Ideologia, rytuał, język*, Wrocław 2006, p. 37.

⁴⁹ M. Sobański, *Dlaczego uprzemysłowienie?*, PSK 1964, no 5, pp. 2–3. Converting economy into the self-sufficient with a relatively big domestic market gave rather good results, but the ultra fast growth of industry took place without considering the criterion of competition and cost effectiveness, while giving preference to branches which were neither work-effective or material-effective. Building of a large industrial complex may be considered as a PRL success story, however, the errors of structuring industry inevitably led to a spectacular economic crisis, with over 1500 industrial units closed down. See A. Karpiński et al, *Od uprzemysłowienia w PRL do dezindustrializacji kraju. Losy zakładów przemysłowych po 1945 roku*, Warszawa 2015.

Other themes

Socialist propaganda paid a lot of attention to exposing huge investment in infrastructure. In the context of touring, numerous new factories were described. In the 60s, some records were quoted: an open-pit coalmine in Turoszów (with a gigantic excavator)⁵⁰, the “Friendship” pipeline (of a record length)⁵¹, as well as the cellulose factory complex in Świecie upon Vistula⁵². In the 70s, more attention was given to the Centrum Zdrowia Dziecka hospital, Trasa Łazienkowska, or the Central Railway Station, despite the continuing industrial growth. The old and the new were contrasted. A picture of old Lodz was put next to the one showing its many factory chimneys with a comment on its pre-war condition “Lodz is modernising its industry”, “it is now a city of universities, scientific institutes, and new modern housing estates”⁵³. Judging by their frequent descriptions, factories were supposed to be equally attractive to tour makers as were the historical sites or natural reserves.

When writing about the coastline, it was mandatory to mention ports and shipyards, the Upper Silesia was inevitably associated with coalmines, while Lodz was described as an agglomeration of clothing industry and artificial fabric factories (such as Anilana)⁵⁴. The descriptions of smaller places run side by side with topics related to the local industry, for example the landscape of Elblag was associated with the Zamech company⁵⁵, and Radom with the shoe producer, Radoskór⁵⁶. Economic topics were a pretext for presenting political propaganda information. A description of the nuclear reactor in Świerk included a mention of nuclear weapons “the destruction of which is an aim of the socialist block”⁵⁷. When picturing the Płock oil pipeline, it was stressed how important the RWPG was⁵⁸. With years the journal abandoned the enthusiastic descriptions of successive industrial investments, going in the direction of balanced description, or even criticism of this kind of enterprises due to ecological concerns⁵⁹.

It was especially in the first decade of the journal publishing that a specific discourse appeared in the presentation of the so-called Regained Territories. Attempts were made to prove the Polish roots of this land within a slogan of “return-

⁵⁰ M. Sobański, *Brunatny Turoszów*, PSK 1961, no 8–9, pp. 2–3.

⁵¹ Idem, *Rurociąg przyjaźni*, PSK 1966, no 8, pp. 18–19.

⁵² Z. Suchar, *Fabryka, która wyżywi miasto*, PSK 1967, no 1, pp. 4–5.

⁵³ *Oznaczona orderem Budowniczych Polski Ludowej*, PSK 1961, no 10, pp. 16–17.

⁵⁴ J. Brysz, *Anilana i inne*, PSK 1967, no 9, pp. 6–8.

⁵⁵ J. Kolendo, *Elbląski „Zamech”*, PSK 1967, no 5, pp. 12–13.

⁵⁶ M. Sobański, *Wielki szewc Radoskór*, PSK 1962, no 4, pp. 20–22.

⁵⁷ *Rośnie nasza ojczyzna. Reaktor atomowy w Świerku*, PSK 1960, no 10, pp. 19–20.

⁵⁸ M. Sobański, *Rurociąg przyjaźni*, PSK 1966, no 8, pp. 18–19.

⁵⁹ T. Garlej, *Skutki petrochemii*, PSK 1983, no 10, pp. 10–11; W. Giełżyński, *Pożegnanie z Wisłą*, PSK 1983, no 6, pp. 3–6.

ing to the motherland". Numerous proofs of Polish roots were searched for, and the journal wrote about the first Poles settling in that land⁶⁰. Frequently the contrasts between the past and the present were used, and positive changes under the People's government were described:

For the last 18 years Szczecin has changed dramatically. Immediately after the war it was a dark, gloomy, terribly damaged city. Only the streets of the central area and the Pogodno district had been saved; the rest consisted in skeletons, burnt remains, appearing depressive. The districts on the Odra looked like a big cemetery of the city. The shipyard and the port did not exist. Everything had been shuttered. Today, it is a new, bright city, pulsing with life and work. Its present appearance is the effect of a tremendous effort of many people, who sacrificed their time and energy to the rebuilding of the damaged city⁶¹.

Vitality of the regions described was stressed, and numerous benefits of re-joining Poland were pointed to. On the other hand, all traces of Prussian heritage were depreciated⁶². Historical texts mentioned the mediaeval Piast dynasty domains, or the time present. The period of the German jurisdiction was treated as "bad times", in which the regions were, for many reasons, marginalised⁶³. In this context, the river Odra was presented as a symbol, it was the river which "time ago witnessed the fall of the German landlords, and ten centuries later it saw the river crossing which embodied the words of the July Manifesto"⁶⁴. Anti German voices were a characteristic feature of the PRL propaganda, which showed through a number of texts depicting the objects related to Polish martyrdom and its battlefields. A great symbol of the invincible standing against the German power was the 1410 battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg)⁶⁵. It was included several times in the texts written in the context of regions and the tradition of the Polish military. The fields of Grunwald were associated with scout meetings systematically organised there⁶⁶. Also the Polish guerrilla fight during WWII had been ideologised. Most articles treated about the socialist irreidenta represented by the People's Guard, the People's Army, and the ZWM

⁶⁰ J. Jasiewicz, *Szczecińskie symbole*, PSK 1987, no 3, pp. 2–3.

⁶¹ L. Mitkiewicz, *Szczecin moje miasto*, PSK 1964, no 3, pp. 27–29.

⁶² T. Gumiński, *Legnica*, PSK 1962, no 12, pp. 6–8.

⁶³ See *Po dwudziestu pięciu latach*, PSK 1970, no 4, pp. 2–3; J. Kłysińska, *Blaski na eksport* (about the crystalmill Julia in Szklarska Poręba), PSK 1966, no 2, pp. 10–13.

⁶⁴ T. Kwiek, *Odra rzeka polskiego losu*, PSK 1975, no 1, pp. 2–9.

⁶⁵ The event had long held a symbolic meaning, its remembrance shaped according to the present needs. Apart from the anti German message and the sense of superiority of the Slav nations over the western communities, it showed the value of common engagement, collective activity and the strength of the state. See. M. Gałęziowska, *Świętowanie wybranych rocznic bitwy pod Grunwaldem formą komunikacji rytualnej państwa i narodu*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 2012, no 4, pp. 83–108.

⁶⁶ H. Pytlik, *Harczerze na polu wielkiej bitwy*, PSK 1981, no 2, p. 11.

(Union of Young Fighting). Even the famous “Zośka” division was mentioned together with the People’s Army⁶⁷.

In the first decade of being published, the journal featured content related to foreign tourism. The brotherly friendship with the USSR and other states of the socialist block was stressed. In this respect a symbolic meaning was given to the Crimea pioneer camp, the Artek. One of the articles, on the other hand, was devoted to the anticolonial struggle of African nations⁶⁸. More and more contacts were noted with the developing countries of Asia and Africa⁶⁹.

The Form

Propaganda texts were most frequently published on the first pages of particular issues. It concerned especially the reports from party meetings, national actions as well as the text praising Lenin and other party leaders. Further pages featured articles related to the main theme of the issues, for example a factory, or some revolution-like traditions of a particular region. The inside of the issue contained some more publications connected with the regular columns with propaganda content. (“Our motherland is growing” column as well as post stamps presented the economic successes of the PRL). The journal was the patron of some social projects and activities (Tradition and contemporary days — the Chambers of National Remembrance, Flowers for the Hero⁷⁰). Also numerous competitions and puzzles which tested knowledge of the new investments and other PRL-related facts served the purpose of spreading the proper image of the state⁷¹. Apart from the characteristic bon mots the authors used a specific style which presented the world of a production cooperatives as a fairy-land universum “I have paid a visit, tasted the raspberries straight off the bush, drunk their marvellous drinks, juice dripping down my chin, and what I saw and heard, I told you as it was”⁷².

⁶⁷ B. Hillebrandt, *Harcerski batalion „Zośka”*, PSK 1968, no 4, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁸ *Zmienia się mapa Afryki*, PSK 1961, no 2, p. 21.

⁶⁹ *Program szkolnego ruchu krajoznawczo-turystycznego*, PSK 1962, no 3, pp. 6–8.

⁷⁰ A lot of attention was paid to the preservation of the places of national remembrance, especially those associated with WW2. As early as in 1964 the journal published a speech of the minister of education, Waclaw Tułodziecki, who reported on the project of grave protection, organised together with The Council for the Protection of Monuments of War and Martyrdom. The educational effects of the project were put down to the socialist ideals of education and upbringing as well as the educational reform discussed during the 7th plenary meeting of the Central Committee of PZPR. W. Tułodziecki, *Niech pamięć o nich nie zaginie*, PSK 1964, no 2, pp. 2–4.

⁷¹ *A jak nie ma stali to się dom zawali*, PSK 1961, no 2, pp. 16–17.

⁷² J. Brysz, *Tajemnica powodzenia*, PSK 1967, no 10, pp. 18–19.

Also many of the front covers, the space of symbolic meaning to the main theme of the issue, had a propaganda character. There were photographs showing particular sights or panoramas, portraits of tourists, pictures of nature, parts of factories, and photo reports of different national events. Especially, the last two categories bore a potential for the socialist propaganda. What they showed was for instance some posters with the motif of a steel mill, or a coalmine together with the symbolic *ears of grains*, reminiscent of the national emblems of the soviet republics, or other socialist countries of the region⁷³. It is important to notice a particular growth in the religious motifs on the covers during the last decade of the PRL, especially in the years directly following the introduction of martial law (see table no. 2).

Table 2
Journal front covers with a propaganda message in the particular issues of “Poznaj Swój Kraj”, years 1958–1989

Year	Number of front covers with elements of socialist propaganda	Number of front covers with sacral elements	Year	Number of front covers with elements of socialist propaganda	Number of front covers with sacral elements
1958	0	0	1974	5	0
1959	1	0	1975	0	0
1960	3	0	1976	3	0
1961	3	0	1977	2	1
1962	3	0	1978	0	0
1963	5	0	1979	3	0
1964	3	0	1980	1	0
1965	2	1	1981	2	0
1966	3	0	1982	0	1
1967	2	0	1983	0	2
1968	3	0	1984	1	2
1969	5	1	1985	1	2
1970	5	1	1986	1	0
1971	2	0	1987	1	0
1972	3	0	1988	0	0
1973	3	0	1989	0	1

Source: own analysis of “Poznaj Swój Kraj”

⁷³ PSK 1972, no 1, p. 1.

Conclusions

Institutionally bound with the teaching community, due to the fact of being published by the National School Publishing House until 1973, and “Nasza Księgarnia” later on⁷⁴ — it comes as no surprise that the journal repeated the propaganda strategies used in that period in school geography course books⁷⁵. Until the end of the 1970s, environmental indeterminism and arguments for the superiority of the planned economy over capitalism prevailed. A lot of space was devoted to industry and economy in general, with a number of statistical data, and the lack of proper description of the touring values of particular regions. It was true especially about the Polish coastline of the Baltic Sea, which was an exceptionally good destination for holiday makers.

Only carefully selected people and events were featured: Copernicus was presented as the father of an anticlerical turn in science, Staszic was considered the founder of modern industry and a forerunner of democracy, Kościuszko was shown as a fighter for freedom and equality of peasants, and the Battle of Grunwald was treated as a symbol of the Polish-German conflict.

The touring themes, which naturally bear an affirmative character, had to match a presumed image of reality showing the evolution of a region and the “system achievements” against the historical background. Propaganda was not only part of informative texts, but of fiction (short stories and narrative descriptions) and poems as well. An original way of expressing the content of this type was the presentation of post stamps⁷⁶ with a proper theme, which commemorated the revolution in Vietnam⁷⁷, the Polish-Soviet brotherhood of the arms⁷⁸, or a party convention⁷⁹. The intensity of the propaganda definitely decreased after December 1981. In accordance with the intensity level of the ideologised content, we can distinguish three periods in the history of the journal, which more or less overlap with the three successive decades (from the start of the journal until 1970, the 70s and the 80s). These periods also match the changes which took place at the highest offices’ level in the state, and the modification of the state policy concerning tourism and media content⁸⁰. In the

⁷⁴ The first quarters of the editorial board were housed in the building of the then Ministry of Education, at Aleja I Armii Wojska Polskiego 25; see. M. Rogoż, *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży Instytutu Wydawniczego „Nasza Księgarnia” w latach 1945–1989*, Kraków 2009, pp. 185–186.

⁷⁵ See J. Wojdon, *Propaganda polityczna w podręcznikach dla szkół podstawowych Polski Ludowej (1944–1989)*, Toruń 2001, pp. 103–130.

⁷⁶ In the 70s stamp collecting was considered an important propaganda means. M. Zaremba, *Propaganda sukcesu. Dekada Gierka*, [w:] *Propaganda PRL — wybrane problemy*, ed. P. Semkow, Gdańsk 2002, pp. 25–26.

⁷⁷ W. Trzcńska, *Znaczki walczącego Wietnamu*, PSK 1968, no 9, p. 25.

⁷⁸ *Polsko-radzieckie braterstwo broni*, PSK 1966, no 2, p. 29.

⁷⁹ *Dla uczczenia VI Zjazdu PZPR*, PSK 1972, no 2, p. 32.

⁸⁰ See A. Chmiel, *Turystyka w Polsce w latach 1945–1989*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 68–78.

years 1958–1970, social forms of activity were stressed, which concerned both industry and agriculture: information concerning the State Agricultural Companies (the PGRs) and farming cooperatives. The readers' minds were mostly directed towards the future, with great visions of machines facilitating the life of the country presented by the texts. The journal was also marginally involved in foreign tourism as a theme, mainly the editors' contacts within the framework of the activities of touring organisations. A lot of attention was paid to the Regained Territories, described according to the following stereotypical pattern: traces of the Polish past and the then contemporary achievements with no mention or criticism of the foreign heritage.

The 70s mark the peak of the success propaganda associated with the description of the growing number of investments in different areas of economy. In the same vein, information on new accommodation base for tourists and new recreation facilities was given. The present had become a measure of progress. The frequently quoted statistics supported the claim of the country's continual development. Also the administrative reform conducted in 1975 was a good reason for presenting the successes. At the same time, the touring description was less intensely ideologised and more focused on specific historical or geographic information. In this decade relatively the most space was devoted to various state anniversaries and ritual festivities. It was also the time of the first ecology-related information in the journal.

After 1981 the level of the success propaganda definitely decreased. There were more and more critical texts, or texts referring to the current problems. The conflict between the industrial growth and the protection of the environment was strongly emphasised. Referring to the economic situation of the country some ideas for "holidays at the time of crisis" were presented⁸¹. Interestingly, sacral objects were described to a larger extent than before: catholic churches as well as synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, or cathedral libraries. When writing about folk traditions, reference was also made to the calendar of religious holidays. It was no longer feared to mention the between-the-wars traditions of scouting, or other organisations. At that time the socialist propaganda consisted mainly in certain fixed forms related to party conventions, military traditions, folklore, or the presentation of industry.

Persuasive elements, including different techniques of suggestion, manipulation and emotional influencing were all present on the pages of "Poznaj Swój Kraj"⁸². Up to a certain degree they belonged to the political propaganda, depending on whether or not they repeated a fixed cultural pattern characteristic for the period. On the one hand, the propaganda content was aimed at achieving different temporary goals, and on the other it served the creating a certain cultural cohort reflecting the system assumption of the socialist state.

⁸¹ K. Lubański, *Kryzysowe wakacje*, PSK 1982, no 7, pp. 28–29.

⁸² Z. Filipowicz, *Propaganda w turystyce*, „Turyzm Polski” 1938, no 7/8, pp. 105–108.

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