

Rosario Napolitano
University of Naples "l'Orientale"

Censorship and “bad censors”: an analysis of Latvian Glavlit in the 1970s and in 1980s

Censorship, a favourite counter-revolutionary “weapon” of the Soviet regime during the Lenin Era became more rigid and strict under Stalin, when used to spreading the Communist Party's political ideology. Consequently, censorship influenced the social and cultural life in the other Republics of the Soviet Union as well, especially in the Baltic States.

After Stalin's death, with the “Thaw” that started when Krushchev gained power, the situation became more relaxed. The process of de-Stalinisation officially started and gave the voices back to numerous artists and writers who had been banned by the regime.

Into the Brezhnev Era the soviet censorship became stricter again in controlling the media and the arts (the Daniel'-Sinjavkij trial in 1966 can be considered one of the most famous examples).

The aim of this paper is to analyze the background of censors and some cases from the mid-1970s and mid-1980s documents in the Latvian State Archive (Latvijas Valsts Arhīvs fundamental for the success of the research) in wich censors of the Latvian Glavlit (the Latvian branch of the main censorship body of Soviet Union) made mistakes and omissions in their work. These mistakes sometimes resulted with firing censors. The failures of the censors to keep the public discourse under control reflect the gradual weakening of the system.