

Power of Discourse: Cookbooks in the People's Republic of Poland

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ABSTRACT: Based upon a qualitative content analysis of selected Polish cookbooks published in the People's Republic of Poland between 1952 and 1989, this paper illustrates how recipes, practical suggestions for cooking and housekeeping followed and perpetuated the main socialist values and ideas. By relating to Foucault's concept of power working through knowledge, this paper locates culinary discourses in a broader context of political control and reduced social autonomy. It demonstrates how the authorities in the People's Republic of Poland influenced the content of cookbooks in order to disseminate socialist propaganda. The aim of this research is to add to the growing body of scholarship around Polish culinary culture of the second half of the twentieth century, and ultimately, acknowledge the significance of ideological discourse embedded within various cookbooks.

Over the last few decades there has been a growing interest in food, together with an increased emphasis by historians and anthropologists on the importance of analysing cookbooks (Appadurai 1988; Mennell 1996; Tobias 1998; Wheaton 1983, 1998; Albala 2012). Arriving at the study of cookery books from several different perspectives, academics have acknowledged those sources not only as instructional cooking manuals, but also as 'revealing artefacts of culture in the making' (Appadurai 1988, p. 22). In the Polish context cookbooks have also been recognized as worthy of analysis in their own right (Żarski 2008; Dumanowski 2014; Has-Tokarz 2016; Kleśta-Nawrocka 2016, Matras 2016). Whereas research on Polish cookbooks is quite limited and concerns mainly the study of old-Polish cookery books, there has been a growing body of academic texts examining the complex relationships among food, culture and society from a wide array of disciplines in the humanities, social studies, and sciences (Stegner 2003; Łoziński M. and J. 2012; Drzał-Sierocka 2014, 2017; Straczuk 2016). Furthermore, the corpus of existing research attending Polish culinary culture in socialist Poland, although not devoting much space to the analysis of cookbooks, provides a solid foundation on which a more specialised investigation into food and power as represented in the selected cookbooks can be conducted (Burrell 2003; Piotrowski 2007, 2008; Brzostek 2010; Sokołowska 2013; Stańczak-Wiślicz 2014). Despite the substantial body of research on Polish food culture and notwithstanding the work of Has-Tokarz (2016), the analysis of cookbooks published in the People's Republic of

Poland between 1952 and 1989 is still at an early developmental stage. This paper, based upon a qualitative content analysis of selected Polish cookbooks, is intended to fill in the gap in the research on the cookery books published during the second half of the twentieth century in Poland. By relating to Foucault's concept of power working through knowledge (1977, p. 27), it locates culinary discourses in a broader context of political control and reduced social autonomy. It illustrates how recipes, practical suggestions for cooking and housekeeping followed and perpetuated the main socialist values and ideas. The aim of this research is to add to the growing body of scholarship around Polish culinary culture of the second half of the twentieth century, and ultimately, acknowledge the significance of ideological discourse embedded within various cookbooks.

Research Methodology and Sources

Although Albala (2012, pp. 229, 231) emphasises that the culinary information included in cookbooks cannot be treated as concrete proof of what people ate in a given period of time, cookbooks and recipes are never entirely removed from political, economic, social and cultural realities:

There are also ways the historian can read between the lines of the recipes, so to speak to answer questions that are not directly related to cooking or material culture but may deal with gender roles, issues of class, ethnicity and race. Even topics such as politics, religion and world view are revealed in the commentary found in cookbooks and sometimes embedded in what appears to be a simple recipe. The most valuable of cookbooks and related culinary texts also reveal what we might call complete food ideologies. By this is meant a way of thinking about the world that is a part of a larger esthetic, political, or social mindset.

The purpose of using cookbooks as a historical source is clearly stated by Albala. He illustrates that cookbooks go far beyond offering recipes. Although they reveal some specific information about the availability and prices of ingredients, table settings and manners, equipment and techniques used during a given period, when read carefully for hidden clues, they also provide a valuable insight into political, social, cultural, economic or even religious characteristics of a particular period. Hence, the researcher's interest should lie in the exploration of 'food ideologies' embedded in various culinary texts. Since

cookbooks are 'a magician's hat', the researcher needs to approach them with a set of methodological tools in order to 'get more out of them than they seem to contain' (Wheaton 1998, p. 2). In the text 'Cookbooks as Historical Documents' Albala explains that historians in order to reveal abundant information regarding gender roles, class, ethnicity and race, firstly need to address five basic questions, namely 'Who wrote the cookbook? What was the intended audience? Where was it produced and when? Why was it written?' (Wheaton, p. 228). The answers to those questions will help the scholar place the information included in cookbooks within a proper context (p. 231). Albala's questions are of particular interest to this research as they provide researchers with the tools that can help reveal underlying patterns and ideologies. Furthermore, following Foucault's concept of power working through knowledge, this article illustrates how both the obvious and more subtle information included in cookbooks constitute vital sites for the production of knowledge. Foucault (1977, p. 27) relates the concept of power to discourse pairing the term with knowledge:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

Foucault acknowledges that neither knowledge nor power can exist without one another. Although he does not refer directly to political power, the relation between those two terms gains its particular significance in the context of various regimes which aim at exercising power through numerous discourses, including cookbooks.

Due to the abundance of the material, for each researched decade one cookbook has been selected to be analysed in more detail, and these are *Cookery Book* (*Książka kucharska*, firstly published in 1953, here the second edition from 1954) by Zofia Czerny; *Modern Feeding of the Family* (*Nowoczesne żywienie rodziny*) from 1966 by Feliksa Starzyńska and Zofia Zawistowska; *Italian Cuisine* (*Kuchnia włoska*) from 1977 by Maria Iwaszkiewicz and Stanisław Włodek; and *Nothing is Wasted in my Kitchen* (*W mojej kuchni nic się nie marnuje*) from 1982 by Anna Gasik. *Cookery Book* and *Modern Feeding of the Family* serve as examples of culinary guides with extensive chapters on rational eating; *Italian Cuisine* is a representative of popularisation of foreign cuisines; whereas *Nothing is Wasted in my Kitchen* is an example of the need to economise, especially apparent in the 1980s. However, in order to trace the main ideological mechanisms and changing culinary trends and expectations embedded in culinary texts, the researcher consulted numerous other cookbooks that are mentioned

throughout the text. Such an approach providing a brief overview of various Polish cookbooks published from 1952 to 1989 serves as a guide towards future research. Cookbooks were approached with a number of research questions, including the ones raised by Albala. During the research several prevailing and reoccurring themes relating to socialist ideology were identified as worthy of investigation and they include, but are not limited to: rational eating regarded as a social duty; emphasis on modernisation and introduction of novelty; and preoccupation with economical eating and product substitution.

Food in the People's Republic of Poland: Social and Historical Context

The People's Republic of Poland (the PRL) was the official name of Poland introduced by the 1952 Constitution, commonly used to define the whole period of post-war history of Poland from 1945 until 1989. During that time Poland was a part of the Soviet Bloc and the main political role within the country was played by the communist party — PZPR (the Communist Polish United Workers' Party). Those years have been characterised as the era of social unrest and economic depression (Zaremba 2001; Paczkowski 2003; Kemp-Welch 2008). Historically the period is divided into several stages: the years of Stalinism from 1945 to 1956 modelled on soviet patterns, featuring the reinforcement of nationalised industry, centrally planned economy and censorship; Gomułka's epoch from 1956 to 1970 regarded as the era of suppressed economy and deferred investments; Gierek's decade from 1970 to 1976 initially characterised by economic boom based on foreign borrowing, which finally led to the crisis of the 1980s; and the economic depression of the 1980s (Cobel-Tokarska 2014). Food, like most aspects of everyday life, was subject to governmental regulation, and its production, distribution and prices were strictly controlled by the authorities. Recurrent food shortages, consumer goods scarcity and rising prices led to major riots in 1956, 1970, 1976 and 1980 (Simatupang 1994). The rationing system was introduced twice during that period, firstly from 1951 to 1953, secondly from 1976 to 1989. In 1951 meat, butter and vegetable fat were rationed, in 1952 sugar and sweets were added to the list of rationed products (Zawistowski 2016, p. 69). Although the economic situation did not improve and many products were in short supply, rationing was abolished in 1953. Over the next few years the communist authorities dealt with shortages by increasing the prices of scarce items. In 1976 rationing, embracing only sugar during the first four years, was reintroduced and during various stages it included different products, for example, meat, sugar, butter, milk, bread, flour, potatoes, salt, to list only a few (Zawistowski, p. 76). Furthermore, the authorities used other methods to restrain the demand for certain products. For example, 'no-meat Mondays' were

introduced by the decision of the minister of home trade of 29 July 1959. On those days it was forbidden to serve meat dishes in restaurants and canteens, whereas shops were allowed to sell only offal products (Zaremba 2004, p. 32). To reduce the consumption of scarce products, the authorities also tried to influence the culinary habits of the nation, which found its expression in cookery books and cooking advice, which were subject to strict communist censorship. As we will see later the content analysis of cookery books and manuals of household advice illustrates how strongly the adherence to socialist rules and ideas was endorsed. Apart from controlling what can be accessed, published, or viewed, promotion of the idea of collective catering, initially based on Soviet patterns, constituted another dimension of the extension of socialist food ideologies. Czekalski (2011, p. 79) writes:

Workplace canteen was designed to pursue important social goals: ensure the rationality of nutrition (i.e. affect the health of the population), to disseminate scientifically appropriate eating patterns, increase productivity and create new jobs for women.

Although it may seem that those canteens would ease women's domestic duties, cooking remained a female domain throughout socialist Poland. Women, who in the face of rapid industrialisation constituted an important workforce, 'had to carry the double burden: of work in the public sphere as well as at home' (Zembrzuska 2000, p. 8). Cookbooks and culinary guides aimed to assist women in combining the role of a full time employee with the role of a housewife. Feeding a family was seen as a woman's active contribution to the development of the new socialist state. It was her duty to support the whole nation by taking care of her family.

Rational Eating as a Social Responsibility

The main socialist ideas, such as industrialisation, hard work for the common good, social equality, collectivity and sacrifice for the wellbeing of the whole community and the state, permeated all spheres of public and private life (Taras 1984). They also found their expression in the suggestions and advice for cooking, which started to be viewed as a part of a wider social endeavour, rather than a personal matter. The importance of a change in the model of consumption and the management of household was illustrated by extensive chapters on calories and nutrients, provided by nutritionists and dieticians. Although the preoccupation with socialist culinary science and rationality is emphasised in numerous cookbooks published during the times of the People's Republic of Poland, it is especially apparent in the 1950s when the connection between nourishment and energy to work was clearly expounded. The three comprehensive cookery manuals published in the 1950s, namely *Cookery Book* (Książka kucharska by Czerny 1953), *Polish Cuisine* (Kuchnia polska edited by Stanisław

Berger, 1954), and *Practical Cooking* (Kuchnia praktyczna by Dudzik, Laskowska, Pyszkowska and Witowska, 1957) have lengthy chapters on proper nutrition. They include numerous tables showing the vitamin content and caloric value of individual foodstuffs, as well as the information on buying, storing and preparing food. Publishing statistics suggest that there was a high demand for those culinary classics. Multiple editions were published with impressive print runs: *Cookery Book*, first edition 1953, 50,000 copies; *Polish Cuisine* called 'the culinary bible of the People's Republic of Poland' issued every year throughout the whole communism era in capital of 100 000 or 50 000 (Tekieli 2016, p. 59); and *Practical Cooking*, first edition 1957, nearly 50 000 copies. Cookbooks from the 1950s attempted to convince the reader that adherence to socialist instructions will ensure the health and wellbeing of every citizen: 'The socialist system brings to the fore the wellbeing of each citizen and continually strives to improve their existence' (Berger 1955, p. 4). Political ideals are also reflected in *Cookery Book*, where in the introduction Czerny praises the achievements of the ruling party: 'Tasks that IX session and II PZPR Congress set in relation to Polish national economy are performed according to the plan and in all sections' (1954, p. 5). In both cases the authors emphasise the positive role that the socialist system and the rulers of the PRL have on the economy and the welfare of each citizen. Furthermore, they illustrate that the developing the science of nutrition and promotion of rational food are major objectives in socialist societies. The idea of healthy eating regarded as a civic duty is illustrated by Czerny in *Cookery Book* (1954, p. 5):

Nutrition is not a purely personal matter. A man, well-nourished according to the scientific and natural dietetics is in good physical and mental health, his work is productive, and his life lasts longer because with the proper fuel for your body cells, ageing is delayed. And when that applies not to individuals, but thousands and millions of people, this matter: what to eat and how to prepare food, becomes a social issue. And that is why we rightly say and write that proper nourishment of the society is of great importance to the material and cultural construction of the nation, for its economy, and for satisfying the ever-growing needs of the whole society.

The author clearly states that properly fed people are not only healthier and they live longer, but they also work more effectively. Since work was a prerogative of the new state, food provision was regarded as a social responsibility. Furthermore, in order to encourage the healthy eating many specialised diet cookbooks were published, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, including *Diet Cookbook* edited by Zofia Wieczorek-Chełmińska (*Dietetyczna książka kucharska*, first published in 1978), Zofia Zawistowska's *Low-Calorie Dishes* from 1986 (*Potrawy niskokaloryczne*), and *I'm on a*

Diet by Anna Rościszewska-Stoyanow (*Jestem na Diecie* from 1988). Although the conviction that diet and health are interrelated found its expression in many cookbooks, Czekalski rightly observes that in times of food rationing, when there was shortage of basic products, it was very hard for people to adhere to rational eating (2005, p. 381). It is very unlikely that people were on specialised diets when many products were in short supply or simply unavailable.

Modernisation and Novelty

One of the fundamental characteristics of the socialist system was its desire for rapid industrialisation of the entire country. As stated above, women started to play an important part of the workforce. The employment of women in the period 1950–1989 increased by 252%; in 1950 women comprised 30% of the labour force, whereas in the end of the PRL their share of the workforce increased to over 45% (Fidelis 2010, p. 239). Zembrzuska points out that 'the need of incorporating women into the workforce challenged the traditional roles of women as mothers and wives and demanded a new kind of family politics' (2000, p. 7). The image of a woman propagated by the socialist regime depended on the political and economic situation: during the Stalinist period a woman was envisaged mainly as a worker (*ibid.*), in the 1960s she had to reconcile the role of a mother and a wife and her professional activity (p. 9), whereas in the 1970s due to the low demography rate the reinforcement of traditional roles took place (*ibid.*). Despite the strong use of socialist propaganda representing women as workers in various posters, films and literature in the Stalinist period, cookbooks of the 1950s illustrate the double role that women had to fulfil, of a housewife and an employee. As educating women about modern housekeeping was in the interest of socialism, the culinary authors assisted housewives in simplifying their household chores by, for example, adjusting their menus and recipes to the working conditions of women. Czerny, for example, gives advice and provides separate exemplary menus for families where all members are working (1954, p. 24), for families using collective catering (pp. 25–28), and for housewives who are not working outside their household (pp. 28–29). She insists that food related duties should be divided among all family members as it would not only assist working women, but also would shorten the preparation time of the meal (p. 23). She also suggests the practicality of one-pot dishes, which can be especially useful when the time is limited (*ibid.* 30). In order to reduce time spent in the kitchen, a number of industrial products, such as bouillon cubes, instant soups, canned food, preserves, powders, and different kinds of frozen food, were produced on a massive scale. Recipes encouraged the housewives to try those novelties. In *Cookery Book* there are numerous recipes calling for bouillon cubes (*ibid.*, pp. 129, 358) and canned fruit (pp. 395, 433). In 1966 *Frozen Food on our Table*

(*Mrożonki na naszym stole*) by Ludmiła Martczak-Grudowa was published, which, as indicated by the title, was entirely devoted to frozen food. Not only convenience food, but also kitchen appliances were designed to liberate women from the most tedious duties and assist them in organising their work more efficiently. Fridges featured among one of the most desired kitchen appliances. Starzyńska and Zawistowska in their *Modern Feeding of the Family* write: 'it is a dream of every housewife, a dream fully justified in modern housekeeping, to own a fridge (freezer)' (1966, p. 392). Although the practicality of using fridges is praised in the publications from 1950s, Kot rightly observes that in those years fridges were luxurious appliances that only very few could afford (1999, p. 34). Hence, the cookery books from the 1950s provide housewives with other ways of storing food and preventing it from decomposing (Czerny 1954, pp. 238, 244; Berger 1957, pp. 679–691). Again in the context of technological development, early publications praise the achievements of the socialist system in relation to modernisation of the kitchen: 'Our socialised trade is offering us better and better possibilities to equip our kitchen with appliances to facilitate housewives' household chores' (Berger 1957, p. 29). Cookbooks glorified kitchen equipment, such as electric and gas cookers (Czerny 1954, p. 46), electric baking pans and electric frying pans (Berger 1957, p. 30), all of which shortened the work process and effort involved. Nevertheless, a lot of those novelties were either unaffordable or unavailable, apart from during a short period of Gierek's rule, when many new products, including household appliances were easily accessible (Cobel-Tokarska 2014, p. 32). Moreover, at that time more imported food novelties were available in shops (Czekalski 2005, p. 372).

Favourable economic conditions during the first part of the 1970s, the result of foreign loans, affected not only the market, but also the range of culinary publications. Moving from a scientific discourse, cookbooks were becoming more and more diverse. A more steady proliferation of cookbooks devoted entirely to foreign cuisines can be witnessed throughout that period. The series entitled *Cuisines from Different Nations* (*Kuchnie różnych narodów*), including *French Cuisine* (*Kuchnia francuska*, 1976), *Hungarian Cuisine* (*Kuchnia węgierska* 1976), *Italian Cuisine* (*Kuchnia włoska* 1977) and *Russian Cuisine* (*Kuchnia rosyjska* 1978) by Iwaszkiewicz and Włodek illustrate some substantial changes that took place in the content of cookbooks. It should be emphasised that the interest in diverse cookbooks began at a time when very few people could travel abroad. The number of publications, as well as impressive print runs of over 100 000 copies and multiple editions, show that people were very willing to reach for cookbooks presenting international cuisines. What is innovative in the series *Cuisines from Different Nations* is the fact that each recipe was accompanied by symbols concerning the cost and the

level of difficulty involved in preparation. Furthermore, readers were introduced to a wider range of culinary possibilities based on numerous novel imported ingredients. For example, such ingredients as anchovies (p. 9), prawns (p. 10), parmesan cheese (p. 45), crabs (p. 50), and oranges (p. 65) feature in *Italian Cuisine* from 1977. Although many of those products would have been available in the early years of Gierek's era of prosperity because of a thriving import market, they would have been very expensive.

Interestingly, the spread of a wide array of culinary publications featuring different foreign cuisines continued throughout the difficult 1980s, with such titles as Katarzyna Pospieszńska's *Chinese Cuisine (Kuchnia chińska)* 1986 and Barbara Pokorska's *What They Eat and Drink at the Rhine (Co jedzą i piją nad Renem)* 1989). As most ingredients were unavailable at that time, the authors tried to assure their readers that the selected recipes were based only on the ingredients available on the Polish market. Furthermore, in order to deliver the desired dish, Pośpieszyńska in the second edition of *Chinese Cuisine* suggests substituting various products with an alternative ingredient, for example, litchi with dried apricot (1988, p. 206); bamboo shoots with carrot, kohlrabi, white parts of cauliflower or leek (p. 208); five-spice powder, including star anise, aniseed, cloves, cinnamon and fennel seed with ground cinnamon and allspice (ibid.). Although the author encouraged housewives to improvise in their cooking and to be innovative in the face of economic shortages when the most basic ingredients were scarce, it is very unlikely that those recipes would have been widely used. Nevertheless, as Bracewell highlights: 'cookbooks can be read as prompts to fantasy and desire, perhaps especially in the absence of the required ingredients' (2012, p. 170). Hence, cookbooks might not only be read as practical culinary guides, but their value also resides in a broad spectrum of culturally defined purposes.

'Waste not, Want not' and Product Substitution

Throughout the whole socialist era cookbooks encouraged their readers to adhere rigidly to the philosophy 'Waste not, Want not.' It was a housewife's duty to minimise waste by using leftovers. Starzyńska and Zawistowska (1966, p. 10) comment regarding this waste:

A great amount of edible food waste is thrown away every day in the households. If every family saved only 1 decagram of bread daily [...], in the whole country 60 thousand kilograms would be saved every day. The very high wastage relates also to edible fats, meat, cold cuts, milk.

A number of frugal recipes based on leftovers turn up repeatedly in various cookbooks from that period. For example, Czerny in her *Cookery Book* provides recipes for Poultry Gelatine in Moulds (1954, p. 92) based on cooked or roasted poultry leftovers, and Ravioli from Fish Leftovers

(p. 147). The cookbook also provides a number of recipes for offal dishes, which as the author indicates, have both nutritional and culinary value (ibid., p. 247). As meat was very scarce, various cookbooks include an impressive number of recipes for fifth quarter dishes. In *Practical Cooking* the authors emphasise that: 'overloading meals with meat dishes and consuming big portions of meat in every meal is harmful to the human body (1957, pp. 25–6), yet they acknowledge the role of offal: 'internal animal organs, such as liver, kidneys, lungs, heart, brain and tongue are rich in minerals, especially phosphorus and iron' (p. 25). They also emphasise the importance of reducing the meat waste and maximising its use. The authors present a chart that illustrates how all the parts of the pig can be used for consumption purposes. For example, snout and ears and meat from the head can be used for headcheese, black pudding or gelatine; tail for black pudding or pâté; tongue and meat off-cuts for sausages, black pudding and pâté (pp. 130–1). In order to equip readers with culinary ideas, the book provides a wide range of offal recipes, including such dishes as Italian Headcheese (p. 144), Brain in Polish Style (p. 208), Veal Lungs in Sour Sauce (p. 214), Veal Tripe Coated with Breadcrumbs (p. 214), and Beef Tongue in Horseradish Sauce (p. 219). Apart from offal being a main ingredient, the recipes are based on very simple, quite cheap products and seasoned mainly with salt and black pepper.

As many products were scarce housewives were not only encouraged to minimise waste, but also to find alternative foodstuffs when they could not purchase certain ingredients. Czekalski notices that bananas and citrus fruit were regarded as luxury products and in the case of the latter blackcurrant could be substituted (2005, p. 371). Interestingly, sauerkraut, used for a completely different purpose in the kitchen, was regarded as an excellent substitute for lemon. Indeed Gomułka himself encouraged people to stop seeking scarce lemons and use sauerkraut instead, which according to him had the same Vitamin C content and thus could perfectly replace them (p. 372). Starzyńska and Zawistowska provide a table with several expensive menus and suggest cheaper alternatives, emphasising that low-cost products are often healthier (1966, pp. 130–2). Hence, tea is replaced by plum compote, ham with smoked cod, roast pork with fried liver, butter with margarine (ibid., p. 130). Although the emphasis on frugality and product substitution can be observed in the 1950s and 1960s, the publications do not speak openly about the economic problems. What is highlighted in these publications is that welfare relies on skilful household management, nutritional knowledge, and social responsibility concerning food provision.

While most of the publications from the 1950s and 1960s were masking or ignoring the problems confronting the socialist economy, the authors of cookbooks from the 1980s dealt with the shortages in a more open way. The recipes and dietary guides of the 1980s started to reflect more closely the unfavourable economic circumstances.

For example, in the editor's letter from Gasik's *Nothing is Wasted in my Kitchen* (1982, p. 3) it is stated:

The author is asking the readers for comments about this book, mainly on the usefulness of the included recipes. She is also expecting suggestions concerning the prevention of daily waste in the kitchen during the time of crisis that the country is experiencing.

More often women were advised how to deal with shortages and how to replace scarce products with other foodstuffs that were more accessible and cheap. Even the titles *per se* illustrate the emphasis on frugality and importance of price. Examples include Henryk Dębski's *Tasty and Inexpensive Dishes* (*Potrawy smaczne i niedrogie*, 1980), Kazimiera Pyszkowska's *Economically and Deliciously* (*Oszczędnie i smacznie*, 1984), and Jadwiga Łukasiak's *Culinary Recipes for a Frugal Housewife* (*Przepisy kulinarne dla oszczędnej gospodyni*, 1986). Although the scientific discourse is still apparent in those publications, noticeably greater amounts of space were devoted to providing culinary advice and recipes based on leftovers and alternative low-cost products. One of the most interesting recipes based on leftovers is provided in *Nothing is Wasted in my Kitchen*, where Gasik suggests making winter tea with apple peel, stressing that 'stock from apple peel contains minerals and pectins which are regarded as an anti-atherosclerotic agent' (1982, p. 79). Other examples of leftover products are stale bread, sodden cake, sour milk, dried out or slimy cheese, and fermented fruit or vegetable preserves (*ibid.*). Similarly to the 1950s and 1960s considerable space in various cookbooks from the 1980s is devoted to offal dishes. Łukasiak, for example, provides numerous traditional Polish recipes based on offal, including a famous Polish black soup called *Czernina*, made from blood, usually of a goose, a duck or a rabbit (1986, p. 71–2); and *Kaszanka* or *Kiszka* (black pudding), traditionally made with buckwheat, blood and offal, with slight regional variations (p. 109). The thriving interest in offal is further illustrated by the publication *Dishes from Offal* (*Potrawy z podrobów*) by Tadeusz Góra and Tadeusz Kwasiński from 1987, entirely devoted to fifth quarter dishes. As has been illustrated, throughout this period culinary guides were preoccupied mainly with advice on how to efficiently use the limited resources available, minimise waste by using leftovers and find alternative foodstuffs when certain ingredients could not be purchased.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that it is only possible to discuss a representative sample of the numerous culinary books and guidebooks from the period of the People's Republic of Poland, the research indicates that Burrell's assertion, that: 'food consumption can also be a deeply political experience' (2003, p. 189) is correct. It is especially apparent in the context of the various regimes, when the

authorities attempted to exercise power over even the most mundane aspects of citizen's life. Although cookbooks cannot be treated as reliable guides to culinary realities (Albala 2012, p. 229), their value as historical sources cannot be underestimated since they provide a valuable insight into social, cultural, economic and political characteristics of a particular period. The publications from the early years of the PRL are especially noteworthy with respect to their strong reinforcement of socialist ideology. At that time food consumption was regarded as a social duty, frugality was seen as a virtue of a good housewife, and socialism was presented as a system which improved living conditions of all citizens. The discourse was highly scientific and considerable effort was devoted to educating housewives about rational consumption and the use of modern kitchen equipment. In the 1970s due to the economic shift based on foreign borrowing significant changes can be observed in the content of culinary publications, specifically the preoccupation with novel dishes of foreign origin. As many products were imported during that period, cookbooks featured sophisticated recipes based on more exotic ingredients, for example previously desired, yet unavailable citrus fruits. The period of Gierek's prosperity did not last long. The economic crisis of the 1980s influenced the content of cookery books. As the communist authorities were losing their political strength, the harsh conditions which pertained in the country were more openly expressed in the culinary publications. Above all, their aim was to provide women with sufficient advice on how to manage with limited resources in those unfavourable economic conditions. While socialist ideology was more apparent in the earlier publications, what has been illustrated in this discussion is how the content of culinary publications was influenced throughout by the economic conditions and the dominant political ideologies at work throughout the whole period of the PRL.

About the author

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Notes

1. The National Library of Poland is in the possession of over 50 cookbooks published during the researched period. The researcher compiled a list of over 150 cookbooks and culinary guidebooks published in the researched period. Numerous editions of most of the publications were issued. It needs to be emphasized that this list is by no means comprehensive.

2. All quotations are translated by the author of the article unless stated otherwise.

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