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Cepelia's Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications (1951–1953). Establishment, activity profile, and achievements

Abstract: The article covers the history, program assumptions, and achievements of the Cepelia's Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications (Biuro Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych, Polish abbreviation BWAiL), operating within the Headquarters of the Folk and Artistic Industry, Cepelia (abbreviation of the Polish name: Centrala Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego). The Bureau, established in 1951, during the first years of Cepelia's intensive expansion of its structures, managed to mark its presence on the Polish publishing map within less than three years of activity. For the following years, it set the direction of activities and the graphic level of publications related to the activities of Cepelia and its subordinate cooperatives. Only a few years' worth of episodes in Cepelia's publishing activity confirm the company's serious ambitions, which explored not only native folklore but also areas beyond folklore and its interpretations in its mission to shape societal taste, even during the difficult time of socialist realism. The history of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publishing was compiled based on archival research (IS PAN and AAN).

Keywords: Cepelia – Biuro Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych – Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications – socialist realism – propaganda of the People's Republic of Poland

Słowa kluczowe: Cepelia – Biuro Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych – socrealizm – propaganda PRL

Cepelia, the abbreviated name for the cooperative-state Headquarters of the Folk and Artistic Industry, was established in 1949, during a period of dynamic changes in the sphere of state cultural policy. The latter was expressed through the introduction of the doctrine of socialist realism, which defined the tasks and duties of art and the artist within the new system.¹ From the very beginning, the newly established institution was expected to perform a propaganda function. Włodzimierz Sokorski's membership in the enterprise's council, the leading ideologue of socialist realism, an art form national in its style and socialist in its content, was probably relevant in this context. Although this trend was relatively short (1949–1955), the awareness of the role of propaganda, which included, in addition to organizing mass events, also editing, was present throughout the institution's life. As late as 1975, in the anniversary publication *Piękno użyteczne. Ćwierćwiecze Cepelii* [*Useful Beauty. The quarter-century of Cepelia*] emphasized that "Propaganda ma dla Cepelii ogromne znaczenie. Jest to nerw ożywiający cały jej organizm"² [Propaganda is of great importance to Cepelia. It is the nerve that animates its entire organism]. Such an understanding of the tasks faced by Cepelia, along with its consistent and effective promotional activities, contributed to strengthening the stereotype of Poland as a country with still vibrant folklore and the belief, still rooted in Romanticism, in the special role of folk culture in the nation's life.

The state of research

Interest in the history and achievements of Cepelia, as well as scholarly reflection on them, emerged with Piotr Korduba's 2013 book, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*³, which analyzes the structure and achievements of this state monopoly, which, overseeing all manifestations of folk production, created, in a sense, a new value – a kind of enterprise with a great cultural, but also political and economic outreach.

However, despite the noticeable growth of interest in Cepelia among researchers in various fields, the institution's editorial activities have not yet become the subject of broader scientific reflection. To date, the only book dealing with the subject of Cepelia's publications (mainly posters) is the one published in 2024 by the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warszawa,

1 W. Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm. Sztuka polska w latach 1950–1954*, Kraków 1991.

2 *Piękno użyteczne. Ćwierćwiecze Cepelii*, [ed. by] J. Oryńczyna, Warszawa 1975.

3 P. Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warszawa 2013.

entitled “Plakat z kręgu Cepelii w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN.”⁴ A small part of this publication contains information on the early editorial activity of Cepelia, including the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publishing,⁵ which is the subject of this article.

Researching Cepelia's early publishing activity was made possible thanks to archival materials held in the collections of the Archives of Modern Records in Warszawa and the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warszawa. Presentation of the BWAiL's activities would not be possible without access to private collections containing Cepelia's publications (postcards, ephemera, charts, etc.).⁶

The establishment and profile of Cepelia's Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications

Within the complex structure of Cepelia's activities, publishing played a crucial role from the very beginning, which enabled the mission of aesthetically educating the public through perfectly elaborated graphic design. Accordingly, as early as May 1951, the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications (BWAiL) was established under the auspices of the company. According to documents preserved in the archival legacy of the institution,⁷ the Cepelia's Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications was established by an order of the President of the Central Office for Craftwork dated May 28, 1951,⁸ as the so-called Cepelia's unit, operating based on internal economic settlement. The Office was supervised by the Minister of Small Industry and Crafts through Cepelia. Detailed plans (thematic, industrial, and a supply and cost plan) were agreed with the Ministry of Culture and Art with the participation of the Bureau's staff (seven people at the time), and then submitted to the Cepelia's General Board and further sent to the Ministry of Small Industry and Crafts. On May 30, 1952, the plan was approved.⁹ By that time, the editorial team was formally

4 A.A. Szablowska, A. Wiszniewska, *Plakat z kręgu Cepelii w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, Warszawa 2024.

5 Ibid, pp. 19–23.

6 Collections of collectors wishing to remain anonymous and the author of this article.

7 Archives of Modern Records (hereafter: AAN), Bilans Zamknięcia Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych za 1952 rok, Vol. 1 and 2 (call no. 2/1629/0/1.3/3/286; 2/1629/0/1.3/3/287) (hereinafter: Bilans Zamknięcia Biura); Lustracja Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych w Warszawie w latach 1952–1953 (2/1629/0/1.2/2/125) (hereinafter: Lustracja Biura); Zbioreczy bilans zamknięcia Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych za 1951 rok (2/1629/0/1.3/3/51) (hereinafter: Zbioreczy bilans zamknięcia).

8 Mark SP2-FT5655/51 r.

9 AAN, Lustracja Biura: *Podstawy prawne Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych*, c. 109.

in the organizational stage, yet it undertook and completed several publishing initiatives. It successfully carried out tasks that included:

1. upowszechnianie arcydzieł malarstwa polskiego, rzeźby, grafiki, rzeźby, architektury i innych dziedzin sztuk plastycznych oraz dorobku sztuki ludowej,
2. popularyzacja osiągnięć artystycznych i narodowych planów gospodarczych włączonych do planów kulturowych w zakresie budownictwa socjalistycznego.¹⁰

[1. Dissemination of masterpieces of Polish painting, sculpture, graphics, sculpture, architecture and other fields of fine arts, as well as the achievements of folk art,
2. Popularization of artistic achievements and national economic plans incorporated into cultural plans for socialist construction.]

Following the approved plan, the Bureau issued reproductions (e.g., portfolios of works by Leon Wyczółkowski and Aleksander Orłowski), postcards, songbooks, handbooks, calendars, ephemera, and numerous other items. A special place within the Bureau's publishing activities was reserved for a series of volumes featuring reproductions of outstanding works by Polish painters and graphic artists active in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1952 and 1953, two portfolios of black-and-white and color reproductions of works by L. Wyczółkowski (a total of 20 boards), a portfolio of A. Orłowski (12 boards), a portfolio of *Malarstwo polskie* [Polish Painting] (parts 1 and 2, each containing ten color reproductions) and *Realizm w malarstwie polskim* [Realism in Polish Painting] (11 color reproductions). The illustrations, printed on paper described as "chalked" and pasted on A4-size boards, were placed in a cardboard folder. They were accompanied by an introduction presenting the artists' work. Carefully compiled, they were luxurious publications of high merit. The selection of 12 illustrations for A. Orłowski's portfolio of works was made by Helena Blumówna,¹¹ an esteemed art historian and curator of the National Museum in Kraków, who also authored the foreword to this publication. The series of portfolios with reproductions of Polish artists' works was indeed a showcase of Cepelia's activities in the publishing field. Besides, it was the portfolios of reproductions of paintings, alongside the postcards that sporadically appeared on the antiquarian market and were present in museum collections, that survived in the most significant numbers. The importance attached to the graphic and workshop side of the publication is evidenced by the report of the BWAiL editor on a business trip to Kraków, with information on the careless preparation

10 AAN, Plan Wydawniczy Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych C.P.L. i A. na 1953 rok (call no. 2/1629/0/1.3/3/36) (hereinafter: Plan Wydawniczy na 1953 rok): Plan opisowy działalności wydawniczej Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych na 1953 rok, p. 1.

11 Helena Blumówna had been related to Cepelia since 1950 as a cofounder of "Imago Artis" Cooperative of Work and Artistic Handcraft, which belonged to Cepelia.

of a portfolio of reproductions of L. Wyczółkowski's works, design of which "projektowanie nie było na poziomie, a to z tego powodu, że marginesy są za małe i teki za szczupłe. Wysłanie ich do dystrybucji naraża BWAiL na ostrą krytykę"¹² [was not up to standard, and this is because the margins are too small and the portfolios too slim. Disposing of them for distribution exposes BWAiL to harsh criticism].

Considering the number and variety of topics, postcards were the most prominent – inexpensive, issued in large editions (the "Polish Trees and Cities" series was issued in 640,000 copies). They were an excellent tool for the authorities' cultural offensive and for popularizing native art among the masses. The Bureau issued postcards in the "Masters of Polish Realism" series (including reproductions of works by L. Wyczółkowski, Józef Chełmoński, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Stanisław Czajkowski, among others), which were intended to acquaint the public with the achievements of the "classics" of Polish painting of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Also part of this series were reproductions of paintings awarded at the All-Polish Art Exhibitions (Ogólnopolskie Wystawy Plastyki, OWP), which provided an overview of current Polish art maintained in the "official" socialist realist style¹³. Among these "pierzyski socjalistycznego realizmu w malarstwie"¹⁴ [primroses of socialist realism in painting] published by the Office was Waław Palessa's work, *Fabryka samochodów osobowych na Żeraniu*, which was awarded at the 1st OWP in 1950.

Photo postcards were also published, featuring views of Polish cities by Jan Bułhak, as well as monuments of the past photographed by Tadeusz Przypkowski and Zofia Chomętowska. The "Architecture of Monuments" and "Polish Trees and Cities" series were intended to popularize "the beauty of the native land" – the most important monuments of material culture and areas of particular natural beauty, including views of the Recovered Territories.

The Bureau's publishing offer also included occasional postcards (mainly Christmas and name-day postcards), maintained in a folk style or thematically related to folk rituals (such as śmigus-dyngus [Wet Monday]). This type of postcard reached particularly high circulation – Easter postcards in 1952 were issued in 1,130,000 copies, and name-day postcards in 1,150,000 copies¹⁵. The inspiration of folklore in the Stalinist era was an attractive alternative for artists to create in the trend of socialist realism. Among the authors of this type

12 AAN, Lustracja Biura: J. Zahorowski, *Sprawozdanie z odbytej podróży do Krakowa*, c. 140.

13 The first of the annual exhibitions organized annually until 1955 was opened on March 20, 1950 at the National Museum in Warszawa, see: P. Strożek, *Polskie życie artystyczne w latach 1944–1960*, vol. 4, *Rok 1950*, Warszawa 2012, p. 45.

14 J. Bogucki, *Pospolite ruszenie*, „Odrodzenie” 1950, no. 13, p. 3.

15 AAN, Lustracja Biura, c. 132.

of graphic (a.k.a. cartoon) postcard were masters of illustration: Jan Marcin Szancer, Maria Orłowska-Gabryś, Wanda Siemaszko, Maria Hiszpańska-Neumann, Józef Wilkoń, and Krzysztof Henisz. Some of them (e.g., Henisz) got associated with Cepelia for a long time, but not as graphic designers¹⁶. For others, cooperation with Cepelia was an episode in their professional lives – they occasionally accepted orders, such as the prominent graphic designer Antoni Cetnarowski (later artistic director of the Advertising Editorial Office of the Artistic-Graphic Publishing House [Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne]), who in 1953 designed the flyer for the European Boxing Championships,¹⁷ published by Cepelia. Janusz Maria Brzeski was the author of the graphic design for the boards in the portfolio of reproductions of L. Wyczółkowski's works (1952). He was then associated with the successor of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications, which became the State Enterprise "Sztuka"¹⁸. Tadeusz Gronowski, the doyen of Polish graphic designers, author of outstanding graphic designs (posters, advertisements, packaging), joined the group of people who cooperated with the Office in 1952¹⁹. The presence of an exceptional artist undoubtedly indicates the high standing of the publishing house and its good reputation among professionals.

From spring 1952, the Bureau of Folk and Artistic Publications published a luxury periodical, "Moda i Sztuka" [Fashion and Art], primarily focused on issues related to fashion and interior design²⁰. The periodical was a type of magazine that published photographs of master design clothes and accessories made in the Clothing Laboratory, one of several specialized Offices of Cepelia. The Laboratory was liquidated at the beginning of 1952. Some of the staff (especially the editors) were transferred to the Publishing Office and there continued to work on the next issue of the quarterly. The first issue already published under the auspices of the BWAiL was the "Wiosna" [Spring] volume, which appeared with a slight delay (May 1952, not March, as assumed). The magazine was short-lived, with only six issues of the quarterly published between 1952 and 1953. The last one, "Lato 1953" [Summer 1953], which the State Enterprise "Art" had already published, had its title changed to "Moda i Dom" [Fashion

16 K. Henisz, together with Zygmunt Madejski and Bolesław Książek, began working on large-scale architectural ceramics in the late 1950s, which went down in art history as the "Eksperyment łysogórski"; see B. Kostuch, *Kolor i blask. Ceramika architektoniczna oraz mozaiki w Krakowie i w Małopolsce po 1949 roku*, Kraków 2015, pp. 61–68.

17 *Mistrzostwa Europy w boksie: Warszawa 17–24 V 1953*, Warszawa 1953.

18 For "Sztuka" in 1955, he designed, among other things, the postcard *Stary Będzin or Pejzaż śląski* commissioned by S.D.A. Stalinogród (formerly Katowice) and the Social Committee for the Beautification of the City of Katowice in Katowice.

19 A.A. Szablowska, *Tadeusz Gronowski. Sztuka plakatu i reklamy*, Warszawa 2005.

20 P. Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż*, op. cit., p. 191.

and Home]. There were also plans to publish “a socio-educational quarterly, dedicated to the issues of everyday aesthetics, in applications to the interiors of residential common rooms and others as well as to clothing”²¹.

The initiative was created in consultation with the Ministry of Culture and Art; however, it was not implemented.

Structure and staff of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications

The structure of Cepelia's Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications was typical of an editorial office, complex and with numerous staff, which soon became the subject of criticism.²² The editorial team at the time of its establishment in 1951 numbered only seven people, but soon began to expand with the addition of more collaborators (they included visual artists, graphic designers, photographers, among others). An inspection carried out from August 20 to September 20, 1952, already showed significant overstaffing. The post-inspection recommendations ordered “zmniejszenie stanu zatrudnienia pracowników etatowych i półetatowych w łącznej liczbie 17 osób, licząc w tym już te osoby, które mają wypowiedzenie”²³ [a reduction in the number of full-time and part-time employees to a total of 17 people, counting those already on notice].

Józef Śliwa was appointed director of the BWAiL on July 1, 1951, according to a confidential opinion preserved in his files:

Śliwa to pracownik o wysokich kwalifikacjach zawodowych, inteligentny, dobry organizator. Nieprzestrzega [sic!] jednak przepisów o socjalistycznej dyscyplinie pracy w stosunku do samego siebie jak i podległego personelu²⁴.

[Śliwa is a highly professionally qualified employee, intelligent, and a good organizer. However, he complies with the regulations on socialist work discipline neither to himself nor to subordinate personnel.]

According to the organizational chart, the following sections were subject to the Bureau's director: financial, procurement and sales, administrative and economic, a post of planning and statistics, and a post of employment organization and personnel affairs. Janusz Niżyński was appointed deputy editor in chief for technical affairs (he held the position since February 1, 1952, having

21 AAN, Plan Wydawniczy na 1953 rok: Plan opisowy działalności wydawniczej Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych na 1953 rok, p. 5.

22 AAN, Lustracja Biura, op. cit.

23 AAN, Lustracja Biura: Poufna notatka do działu kadr Cepelii z dnia 29 IX 1952, Lustracja Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych, p. 188.

24 Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie (Institute of Art, PAS, hereinafter: IS PAN), Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Józef Śliwa: Poufne pismo z dnia 22 VII 1955.

previously worked as editorial secretary). According to an opinion from the Ministry of Small Industry and Crafts stored in his personnel file, Niżyński was “an expert in press and publishing technology, and especially in editorial work, he proved to be a competent employee”²⁵.

Irena Markiewiczowa became the editor-in-chief. Reporting to her were, among others, the posts of production preparation and control, secretarial staff, technical editors, and seven editorial boards. These were: Editorial Board of Charts, Editorial Board of Postcards, Editorial Board of Calendars, Stock Editorial Board, Editorial Board of Fashion Journals, Editorial Board of Celebrations and Artistic Events, and Children and Youth Editorial Board²⁶. Kazimierz Ziemkiewicz, then a student of Slavic philology at the University of Warsaw, became the editorial secretary²⁷.

Besides, the Bureau employed typists, secretaries, drivers, couriers, and a cleaner. Analysis of the surviving personnel files of Cepelia’s employees, stored in the archives of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, allows for a rudimentary reconstruction of the team of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications.²⁸ Thus, for example, the editor of the department and in charge of the editorial office of the “Moda i Sztuka” journal was Władysława Baranowska-Szwajcerowa, a journalist specializing in cultural issues²⁹, who cooperated with the Polish Radio, “Express Wieczorny” daily, “Repatriant” weekly (at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and “Życie Śpiewacze” monthly. On behalf of the Department of Culture and the Arts of the Municipal Board, she gave lectures in workers’ settlements on the topic “Aesthetics of Everyday Life.” Maria Jackowska, formerly employed in the editorial offices of “Życie Warszawy” and “Sztandar Młodych” dailies, became the secretary of the journal’s editorial board. The Editor of Postcards was J. Zahorowski³⁰.

The Cepelia Publishing Office was staffed by individuals connected to the secret services of the People’s Republic of Poland, who denounced fellow writers. Between 1951 and 1953, Andrzej Kuśniewicz, a writer and an agent of the Security Office who had denounced fellow writers, including Jerzy

25 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Janusz Niżyński: Pismo z dnia 22 X 1951.

26 AAN, Lustracja Biura, c. 118.

27 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Kazimierz Ziemkiewicz: Życiorys.

28 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe [in preparation]. The files transferred by the liquidator of Cepelia to the collection of IS PAN include only a small part of the employees’ personal documents (to be destroyed) and cover the 1950s and 1960s.

29 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Władysława Baranowska-Szwajcerowa: Curriculum Vitae (19 XII 1949).

30 AAN, Lustracja Biura, c. 140. First name unknown, surname appears in *Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu służbowego do Krakowa w dniach 15–18 VII 1952 r.*

Andrzejewski, was employed at BWAiL as an editor. Recruited into the service just after the end of the war, during his work at the Cepelia Publishing Bureau, he established valuable contacts within the art community, which would prove invaluable for his further activities as an informer³¹.

Zofia Obretenny, Paweł Jasienica's second wife and a secret collaborator of the secret police (alias Max), also cooperated with the Public Security Office and was employed in the Publishing Bureau as a technical editor³². Earlier, between 1949 and 1951, Obretenny worked as a political censor at the Main Office for Press Control, while in her curriculum vitae, preserved in Cepelia's files, she declared that she was working on a crime novel (never completed). Although Obretenny was recruited as an informant after she had already left her job at Cepelia, it is worth remembering the acquaintance she made at the time with Kuśniewicz, who verified her reports when she denounced Jasienica.

The personal files of the Bureau's employees also make it possible to learn the names of clerks, craftsmen, and manual workers, i.e., people hitherto omitted from the official narrative on the history of Cepelia and other institutions. These are: Zofia Belczak (courier), Michał Bielak (bookkeeper), Irena Bliżyńska (proofreader), Hanna Juracz (personnel inspector, responsible for "youth and women's issues"), Anna Łempicka (technical and illustration editor), Wojciech Madejski (insurance, transportation and supply clerk of the Administration and Economic Section), Tadeusz Puget (bookbinder), Wojciech Rakowski (courier).

Decline and legacy of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications

The Bureau conducted publishing activities aimed at supporting the dissemination of art and knowledge of Polish culture and the country. Its offerings were aimed at a wide range of audiences, including daycare centers, schools, individual readers, offices, stores, and even light industry (mainly fabric and ready-made garment factories), to which the "Moda i Styl" periodical was directed. In the Bureau's archival documents, the audience was defined very broadly as state-owned, cooperative entities, and CPLiA cooperatives³³.

The Bureau intended to shape the tastes of the mass audience, as well as to respond to the needs of state institutions. In this context, it is significant that the Bureau was established shortly after the creation of Centralna Poradnia

31 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Andrzej Kuśniewicz. Information in the file that from 1953 he worked in the publishing house "Sztuka" – successor of BWAiL Cepelia.

32 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Zofia Obretenny. Z. Obretenny worked at Cepelia from June 1 to December 9, 1952, see: Świadection pracy, wydane dn. 29 VI 1959.

33 AAN, Bilans zamknięcia za rok 1952 (call no. 2/1629/0/1.3/3/286), p. 1.

Świetlicowa i Wzorcownia Artystyczna [Central Counseling for Day Care Instructors and Artistic Showroom] at the then Department of Amateur Artistic Movement of the Ministry of Culture and Art (1950). One can hardly miss that Cepelia's publishing offer (mainly postcards and portfolios of carefully selected reproductions of works realism's representatives in ancient and contemporary Polish painting, such as the paintings exhibited at the OWP) worked perfectly well as auxiliary materials for equipping day care services, e.g. with graphics and reproductions that conformed to the doctrine of socialist realism and which, when framed, decorated the walls. The Bureau also offered relevant guide literature, providing inspiration for spending time usefully (e.g., handicraft and DIY guides³⁴).

The stylistics of BWAiL's publications can be described as "pre-thaw" (in a political sense), attempting to meet the requirements of the doctrine of socialist realism, which is art that is realistic in form and socialist in content. A focus accompanied attempts to meet the challenges of ideology on the high artistic and substantive quality of publications. A wide range of contributors ensured reliable captioning, careful selection of illustrations, and high-quality printing.

An essential feature of the graphics produced at BWAiL was the excellent graphic design, characterized by a "culture" of typesetting, carefully selected typefaces, vignettes, and discrete graphic elements. In the preserved residual archives, there is information testifying to a special, "missionary" approach to education through publications of high visual culture. Examples included "kalendarze o kilku typach, wykonane bardzo starannie, [które] przyczyniły się do podniesienia tego rodzaju produkcji"³⁵ [calendars of several types, made very carefully, [which] contributed to the elevation of this type of production].

The Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications operated for less than three years. In 1953, as part of the reorganization of Cepelia, it was merged with the publishing house "Sztuka", whose specialty was publications in the field of applied art (including those related to the activities of the Institute of Industrial Design).³⁶ "Sztuka" continued the work started by Cepelia, for example, by publishing in 1954 the third volume of reproductions of works by L. Wyczółkowski. In May 1957, following the merger of the "Sztuka" publishing house with the "Architektura i Budownictwo" publishing house, the Arkady Publishing House was established, which remains in existence to this day. The staff employed at BWAiL were dismissed or reassigned to other departments.

34 E.g., H. Dutkiewicz, *Dzielnictwo ręczne*, Warszawa 1953.

35 AAN, Plan Wydawniczy na 1953 rok: Plan opisowy działalności wydawniczej Biura Wydawnictw Artystycznych i Ludowych na 1953 rok, p. 1.

36 E.g., A. Wojciechowski, *Wzornictwo meblarskie*, Warszawa 1954.

This happened, among others, to the director of the Bureau, J. Śliwa, who went to work in the Bureau of Studies and Projects of the Toy Industry (also in a managerial position)³⁷. Some of them (this applies primarily to journalists, including A. Kuśniewicz) continued to work at the “Sztuka” publishing house. In this command manner, characteristic of a socialist economy, the growth of Cepelia and its attempts to create a self-sustaining, independent institution were curtailed. However, Cepelia did not abandon its publishing ambitions or the goal of producing high-quality, artistic, and substantive publications related to its activities.

The liquidation of the Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publishing did not inhibit Cepelia's editorial activities. Prominent specialists (especially designers and graphic artists) recruited to work there continued to work with Cepelia long after the Bureau's activities were extinguished. The institution began cooperation with Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne (WAG) publishing house, and after 1975 with the Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza (KAW)³⁸. Some of the prints (posters, folders, invitations) were published in graphic cooperatives (e.g., “Intrografia” in Warszawa, “Starodruk” in Kraków)³⁹. However, they always resulted in works of the highest artistic level.

The jubilee study *Piękno użyteczne. Ćwierćwiecze Cepelii*, published in 1975 on the occasion of the company's 25th anniversary, emphasized that:

Cepelia sama prowadzi szeroką akcję wydawniczą. Opracowania graficzne publikacji powierza się wybitnym plastynom, jak: Jan Młodożeniec, Jan Mroszczak, Andrzej Zbrozek, Karol Śliwka, Waldemar Świerzy, Jan Urbański, Stanisław Zamecznik i inni. Znane są barwne, fascynujące plakaty Cepelii, z których niejeden został wyróżniony w konkursach. [...] Kolorowe, efektowne foldery i katalogi są bogatą dokumentacją pracy Cepelii. Foldery te wypełniają dotkliwą lukę w polskich ilustrowanych wydawnictwach. Wielojęzyczne, efektowne i zrozumiałe, stały się nieodzowne dla na wielu międzynarodowych spotkaniach naukowców, zwłaszcza etnografów, muzeologów, plastyków oraz spółdzielców, na festiwalach, wystawach, targach krajowych i zagranicznych⁴⁰.

[Cepelia itself conducts an extensive publishing campaign. The graphic design of the publications is entrusted to outstanding artists, such as Jan Młodożeniec, Jan Mroszczak, Andrzej

37 IS PAN, Archiwum Cepelii – akta osobowe Józef Śliwa.

38 In 1975, WAG was incorporated into the structures of the Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza.

39 A.A. Szablowska, A. Wiszniewska, *Plakat z kręgu Cepelii w zbiorach Instytutu Sztuki PAN*, op. cit.

40 *Piękno użyteczne. Ćwierćwiecze Cepelii*, op. cit., p. 93.

Zbrożek, Karol Śliwka, Waldemar Świerzy, Jan Urbański, Stanisław Zamecznik, and others. Cepelia's colorful and fascinating posters are well-known, with many having been awarded in competitions. [...] Colorful, striking folders and catalogs are a rich documentation of Cepelia's work. These folders fill an acute gap in Polish illustrated publications. Multilingual, striking and comprehensible, they have become indispensable for many international meetings of scholars, especially ethnographers, museologists, visual artists, and cooperatives, at festivals, exhibitions, domestic and foreign fairs].

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Translated by Małgorzata Kisilowska-Szurmińska

List of illustrations

Leon Wyczółkowski, “*Dąb*”, postcard, published
by the Cepelia Bureau of Artistic and Folk Publications, 1952



Zofia Obretenny, *Curriculum vitae*, in: Akta osobowe,
Archiwum Cepelii, Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warszawa

Życiorys

Urodziłam się 15 maja 1924 r. w Warszawie, z ojca
Antoniego Zarowskiego i matki Zofii z d. Kufarskiej.
Ojciec inżynier parostacyjny, od 34 roku na emeryturze.
Po ukończeniu szkoły powszechnej nastąpiłam do gimnazjum
im. Królowej Jadwigi. W pierwszym roku okupacji
zostałam zmaturowaną matką maturoz - w 1943 r. zostałam
na kompleciech dwujęzycznych ukończonych po
wojnie. W czasie okupacji ukończyłam (43 r. i 44 r.)
na wykłady S. G. H. i polonistykę, pracując jednocześnie
w warsztacie tkackim i w fabryce pończotniczej
„Samotnia” ul. Wołoska 69. Po powstaniu Warszawskim
zostałam wywieziona do obozu pracy na Oświęcimie
w kierunku kwateron. W 1945 r. wyjechałam z obozu z
Jenego Obretennego - męża i zamieszkałam wraz
z nim w Sopocie.

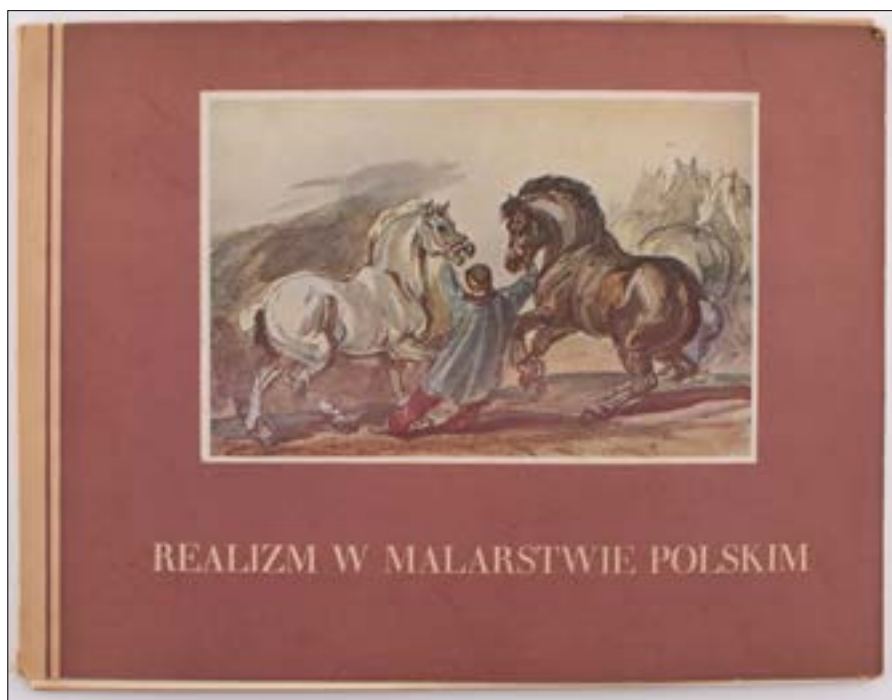
W kwietniu 1946 r. rozwiódłam się z mężem i wraz
z synem (urod. w 1947 r.) przenieśliśmy się do
Warszawy. Od 1. II. 1949 r. do 1. X. 49 r. pracowałam w
Komitecie Edukacyjno-Wychowawczym przy Dziel. Rady al.
obroń jako kierownik Wydziału Szkolenia i Wychowania.
Od 15.3.49 r. do 2. II. 51 r. pracowałam w Głównym
Urzędzie Kontroli Prasy jako kierownik pol. Jednostki
kierującą aplikantów dziennikarskich w redakcji
„Ekspresu Wrocłowskiego”. Od 2.49 r. do XII. 50 r. byłam
kandydatką do P.Z.P.R. - nie zostałam przyjęta.
W związku z powrotem nie wyłączenia się aktywności
Od 18. II. 51 r. do 31. V. 52 r. pracowałam w Dyrekcji Techn.
miejscowej Państwowych Wydziałów Technicznych
ul. Chałubińskiego 4.

Od 1. VI. 52 r. pracuję jako red. techn. w Biurze Inżyn.
Art. i Ludowych C.P.R. i A. jednocześnie przez
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Zofia Obretenny

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