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DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTION OF MAPS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF PRESS INFORMATION IN POLAND

Abstract: In view of changing political and economical situation in Poland during the last 150 years, the role and development of press maps in transmission the information is being addressed. Maps published in the newspapers, to a large extent reflected the main topics addressed by the press as well as features of transmission policy of the time. The number of maps published substantially increased during the times of military conflicts and political changes. The press maps, together with the maps addressing criminal and lately common terrorist's activities, played the most important role among all published maps. Besides providing the information and allowing understanding the background of the events, in some cases the press maps played educational role and in other cases, through the mass media they became accessible to the general public. The early 1990s brought a gradual increase in number of maps published. The political changes in Poland after 1989 resulting in, among others, the introduction of market economy, suppression of censorship and state mass media monopoly, did have significant impact on the development of Polish press and indirectly also on journalistic cartography. Furthermore the use of computers revolutionized the processes of preparing maps.

Key words: history of press cartography, function of press map, censorship, infographic.

The beginning of the development of press cartography dates back to the time when Poland did not have its own state. Poland disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795, after having been partitioned by the Austrian Empire, the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. Polish territories were subordinated to the political, legal and economic systems of the three countries. Polish press did not have such conditions to develop as the press in Western European countries or the USA. Only after the revolution of 1848 ("The Springtide of Nations") a rapid development of Polish press was possible, thanks to partial abandoning of censorship and liberalization of press law. In Galicia (Austrian partition) and Wielkopolska (Prussian partition) it took place towards the end of the 19th century, and in the Russian partition – after 1908. At the time the press was only becoming a medium of mass communication. Besides its informative and opinion-shaping function it also popularized culture, mainly literature, and concentrated on the defense of Polish nationality, effectively counteracting the policy of denationalization and discrimination of Polish population.

At the break of the 19th and 20th century the graphic design of dailies changed and became more attractive, mainly due to the introduction of illustrations, including maps.

First maps in Polish newspapers started to appear in the second half of the 19th century, but very infrequently – one, two or four maps a year. Sometimes they had not been published for several years. Apart from the Italian – Abyssynian war of 1896 and Boer war in South Africa in 1899 – 1900 (Fig. 1), the topics of maps included plans of new buildings and city areas, national and international exhibition sites and schemes of transport connections. There also appeared some, although schematic, maps of natural disasters (the flood of 1892–1893 in Poland).

In the 20th century the number of maps increased, especially at the time of military conflicts, e.g. during the war in the Far East (1900, 1904–1905), in the Balkans (1908–1913). They were mostly chorographic maps, sometimes with detailed contents, including relief. They supplemented the descriptions of warfare or “War Reports” and “Telegraph News”. Maps showing army positions were less frequent.

A rapid growth in the number of maps in daily newspapers came with the beginning of the World War I. They illustrated news from the war theatre. Publicly awaited news and enormous interest in press as the main source of information multiplied the circulation and number of daily editions of many newspapers. At the beginning of the war most dailies published several tens of maps a year; towards the end their number usually went down.

Maps, which proved essential in presenting information about the current situation on the frontiers came from different sources. Usually they were chorographic maps drawn for a particular purpose. There also appeared maps, which presented specific war operations. Newspapers, which could not afford to prepare or buy proper maps usually printed primitive sketches.

The largest dailies published full page maps of war theatres and suggested that they were cut out or even glued onto cardboard and used to follow the developments on the fronts. Such maps were published, also in the period between the wars, mainly for advertising. They also acted as a means of education, because availability of inexpensive atlases and maps was still limited at that time.

In the first two decades of the 20th century the press became the main medium of mass communication. Its significance for popularization of culture in the areas inhabited by Polish population is undeniable. Its influence was wider than the number of sold copies would suggest. It is estimated that in the cities every copy was read by several people and in the country every copy had up to several tens of readers (Myśliński, 1988). Readers of dailies were also readers of press maps; at the time that group was bigger than the number of users of atlases and maps. Therefore the role of press maps in information and education was extensive. By showing the locations of events press maps not only informed but also widened geographic horizons. For many readers that could have been the first contact with any, or Polish

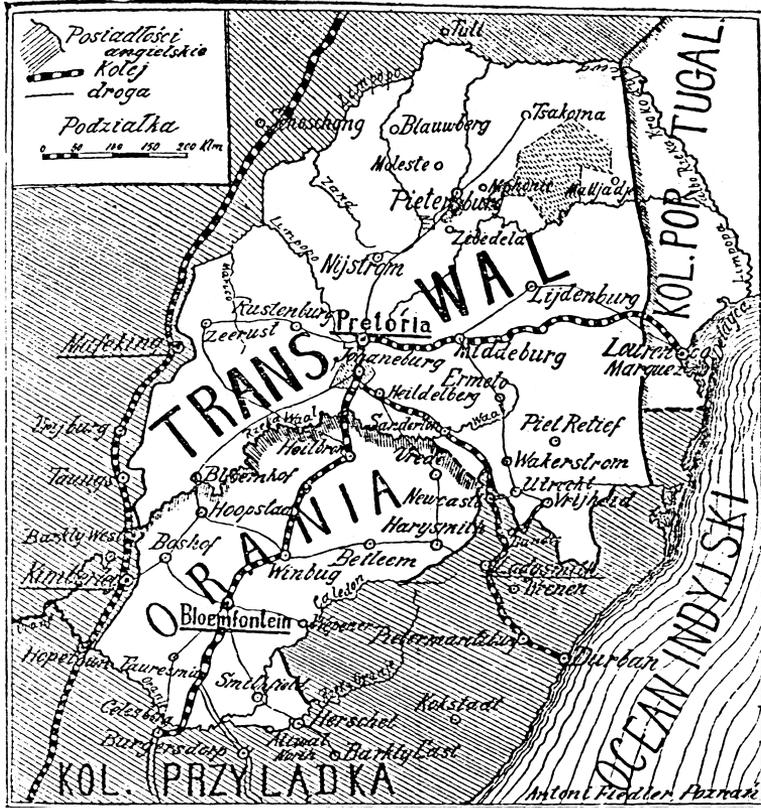


Fig. 1. An example of a map showing a war zone in South Africa (*Kurier Poznański*, 12.11.1899, *Kurier Lwowski*, 12.11.1899).

map. Although press maps of the time were sometimes primitive and difficult to read, and they were rare (except during wars) their role in communication of information can not be overestimated.

New conditions were established for the development of press and press cartography when in 1918 Poland regained its independence after over a century of subordination. Difficult beginnings of the Polish state effected from two major reasons. First was the extent of damages after the World War I. Secondly, the state had to unify the areas of three former partitions which had been at different stages of social, economic and cultural development. These factors also influenced the development of press. Additionally, press had to struggle with illiteracy, poor general education, national diversification, poverty of certain social groups, technical conditions and division of printing industry and conditions of press distribution.

Between the wars the development and number of press maps was closely related to the following periods: reconstruction after regaining independence,



Fig. 2. An example of a map presenting the delimitation of borders which presented by Polish delegations at the International Peace Conference in Paris (*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 16.03.1919).

development, stagnation and economic breakdown, as well as changing political situation.

In the period between the world wars the development of press was closely linked to the general phases of development, stagnation and breakdown of economy, as well as political situation.

After the Treaty of Versailles some dailies became engaged in the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, and later fighting on Polish territories and the problem of delimitation of national borders. Maps were integral parts of many articles (Fig. 2). Their role was educational – they helped to establish the feeling of national unity. Maps which accompanied articles on various regions of Poland and their landscape, cultural heritage and tourist attractions also played an important role – they promoted tourism in those regions. A sudden rise in the number of maps published in newspapers can be observed



Fig. 3. A typical press map of the period between the World Wars, entitled “Atlantic Ocean conquered again” (*IKC*, 13.10.1930).

in the second half of the thirties. It was caused not only by the improved economy of the country, dynamic development of publishing houses and growing competition on the market. There is a visible correlation between the number of maps and international events, mainly international conflicts, both political and military (wars in the Far East, the Balkans, Morocco, Abyssinia, Spain). The biggest newspapers devoted 25–30% of their maps to those events; smaller dailies even over 60%. The largest dailies published full page chorographic maps of warfare area and suggested that they could be cut out or even glued onto cardboard and used to follow the developments on the fronts. Maps were a very attractive illustration of frontline correspondence because photographs were still scarce at the time. Commentaries were illustrated with simplified chorographic maps which located the event, outlined its “geographic background”, or showed situation on a particular front, conflict areas and results of peace negotiations. Maps of expedition routes, trips, rallies and flights represented a significant share of almost 13%. They were published systematically throughout the whole period between World Wars (Fig. 3).

With the development of Polish economy there appeared more communication maps showing communication routes and junctions, projected air routes, localization of new canals, bridges, border crossing points etc. A distinctive group consisted of population maps, which showed distribution of national groups, ethnic groups, level of life, diseases rate, spread of epidemics. Maps of ethnic groups often appeared at the times of ethnic unrest or

plebiscites, e.g. during the plebiscite in Upper Silesia. They often had propagandistic character. Propagandistic maps in Polish press were specific and less numerous than in the presses of neighboring countries – Germany and Soviet Russia. One of the reasons for that was the Polish – German agreement of 1934 about the protection of the good name of the Reich’s Chancellor and Führer, which obliged the press to censor published information and articles. In Polish press, especially pro-government, the agreement was respected, contrary to German press. Most of them were reprinted from the newspapers of totalitarian states, mainly Germany and Italy, with attached explanation, commentary, sometimes also a correct interpretation of the problem in the form of a new map. Violation of the agreement by the Germans brought on a reaction on the Polish side; starting from 1938 propaganda materials began to appear more often (Fig. 4).

During the second World War newspapers were liquidated by occupying German and Soviet forces. German occupants soon founded a new press system of 8 dailies (so-called “prasa gadzinowa” – “reptile press”). Maps which were abundantly published in them were an element of German propaganda. Also Soviet authority founded several magazines in the areas under their occupation (Lvov, Vilnius), but few maps appeared in them. Occupants’ publications were offset by the titles of Polish resistance. The largest number of Polish underground press was published by groups linked to the Polish government in exile based in London.

After WW II Polish press cartography could develop spontaneously and multidirectionally only for a short period of time. During that time it followed the example of pre-war press. Communist authorities intended to subordinate the press completely – they finally achieved that goal after the falsified elections of 1947. For the next decades the press was controlled

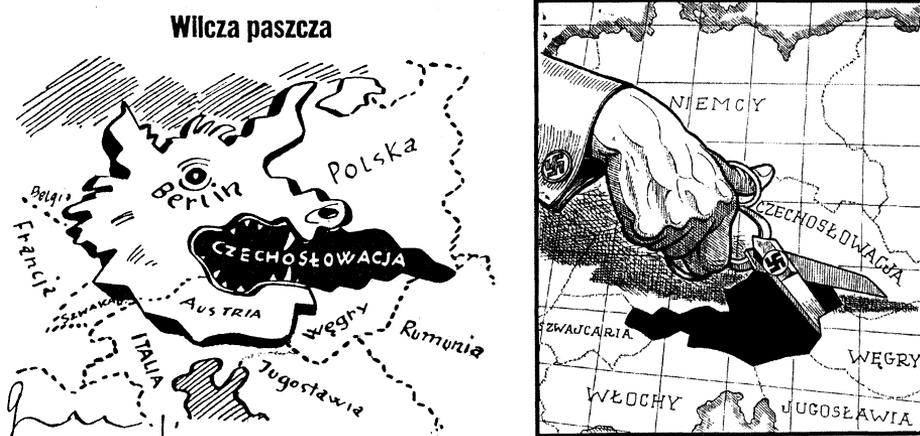


Fig. 4. A political caricature entitled “Wolf’s jaws” (*Kurier Poznański*, 12.11.1938) and “Political cut out” (*Kurier Poznański*, 22.05.1938).

practically by a one party – Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Press illustrations (photographs, maps, diagrams, also for propaganda use) were initially (in the forties) provided by two agencies. From 1951, after a further reorganization there remained only one – Central Agency of Photography (CAF). Newspaper publishers, especially of national papers, often had their own artists, who drew maps and other illustrations.

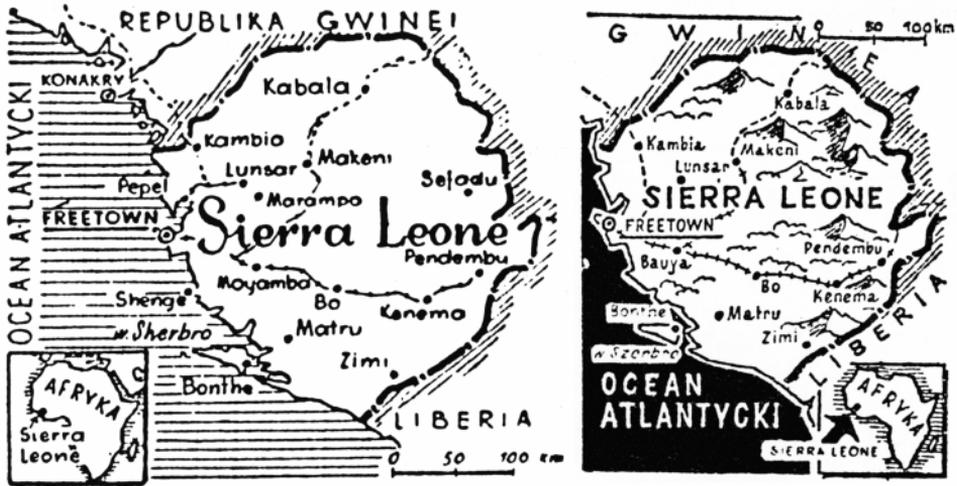
Party and state authorities not only controlled the flow of information but also influenced its character. Issued instructions for the press (so-called "zapisy") determined the acceptable interpretation and "silent areas" – forbidden topics, problems and facts, ban on publication of certain authors, or even mentioning their name. From the late forties on, information was limited and selected; this applied not only to international information (due to "Cold War"), but also domestic information, e.g. on industry, and later also on environmental degradation or wages and prices, which was of most interest to the readers in the late seventies.

From the beginning of the fifties the press had another priority – to strengthen links with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. That task was accomplished with the use of propaganda maps which presented economic and scientific achievements, of The Soviet Union in particular, and later also of the whole RWPG (Council of Mutual Economic Aid) bloc.

Maps published in central dailies to a large extent reflected the topics of publications as well as features of informational policy and propaganda of the time. They were mainly reference maps presenting international affairs. Their number grew during the times of political changes (e.g. decolonization of Africa) military conflicts (e.g. in Korea, China, Indochina, Middle East, Latin America) and during the periods when the attention of society was to be diverted from domestic and local affairs (e.g. in the seventies and eighties).

Especially in the seventies, when for the sake of ideology the censorship imposed a ban on certain domestic issues. Most papers presented mainly foreign affairs. About 70% of all the maps published in the seventies presented foreign events; half of them concern conflicts and wars. Most of them were reference and location maps of countries presented in a particular article or commentary. Some maps also showed the locations of disasters (catastrophies, cataclysms), large investment projects, especially with the participation of socialist countries.

Percentage of maps dealing with domestic and local (the place of publication) issues was significantly lower than those on international affairs; it also varied in different periods. It was relatively high in the first post-war decade, because of the publication of many plans and town-planer concepts of reconstruction of ruined cities, especially the capital. Plans of new investments in industry and agriculture were also common at that time. The number of maps and plans of new investments increased again in the seventies, during the time of economic prosperity and the later "propaganda of success". Most of those maps were meant to publicize economic successes and new investments; they were mainly chorographic maps. The number of



Trybuna Ludu 27.04.1961

Trybuna Ludu 12.09.1974



Gazeta Wyborcza 19.07.1999



11.05.2000

Fig. 5. Examples of various graphic styles of journalistic maps from the sixties, seventies and nineties of 20th century and from the beginning of 21st century.

communication maps also went up; they mainly informed about changes in traffic organization on holidays and during national celebrations (celebrity visits) as well as because of new investments. In order to “strengthen people’s faith in the Party and Authorities” newspapers organized picnics, which were preceded by the publication of plans and traffic schemes.

The decline of economy in the late seventies brought on the general strike of 1980, the rise of Solidarity and the end of Party’s monopole in information policy. After the Martial Law had been introduced on 13th December 1981, all dailies except *Trybuna Ludu* and *Żołnierz Wolności* were closed. After the suspension of the Martial Law the press continued to write more

about foreign than domestic affairs, with the percentage of reference and locator maps reaching 80% in some years.

The political changes in Poland after 1989, which resulted in the introduction of market economy, suppression of censorship and the end of the state monopoly in mass media, also had significant impact on the development of Polish press and, indirectly, on press cartography.

In the early nineties digital technology was introduced to the newspapers' graphic departments. Computers not only revolutionized the processes of preparation, typesetting and printing, but also significantly shortened the time necessary to prepare a map. This tool enabled people with no cartographic training to prepare maps on high graphic level.

The early nineties brought a gradual increase in the number of published maps, especially in national newspapers after 1993. Regional and local newspapers increased the number of maps in the late nineties.

Increase in the number of maps was a result of newspapers' wider topic range, larger volume and the introduction of new departments and sections, as well as improved editorial skills. These changes were brought on by growing competition and a struggle for readers and advertising funds. Mainly because of the expectations of advertisers today's dailies are printed in color; published maps only profited from it.

Growing competition forced all newspapers, lately also national, to introduce local sections. They usually occupy a few columns (several pages), with extended information range, which is reflected in the maps published.

Most papers introduced a several pages' local section, and widened its scope, which resulted in more maps. Map preparation gradually moved to editorial offices.

At present the maps on local, regional and national affairs are usually prepared by the editors, while those on international affairs are taken from large global infographic agencies. Smaller newspapers prepare mainly maps on local issues, the rest is bought from PAP (Polish Press Agency) or other infographic agencies.

The range of topics illustrated with maps became wide; from typically administrative (new administrative divisions, ranges of commercial activities) through social (election results, levels of life, prices, income, health service, education, crime, culture, public safety, leisure, tourism), numerous communication maps (changes in public transportation, traffic obstacles, traffic jams, construction of new communication routes, underground, circular roads, parking sites), economic, environmental or devoted to recycling and waste management.

Contemporary maps published in the press or other media can and should also have an educational function. In newspapers this is best realized by complex graphic illustrations (with a map being an integral part) explaining the origin or development of a particular event, cataclysm or phenomenon (Fig. 6). Their weakness is sometimes odd classification and terminology, different from Polish standard used in school handbooks. In Polish press one

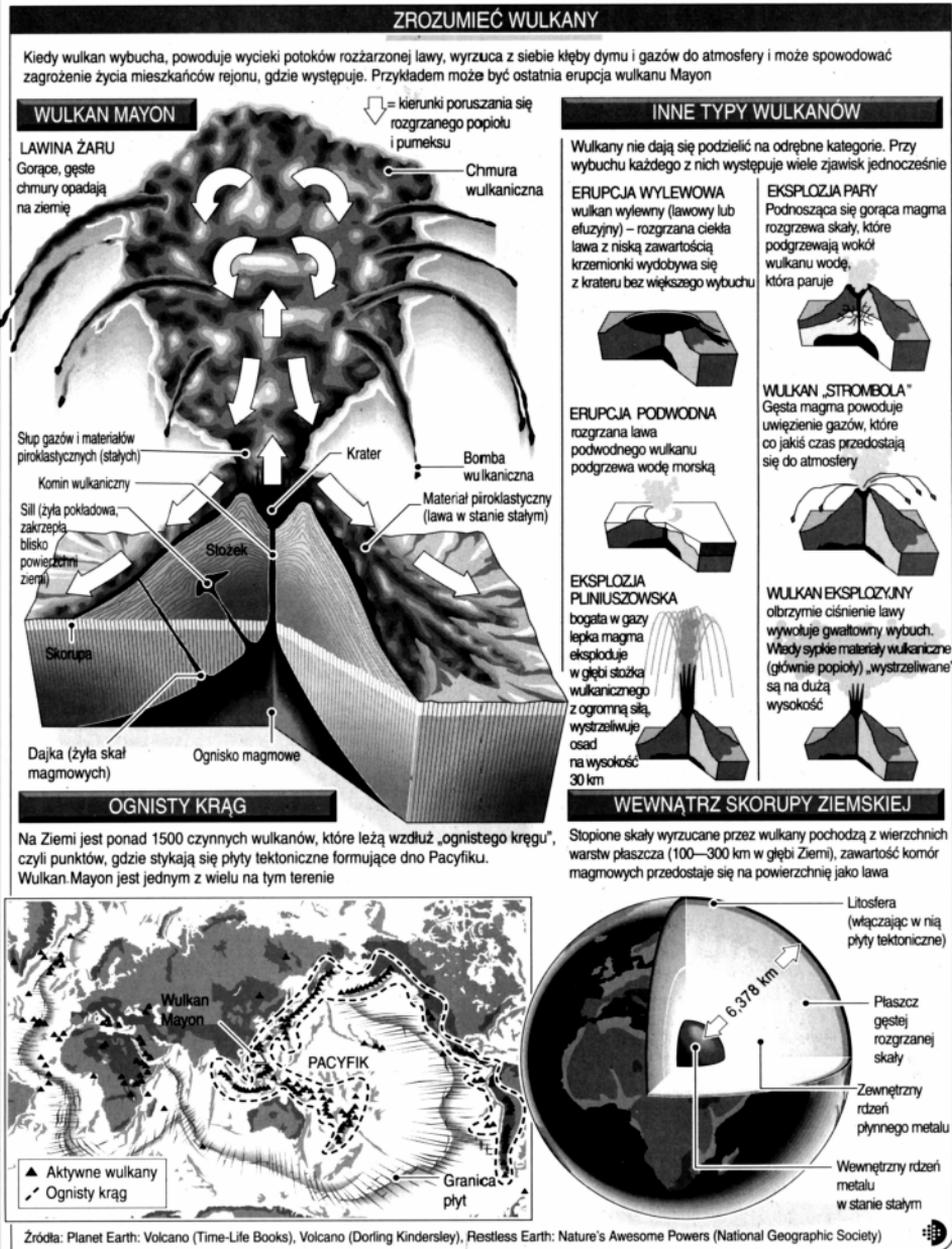


Fig. 6. An infographic entitled “Understand volcanoes” showing the eruption of Mayon, prepared by Reuter’s infographic service (*Rzeczpospolita*, 4.03.2000).

can come across such infographics prepared by Reuter's, Graphic Press or Associated Press. Unfortunately, they are rarely prepared by PAP, which is the main supplier to almost all regional and local dailies, as well as lesser national dailies. Illustrations presenting local events (e.g. bank robbery and a following car chase) are prepared by the editors of larger dailies (*Super Express* in particular).

Although contemporary daily press maps are colorful and much more attractive graphically than before, they are not always clear and functional. Many maps' backgrounds are too detailed and the main topic is not always explicit enough. The function of a press map differs from that of an atlas map. It should first of all be a source of quick and clear information. Dailies' advantage over the television and the Internet lies in the fact that they can be read anywhere (e.g. on the way to work, on a bus or a train). The reader has a wide choice of information. Therefore a too graphically and textually complex map might not work. It will not draw reader's attention to the article nor will it leave a lasting impression. However graphic attractiveness should not affect the quality of the message.

In this study six dailies were published in the second half of 19th century and ten dailies published from 1900 to 1918 were analysed. Over 970 maps were published in these newspapers. Fourteen dailies from the period between 1918 and 1939, were analysed, in which over 3 000 maps appeared. In the period from the end of WW II to 1989, the most popular four central dailies published in the capital region, comprising over 2 500 maps, were examined. Three of central dailies were nationwide newspapers. From the political changes, which took place after 1989, to the end of the 20th century, ten dailies were examined (six nationwide and four regional newspapers). In these dailies, over 1 000 maps were published. During the first two years of the 21st century, over 2 500 maps appeared in these newspapers.

In this research, maps that were part of advertisements as well as weather maps were not considered.

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