

Kultura (1946–2000)

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1. Genesis and Beginnings of *Kultura*

After World War II, *Kultura* was the most important Polish émigré monthly publication; for decades; it was the only East-Central European émigré publication in the West that mattered. Its activities had a decisive influence on the rise and development of the Opposition in Poland in the 1970s, as well as on the emergence of both a publishing movement independent of communist censorship, and of dissident magazines such as the Russian *Kontynent* (1974), the Ukrainian *Suczastnist* (1961) and *Widnoma* (Modernity; 1985), the Czech *Svědectví* (1956), and the Hungarian *Magyar Füzetek* that Péter Kende founded and edited 1978–89 in Paris (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; K. Pomian *W kreggu*).

The contributors to *Kultura* were among the most prominent émigré writers, scholars, and journalists, as well as representatives of the intellectual elite from many European countries with communist regimes. Almost all intellectuals interested in Central and East Europe sympathized with it (G. & K. Pomian 127–58).

Today, the term *Kultura* encompasses three different serials: (1) the monthly *Kultura*; (2) the book series *Biblioteka Kultury* (Library of Culture; 1953–), which featured works of literature, history, and journalism in three series (Documents, Archive of Revolution, and Without Censorship); and (3) the periodical *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Historical Notebooks; 1962–), which published articles on twentieth-century history. The publisher of all these was the Instytut Literacki (Kowalik, Danielewicz-Zielińska, Supruniuk vol. 1).

The genesis of *Kultura* – the conception of its mandate and most important guiding principles – was tied closely to Poland’s history during the last two hundred years, while the beginnings of *Kultura*, and even the fate and choices of its editors, were linked to the end of World War II. The war brought East-Central Europe under Soviet domination, the Baltic states ceased to exist, almost forty percent of the Polish territory was annexed by the Soviet Union, along with the major cities of Vilnius (Wilno) and L’viv (Lwów), while Poland gained part of a former German territory, including the major cities of Szczecin and Wrocław [Breslau].

The Beginnings of *Kultura* (Italy)

The post-1945 Polish political emigration comprised primarily former soldiers who had fought against the Germans on all fronts and found themselves outside Poland. Where did these soldiers-emigrants come from? After the partition of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union (in accordance with the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939), tens of thousands of soldiers were evacuated to the West, and as many soldiers were arrested by the NKVD in eastern Poland occupied by the Soviet Union on September 17, 1939. Thousands of them were murdered in the Soviet Union, while the remaining ones were sent to camps. The Polish Government in Exile (first in France, from 1940 in London) organized the underground *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) in 1939 on the Polish terrain occupied by the Soviet Union and Germany.

Three different Polish regiments were formed from the soldiers in the West and East: 1) the Western Polish Army under the Polish Government in Exile with soldiers who got away before Poland was partitioned by Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939; 2) the Polish Army named after Tadeusz Kościuszko, formed of Polish citizens in the Soviet Union by Stalin; and 3) the Polish Army formed of Poles released from Soviet camps and prisons on the basis of an agreement reached in July 1941 between Stalin and Churchill. The latter, led by General Władysław Anders (who was also released from a camp), was given permission by Stalin to leave the Soviet Union in 1942. It joined the Polish forces in Palestine (1943) that had earlier fought in Africa and elsewhere, and became part of the Eighth British Army known in the East

as the Second Corps (*Habielski Życie*).

Among the soldiers in both regiments of the Western Polish Army were many intellectuals, writers, reporters, scholars, journalists, political activists, and diplomats mobilized in 1939. During the war, they carried out an intensive round of instructional, educational and cultural activities among the soldiers. Among them were the future founders of *Kultura*: Jerzy Giedroyc (lawyer, high-ranking member of the government before 1939, editor of two weeklies, diplomat), Józef Czapski, a painter and writer, Zofia Hertz and her husband Zygmunt, both lawyers, as well as Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, a literary critic. In August 1947, General Anders nominated to the personnel of the Instytut Literacki Giedroyc, Herling-Grudziński, Zofia and Zygmunt Hertz (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Ptasieńska-Wójcik; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

The most important figure was Giedroyc, who was known in a narrow profession circle before the war, but not in the broader public. In 1942, he became the head of the Propaganda Office and of the Second Corps' *Kultura*.

Czapski had previously worked in the Propaganda Office, while Herling-Grudziński had worked for the Army's publishers. The most important publication under the commander of the Second Corps was the weekly *Orzeł Biały* (White Eagle), together with a book series titled *Biblioteka Orła Białego* (Chłap-Nowakowa).

When it became clear in 1945 that the agreements at the Allied Conferences of Teheran (1943) and Yalta (1945) would leave Poland to the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Poles (mostly demobilized soldiers) decided to remain abroad. Poles who had lived in eastern Poland prior to the war had nowhere to return, for their lands became part of the Soviet Union in 1939. From the perspective of the exiles, the Soviet occupation simply replaced the German one. The Yalta agreement was for the Poles what the Treaty of Trianon (1920) had been for the Hungarians.

The Polish emigrants in Western Europe were concentrated in two cities: London and Paris. After 1945, the London-based Polish Government in Exile continued to exist, with political parties, press, etc. This gave the emigrants a sense of legality and continuity with the prewar Polish state. The Polish post-war émigrés also settled in other countries of Western Europe, in both Americas, and in Australia. It became clear that so many Polish émigrés would need various forms of communication, and their own institutions for organizing intellectual life in the West.

After his discharge from the army, Jerzy Giedroyc decided, therefore, to continue his publishing activities, with Polish émigrés as his audience. With a loan from the army, he bought a press (Officine Grafiche Italliane, or "Oggi") and he opened in January 1946 in Rome the Instytut Literacki (registered under the name of Casa Editrice Lettere). Giedroyc quickly repaid the loan "so that he could freely criticize the exilic Polish politico-military establishment without being accused of ingratitude" (Jeleński "Kultura"; Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Kowalczyk; Ptasńska-Wójcik; Żebrowski).

Genesis: The Historical Tradition of *Kultura*

In creating the Instytut Literacki, Giedroyc consciously forged a connection with an identical situation 150 years earlier. After the partition of Poland by the imperial powers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria (1795), Polish soldier-emigrants in Italy (serving in the so-called Polish Legions of Napoleon's army) created the Instytut Naukowy (Academic Institute) to preserve Polish national life abroad. It was in 1798 that a Polish national hymn, originally the song of emigrants, was written. The genesis of *Kultura* was therefore both his-

torical (deeply rooted in the Polish tradition of independence) and symbolic. It bears keeping in mind that the emigrants who remained in the West after 1945 regarded their fate as a continuation of the annals of the Polish emigration of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first two books published by Giedroyc were, actually, dedicated to the Legions of the eighteenth century. As Giedroyc stated in the founding document of Instytut Literacki:

[Its] mandate is to provide émigré Poles with a selection of literary masterpieces, to demonstrate thus to them the many centuries of cultural tradition thanks to which we know that “a great nation may fall, but only one dishonored may disappear – a nation without a yesterday or today.” [...] In the tradition of Polish Culture and the Polish fight for independence, Polish socio-political thought also played a far-reaching role [...]. The Instytut Literacki considers it therefore special and important for our age to acquaint readers with its intellectual achievements and its evolution.

The goal of the Instytut Literacki was, according to Giedroyc, “to inspire the emigration to a movement of thought and action in the sphere of culture,” to organize Polish life according to the principles of political equality, social justice, respect for law, and the dignity of the human being. The time is coming when not only every political and social activist but every contemporary cultured Pole will have to know the books with which the Instytut Literacki is supplying its readers [...] If the Instytut fulfills its task, perhaps we will have the right to repeat the words uttered 150 years ago [i.e., in 1798], words representing the act of establishing the Legion’s Academic Institute in Italy: “It is with the skills acquired here, and bearing the true and pure republican heart, that we shall return to our homeland and become more useful to it, than our forefathers who pilgrimaged around the world” (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

This formulation, which grew from the Enlightenment idea that social reforms could be achieved through educational, academic, and literary activities, became the actual program of Giedroyc’s Instytut Literacki.

Kultura in France

At the turn of 1946/1947, Giedroyc decided to transfer the Instytut Literacki to France, with the permission of General Anders. The reasons were both economic (the drop in readership among soldiers, the Italian revenue service, which was strangely suspicious of firms showing a profit, Italian disinterest in the Instytut’s printing services) and, primarily, political: the pro-communist Italian establishment treated the Polish émigrés as “lepers,” as fascists who refused to return to a home country “liberated” by Stalin. In France, which had hosted many Polish émigrés since the eighteenth century, Józef Czapski’s

personal acquaintance with General de Gaulle secured the Instytut the French government's favorable disposition (Giedroyc "Rozmowa"; Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Ptasńska-Wójcik; Żebrowski).

Giedroyc sold the printing press in 1947 and invested the money in a new office in Maisons-Laffitte, just outside Paris, to which the operations of the Instytut were transferred in November. (Due to the high rent, the premises had to be abandoned in 1954, but thanks to loans and contributions from readers a new house was purchased next year in the nearby suburb of Le Mesnil-le-Roi. The name of Maisons-Lafitte was retained.) The beginnings in France were very difficult, Giedroyc recalled: "The money we received from selling the printing house in Italy ran out quickly, though our costs were minimal. [...] After that very difficult moments followed." Czapski had to travel twice to America to raise funds among Polonia and American friends. "It allowed us to survive the two, three most difficult years before we could stabilize" (Giedroyc "Rozmowa"; see also Jeleński "Kultura"; Giedroyc, *Autobiografia*; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*). The villa purchased in 1954 houses today the Archiwum Instytutu Literackiego (Archive of the Literary Institute), one of the most highly valued Polish archives on the émigrés.

2. The Editorial Staff

Jerzy Giedroyc's Profile

The main ideas behind *Kultura* connect directly to the Yalta Conference, which ceded control over East-Central Europe to the Soviets; but *Kultura*'s strategic setup can be understood properly only through a consideration of Giedroyc's biography.

The future editor of *Kultura* was born in 1906 to an old (part Russified, part Polonized) Lithuanian family in Minsk, where he spent his childhood and youth. He lived 1916–17 in Moscow, and moved in 1918 to Warsaw. Giedroyc had a good understanding of Eastern Europe and he recognized even before World War II that the region's biggest problems were: (1) national conflicts, which the Bolsheviks and Nazis exploited to advance their totalitarian aspirations; and (2) ignorance of the region's problems on the part of Western politicians. In Giedroyc's opinion, the key was to establish relations among Poles, Ukrainians, Belarussians, and Lithuanians on new terms, and to gain independence for the Baltic States, the Ukraine, and Belarus.

These ideas were already presented in a prewar publication edited by Giedroyc, *Polityka*. Giedroyc's hero was the creator of independent Poland in 1918,

Marshal Józef Piłsudski, who dreamed of a federation with Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine, within the framework of a multinational reconstruction of the First Republic that existed from the fifteenth century until 1795, known as Jagellonian Poland. However, Giedroyc knew that certain countries had powerful aspirations to statehood after World War II and wanted to be treated as equals. For this reason, *Kultura* supported the concept that – within the framework of a future European federation – independent Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Belarusians should live on the eastern lands of prewar Poland; the two cities that played a major role in Polish history and culture, Wilno and Lwów, should become the capitals of the independent states of Lithuania and Ukraine. This far-reaching vision made credible *Kultura*'s political program to build new relations among the elites of the Central European nations (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Jeleński “Kultura”; Korek; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Strońska; Żebrowski).

Giedroyc had much experience editing magazines: in 1929, he founded the *Mysł Mocarstwowa* (Thought Among the Great Powers), which he later renamed to *Bunt Młodych* (Revolt of the Youth) and then to *Polityka*. These magazines attracted young, nonconformist intellectuals with conservative sympathies, who leaned equally to the left and to the right (Zbyszewski; Król; Korek).

Giedroyc said of himself that he was by nature a “political animal.” He was not, however, a political activist. His title Editor was to underscore the exceptionality and exclusivity of his role. He was a shy man, a loner, who felt uncomfortable in making public speeches and had difficulties communicating directly with people. Nevertheless, by writing letters every day he succeeded in persuading approximately 2,500 writers from around the world to collaborate with *Kultura* and to form, as was sometimes said, an “invisible editorial board.” His correspondence numbers at least several tens of thousands of letters (Kowalczyk *Od Bukaresztu*), but Giedroyc never wrote a single article. His few-sentence commentaries, notes, and opinions in *Kultura*, often signed “Redaktor” (Redakcja, Obserwatorium), were limited to the most important current political affairs.

The Contributors

The people at *Kultura* were the brothers Jerzy and Henryk Giedroyc (as of 1952), Herling-Grudziński (1946–1947; 1956–1996), Czapski, Zofia and Zygmunt Hertz. From the beginning, faithful collaborators supported the editorial board, the most famous of whom were Maria Czapska (Józef's sister), Juliusz Miroszewski (as of 1950 a permanent member), Konstanty Je-

leński, Jerzy Stempowski, Czesław Miłosz (as of 1951), Witold Gombrowicz, and later Bohdan Osadczyk, Benedykt Heydenkorn, and Leopold Unger. Although three or four people formed the close-knit Editorial Committee that lived permanently at Maisons-Laffitte, and several hundred writers contributed in total, the person who actually decided on the contents of each issue, as well as the on journal's profile and strategy, was Jerzy Giedroyc. *Kultura* had an editorial office but was the publication of one man (Zbyszewski; Jeleński "Kultura"; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; K. Pomian *W kregu*; Żebrowski).

Following Mickiewicz, *Kultura* defined emigration as "a pilgrimage to freedom" (Herling-Grudziński "Księgi"). The *Kultura* team recognized in its mission no division between personal and professional life. It created perhaps the last "phalanstery" in Europe (some compared it to a kibbutz), in which work and living shared the same space, and the publishing of magazines and books was the only content of a shared life (Jeleński "Kultura"; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; K. Pomian *W kregu*; Żebrowski). As Miłosz wrote:

Those who pick up the annuals of *Kultura* and the books published by the Instytut Literacki, and those who will pick them up in the future, should reflect for a moment on the kitchen pots, on the preparing of breakfast, lunch, and dinner by the three, four people responsible there for the editing, corrections, and distribution, on the washing up, on the buying (fortunately a simple enough task in France), and multiply the number of these and similar household duties by the number of days, months, and years. And also [as Miłosz remarks] on the strings and packing paper, on lugging, carrying, sending packages by post.

The costs of living and eating are paid for by shared money, and the editor-in-chief and his three collaborators receive the same salary, almost the lowest French salary. [...] All surpluses are invested in the publication of books (Jeleński "Kultura")

Destitute poverty; the daily threat of bankruptcy; counting every penny; four people for the entire editing, publishing, and administration of the magazines and books; and, on top of all this, helping out writers in need, looking for work for them, welcoming and hosting guests from Poland, thousands of petty matters and problems. A couple of people with minimal means were capable of accomplishing great work (Zbyszewski).

Giedroyc emphasized that he did not have a personal life. "I think that if we lived in Paris, not to mention London, *Kultura* would not be able to exist. What we need is distance and isolation from people. In London and in Paris, we would not be able to get out of various meetings and visits, which take up a ridiculously amount of time. But above all: distance" (Giedroyc "Rozmowa"). As Jeleński wrote: "Only the closed circle of emigration allowed *Kultura* to survive so long on the same level, to evade being destroyed by weeklies or supplements in the large dailies, to evade being subsidized by a large publisher (or even more so by the state)" ("Kultura").

This is why Giedroyc considered that the precondition for *Kultura's* success could only be independence from sponsors, politicians, interest groups, lobbies, etc. Giedroyc repeatedly refused all financial help that would threaten *Kultura's* autonomy (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Jeleński “Kultura”; Zbyszewski; Ptasńska-Wójcik; Zebrowski).

3. *Kultura's* Program

The First Assessment: The 1940s

The Instytut first focused exclusively on the publication of books, which was Giedroyc's primary aim (twenty-six titles appeared in 1946–1947; thirty-five by 1953). “Knowing a bit about the prewar Russian emigration, I decided in advance that organization makes in the long run no difference in emigration; only words matter. One must think about creating some sort of publishing house. At the beginning I thought that only books would have a strong influence on the education of a readership” (Giedroyc 70). However, the closest collaborators, especially Herling-Grudziński, quickly convinced Giedroyc that publishing a journal was a necessity (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Herling and Bolecki *Rozmowy w Dragoni*).

Giedroyc and Herling-Grudziński published in June 1947 the first issue of *Kultura* in Rome. The selection of material and the introduction, written by both editors, presented the main ideas that remained valid for the more than fifty years of the journal's existence. The first issue contained Paul Valéry's “Z kryzysu ducha” (La crise de l'esprit=The Spiritual Crisis) and Benedetto Croce's “Zmierzch cywilizacji” (The Fall of Civilization), an excerpt from Arthur Koestler titled “Krucjaty bez krzyża” (Crusade without Cross), polemical sketches on Marxism and Existentialism, a study of Lytton Strachey's work, poems by Federico Garcia Lorca, and excerpts from the memoirs and works of Poles in the Soviet Union.

The common theme among the most important texts in this issue was the crisis of European civilization, the extreme manifestations of which were Soviet Communism and German nationalism (and its consequence, Nazism). Both led European culture to destruction and barbarism. The goal of the editors became to diagnose this situation and to search for ways out of the crisis, of which Central Europe was the gravest victim. The editors addressed not only the émigré Poles but also to readers in a Poland governed by the communists, in the hope of “strengthening in them the faith that the values dear to them were not crushed by the sledge-hammer of naked power.” *Kultura* saw

the need for an activist, even a heroic, stance to oppose the spread of pessimism and nihilism. The journal thus declared that “it wants to seek, in the world of Western civilization, this will to live without which the European dies, as once the leaders of ancient imperia did.” *Kultura’s* intellectual program became a battle to restore values in public life that were annihilated through World War II (*Kultura* 1947 nr. 1). Stempowski characterized the 1940s in his memoirs as the “years of uncertainty and apprehension, such as Europe had never witnessed since the times of the invasion of the barbarians and the fall of the Roman Empire” (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

According to the editors’ declaration: “European culture lost its consistency, its ability to resist and radiate. This period of postwar threat will not last for long. [...] *Kultura*, finding itself at the very heart of Europe’s aspirations to cultural rebirth, wants to take advantage of this privilege and renew ties with the Polish intellectual movement in both Poland and the Diaspora” (*Kultura* 1947 nr. 2–3).

Kultura directly translated its philosophy into (1) a political program that aimed at battling Communism, liberating the country from the Soviet Union, and regaining of Poland’s full independence; and (2) a social program that postulated building the foundations of a modern democracy and a modern society in a future Poland. The journal’s title thus had a symbolic meaning. *Kultura* became the name for all the intellectual activities that would help the émigrés to commence a battle for the democracy and independence of all East-Central European countries subject to the Soviet Union.

According to Jeleński, “nothing at the time could predict the extraordinary success of *Kultura*, but even then we knew that the unusual passion [of Giedroyc], devoid of all personal ambition, would have a decisive influence on the fate of his country, the fate of all Central Europe (and, as I suspected, also on the fate of the entire world); this emerged as a cause more powerful than any sort of collective effort” (“*Kultura*”).

Kultura’s Relation to the “Emigration”

One of *Kultura’s* main goals was to reach readers in emigration and in Poland. Giedroyc wanted *Kultura* to mobilize the émigrés dispersed in both hemispheres to think about the future of Poland and East-Central Europe. The editors hypothesized that, after losing the war, the émigrés would distance themselves from Polish affairs, and that their ties with the homeland would become merely emotional and nostalgic. Giedroyc feared that the matter of Poland and East-Central Europe would quickly cease to interest not only

foreigners but also Poles in the Diaspora. The consequence would be an acceptance of the status quo. Since he did not believe in émigré political parties, Giedroyc carved out for his monthly the role of integrating the émigrés and readers in Poland. The Instytut Literacki became an intellectual weapon to achieve political aims.

Kultura's activities were based on the conviction that émigré political institutions would gradually lose their significance; the fundamental task of intellectuals in the Diaspora should be to enrich the Polish cultural heritage and to provide readers in Poland, indirectly, with arguments that would mobilize them to resist Communism. “From the beginning,” recalled Giedroyc years later, “we established that émigré organizations do not exist [...]The question of exerting influence by way of the word was for me the most important” (Giedroyc, “Rozmowa” 70,77).

Kultura achieved this aim by initiating discussions on themes concerning the People's Republic of Poland, and by systematically analyzing the situation in all of communist-ruled East-Central Europe. For ideological reasons, Giedroyc assumed a grudging attitude with respect to the Polish Diaspora centered in London. The feeling was mutual:

We were not liked much among the émigré communities, especially the one based in London. [...] Primarily, of course, for political reasons. There were relics of the government-in-exile there. [...] The atrophy of everything; I am not speaking of thought or political strategy, just even of political tactics. [...] A complete lack of imagination, imprisonment in the London ghetto. That is typical. They have their own parliament, their own cafés and restaurants, their own businesses; they live in a completely closed world. And that's just fine with them. [...] They consider me an imposter, because no one stands behind me. I was no Minister or Ambassador. I did not belong to any party. I do not have a venerable past. I was no colonel, I was only a first lieutenant during the war, and before that I was a rifleman. (Giedroyc, “Rozmowa” 72–73)

Kultura was convinced that the Polish institutions in Diaspora were incapable of elaborating their own political concepts. From its first issues, *Kultura* aspired thus to shape the readers' political consciousness according to its own vision of a future modern, democratic, and independent Poland. Each issue featured texts that served as voices in an unending debate on Poland's and Central Europe's most important topics. *Kultura* became involved in politics, not by taking action, but by creating ideas, thoughts, and a vision, shaping the readers' political imagination and sensitivity on issues of public life in Poland, Europe, and the world.

Kultura had a distinct profile among the post-1945 émigré journals. The informational and journalistic sections addressed themselves to all readers; the essays and literature to the intellectual elite. While the other Polish émigré

magazines had no ambition to shape reality, Giedroyc created a journal with a clear ideological profile that expressed the editor's position in concrete political, social, or cultural matters. While émigré journals did present pluralist viewpoints, Giedroyc sought out people who would provoke. He rejected the existing hierarchy and he proposed new ideas for Poles in the Diaspora and in Poland (Lewandowska; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

Thanks *Kultura's* global network of collaborators, it could feature local chronicles of events. It documented, among others, the events in the Russian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, Belarus, and Ukrainian Republics of the Soviet Union. As a result, *Kultura* could present a diversity of topics and authorial experiences, as well as cultural and historical perspectives not represented in other émigré journals. It was always concerned with the popularity of Communism in the Western intellectual elite.

One of *Kultura's* distinguishing traits was its vitality. It was edited in an unusually dynamic manner, featuring genres such as journalism, reviews, articles, views, polemics, letters to the editor, editor's comments, etc. Almost every issue contained spirited political, social, and literary discussions, as well as viewpoints related to people's outlook on life. *Kultura* did not publish articles exclusively concerned with the past; these were featured in the *Zeszyty Historyczne*. The *Kultura* articles dealt with current or future affairs.

Without the influx of articles from Polish émigrés around the world, and after 1956 with increasing frequency from Poland as well, *Kultura* would not have been able to exist as a viable and relevant journal. Even though it had more than a dozen permanent collaborators, Giedroyc identified "*Kultura's* line" only with Juliusz Mieroszewski's texts (Habielski in Mieroszewski's *Final klasycznej Europy*; Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Mieroszewski *Final klasycznej Europy*; Korek; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; K. Pomian *W kregu*).

Kultura's Relation to the People's Republic of Poland

"As for imagining *Kultura's* role," Giedroyc recalled, "the model for me was Herzen's *Kolokol* [The Bell]. Starting with the second issue, it was a journal addressed to the homeland. [...] Each émigré lives off the homeland's lifeblood. Herzen's *Kolokol* could not have existed if it did not have a mass of correspondents in Russia itself" ("Rozmowa" 76).

Kultura's editorial team believed that knowledge of the country and the preservation of ties with Poles living at home was decisive. After 1956, Giedroyc also spoke with ex-communists, who interested him not only as political opponents and representatives of the governing group, but also as repre-

sentatives of a new mentality in a new state, the People's Republic of Poland. In opposition to the London émigré community, he treated communists as a real social power, and believed that they would remain politically active after the fall of the Soviet empire.

One must separate the editors' steady long-term aim from the changing conceptions that appeared in the articles. *Kultura's* aim was to effect change in the communist camp by intellectual means. This is why Giedroyc reacted to events in Poland by including articles that dealt with current affairs; his ambition was to shape the opinion of the Polish intelligentsia under communist rule, which, exposed to primitive Party propaganda, was deprived of information, democratic models, and a freedom to exchange thoughts. *Kultura* realized this aim by initiating discussions on topics prohibited in Poland, analyzing the situation within the country and in all of communist-ruled East-Central Europe. In *Kultura*, Communism was treated as a global problem that had to be battled with many allies, a profound knowledge of the enemy, and diversified methods.

Most of the émigrés imagined life in the People's Republic of Poland as a deviation from which Poland would reemerge unchanged as soon as the communist dictatorship and Soviet occupation disappeared. However, *Kultura's* corps treated Poland's transformation after 1945 as deep, even irreversible. Mieroszewski compared the communist revolution to a hurricane, after which the devastated region, even when rebuilt, would never be the same as before. He added, however, that "recognizing this fact in no way changes our relationship to the hurricane, which we consider a catastrophe." The foundations of a democratic Poland had to be built in the People's Republic. This was *Kultura's* mission (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Giedroyc & Mieroszewski *Listy 1949–1956*, vol. 2; Habielski *Życie*; Giedroyc & Mieroszewski; Korek; K. Pomian *W kregu*; Żebrowski).

4. The So-called *Kultura* Line

Although *Kultura* did not have a program in the strict sense, the fundamental ideas binding the editors and the strategic aims that they tried to reach (often called "the *Kultura* line") remained constant. The tactics and notions for achieving these aims could, however, often change:

Our position was subject to continual jolts. [...] It was clear that one had to adapt to a situation with greater or lesser success, if only because it forced people to think about deciding, though it may not have had any influence on the course of events. This I consider to be probably *Kultura's* most important role. Whether or not the various concep-

tions prove themselves or not has no great meaning. What is important is to cling to reality. (Giedroyc, "Rozmowa" 73)

The history of *Kultura's* program can be divided into periods, each differing according to its political assumptions, assessments, postulates, selection of contributors, and, above all, tactics.

1947–55

According to Giedroyc, *Kultura's* position during the first period was "uncompromisingly anti-Russian and anti-communist." It can be subdivided into the periods 1947–50 and 1950–55 (Giedroyc *Autobiografia* and "Rozmowa"; Korek 11–62; Żebrowski).

Typical for this period was the journalistic work of Ryszard Wraga, who warned against the Soviet danger threatening the West. According to Wraga's articles, Russia never participated in the evolution of universal thought. The Russian version of every Western idea, even the most revolutionary one, became reactionary. In Wraga's opinion, Western Europe was in a crisis, incapable of opposing the Soviet ideological expansion. The only alternative became the US, which, however, was, in his opinion, an immature political power. James Burnham's pro-American option in *The Struggle for the World* was excerpted in *Kultura* and published in 1947 as a book.

While the theme of Western Europe's moral crisis and its consequences was often treated in *Kultura* (Florczak), it was formulated most strongly by Andrzej Bobkowski, who left France for Guatemala in protest against Europe's decadence, its acceptance of Bolshevism and Nazism. According to Bobkowski, the West betrayed the moral and ideological values it espoused, and was driven solely by economic-political interests. Moreover, it did not even have the courage to acknowledge its crisis. The consequence was an inability to oppose the expanding and strengthening power of totalitarian ideology – i.e., Communism – in World War II (Bobkowski, "Pożegnanie" and "List"; Giedroyc, *Autobiografia* 132–34; Giedroyc & Bobkowski). Stempowski reinforced this assessment by claiming that the Allies were guided during the war by a conviction of Western civilization's superiority, and a contempt and colonial disdain for the East. For example, the Allies delivered East-Central European refugees on Austrian, Swedish, and Yugoslavian territories into the hands of the NKVD, which meant for them certain death or deportation. Stempowski also blamed the West for ignoring the ongoing Holocaust: the Allies knew of the extermination of Jews and Gypsies and did nothing to help

them (Stempowski, “Corona” 16; Stempowski *Berdyuzowa*). Józef Mackiewicz presented the same thesis in his journalistic work and in his novel *Kontra*, which was published by *Kultura* in 1955.

Aleksander Janta-Połczyński’s reportage of his 1948 stay in Poland sharply criticized the West and the émigrés, and postulated that the changes in Poland be accepted. Janta’s claim that Poland could never count on the West and must therefore choose a pro-Russian stance evoked a storm of protest by readers and by the Polish émigré government. Giedroyc defended the publication of the reportage, for it unleashed a discussion that was possible only because of a Western freedom of speech. Wańkiewicz responded in 1949 that the Western crisis would last many years, but should not be treated as a transitional period, an “inter-epoch.” He surmised that Communism, which he viewed as primitive and destructive, would never fall on its own because it would disillusion the Russians. Only the US could bring about the new epoch, since it was the only state with the spiritual power needed to overcome the crisis (Giedroyc, *Autobiografia* 144–49).

The texts in *Kultura* were literary, and gave people’s outlook on life rather than political evaluation; the journal tried to work out a constructive position for Europe, above all on its relationship to postwar Germany and the Soviet Union. One option was to create a European federation. *Kultura* first thought that a pan-European federation should be the precondition for a European balance of power. However, after 1950, when West Germany was becoming ever more powerful, *Kultura* changed its concept by calling for a federation of states in Central Europe that could become a regional defense against German or Russian domination, or against another German-Soviet pact. *Kultura* even proposed the creation of international military regiments of volunteers from Central Europe who would be stationed in the West. In the context of this federation of Central European states, *Kultura* proposed that the Poles should declare as a gesture of unity with the other Eastern European nations that they surrender the historic Polish cities of Wilno and Lwów.

Kultura published various concepts of a new organization for postwar Europe. Alfred Fabre-Luce suggested the creation of a European empire under the leadership of France, based on the idea of colonialism (“Europa”). Raymond Aron proposed creating a single European body encompassing both the Western and Eastern parts; although he criticized Marxism and Communism, he also perceived many errors in the capitalist system. He saw a threat not only in communist totalitarianism but also in conquering the crisis by means of a gradual Americanization of the world (“Mit”). Giedroyc valued Aron’s position (*Autobiografia* 180). Jan Ulatowski presented another decidedly pro-European stance by claiming that the Polish Diaspora cannot

count on a federated Central Europe, because it does not lie in the interests of the West. He proposed working out a “third road,” which appealed to Giedroyc.

Between 1950 and 1955, *Kultura* emphasized most strongly the necessity of forging a European federation and a pro-American option to combat Communism’s ideological expansion. At the beginning, its journalists counted on the complete destruction of Communism and underscored the mutual interests of Central Europe and America, hypothesizing that the US would win in a war. A fundamental shift occurred after the publication of George F. Kennan’s article “America and the Russian Future,” according to which the US would guarantee – even in the case of war – to maintain the Soviet position in Central Europe. *Kultura* criticized Kennan for regarding the Baltic countries, Belarus, and the Ukraine as belonging to the Soviet Union, but it declared that in light of the American position it was unreasonable to count on the destruction of Communism and the Soviet Union. *Kultura*’s pro-American stance weakened further with the publication of Samuel Sharp’s *Poland, White Eagle on a Red Field* (1953), which argued that the Poles do not and will not have influence over the fate of their own country, and that Americans should agree that the Soviet Union alone should determine Central Europe’s fate. The thesis showed that the Central-European Diaspora held unrealistic political hopes, and it nullified *Kultura*’s program. For this reason, the journal decided to support the confrontational stance of the new American President, Eisenhower, believing that a war with the Soviet Union was inevitable, and hoping that the American doctrine of “liberation” and “mass revenge” would lead to a change in the European status quo and the fall of Communism in the region. The doctrine changed in 1955, when the superpowers entered into a political dialogue (Korek 71–78).

In 1950, *Kultura* became involved with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, whose founders were Arthur Koestler, James Burnham, Ernst Reuter, Sidney Hook, and Melvin Lasky. The aims of the Congress were similar to those of the Instytut Literacki (Laqueur). It demanded an ideology-free culture, and a Europe liberated from Soviet dictatorship. Many intellectuals supported the Congress. Representing *Kultura* at the June 1950 meeting in Berlin, Czapski remarked that many young people were drawn to Communism, though the communist apparatchiks kill “every thought and every experience” in the human beings. He blamed the West: “Countries which suffered the greatest losses only replaced the Gestapo with the NKVD and other Secret Police. What could the youth of these nations think about the victorious allies?” Thousands of young people fled the communist bloc. The best aid would be to open a university for Central European refugees. “Do we not

understand,” asked Czapski, “that our indifference toward the inescapable barbarization of an entire generation of half of Europe is condemning Europe and us to death?” (Giedroyc, *Autobiografia* 156, 173–78; Kowalczyk, *Giedroyc* 128–29). Giedroyc subsequently enlisted the support of Burnham, who found US funds to open in 1951 the Collège de l’Europe Libre with a boarding school in Strasbourg. Although the school educated several hundred students of various nationalities, it contributed little to the cultural integration of Central Europe because it did not receive sufficient Western support. For example, fearing Soviet reaction, the Americans did not allow Ukrainians to study at the school (Korek 98; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*). The heir to the idea of the Collège de l’Europe Libre became after 1989 the Central European University, financed by George Soros.

Thanks to the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Giedroyc forged closer ties with Manès Sperber, Jeanne Hersch, Raymond Aron, and Arthur Koestler, hoping to use the Congress to promote émigré writers. This was made possible thanks to Konstanty Jeleński, who became with Giedroyc’s support the head of the Eastern European section of the Congress’s General Secretariat. As a leader in the Congress, Jeleński was involved in organizing international seminars; together with François Bondy, he edited the monthly *Preuves*. Justifying *Kultura*’s position during the period 1950–55, Giedroyc wrote:

American politics is not only American politics; in a certain sense, it is also British, Belgian, Dutch, Danish, and ... Polish politics. [...] This means that even nations of Great Britain’s stature are in a certain sense dependent on the United States. In this context, voicing the independence of Polish politics from America [...] is complete and utter nonsense. We, the Emigration, are tied to America, just as the Western nations are tied to America, when American policy is proper and expedient, as well as when its policy is wrong. (Redaktor, *Kultura* 1955, nr. 1–2, 87–88: 143; Korek 82)

I did not believe in a world war, but I was convinced that if the United States demonstrated decisively its power this could do much to change the arrangement in Eastern Europe. Today we do not attempt to persuade anyone to go to Vietnam to fight the communists. Does this mean we have changed our conviction? No, we changed only our policy and tactic, because the international situation has undergone a radical transformation. (Microszewski, “ABC polityki” *Final* 245)

Kultura published in 1951 Józef Maria Bocheński’s article “Zarys Manifestu demokratycznego” (An Outline of Democratic Manifest) with the signature of *Kultura*’s Editorial Board. The manifest of the Professor at Freiburg concerned the structure of future Poland, as well as its situation in Europe. It was based on the claim that a constant presence of freedom and equality will decide the history of Europe. This democratic tradition, claimed Bocheński, is foreign to Russian culture, for equality and freedom were transformed in Russia into a caricature of the European ideals. The communist system reverted

to mass slavery on a scale heretofore unknown. The acceptance of Bolshevism was a prelude to a Soviet occupation of the entire continent. In order to cast off Russian Communism, the European nations would have to integrate politically: “none of us is merely a Pole; [we are] also Europeans from the Polish canton” (3–17). In April 1951, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, West Germany, and Italy called in Paris for a European Coal and Steel Community, the precursor to the European Economic Union and today’s European Union. The “Manifest demokratyczny” was therefore the first – at the time merely symbolic – Polish call for a European Union. However, Polish political émigrés in the West were treated either as enemies or with suspicion. In September 1950, the public prosecutor’s office in Bern, Switzerland declared that the dissemination of *Kultura*, or even the possession of a single issue of it by an émigré, would be a prohibited political act. The prohibition was rescinded after *Kultura*’s interventions.

Kultura attempted also to hammer out the foundations of a historic Polish-German memorandum of understanding, which would have Germany declare the inviolability of the western Polish borders and its support of a federation in Central Europe. These plans, which were started shortly after the end of the war, bore witness to the far-reaching vision of *Kultura*’s contributors (Stempowski *Dziennik*; Mieroszewski “List,” “Niemcy,” and “O reformę”; Mackiewicz; Kowalczyk, *Giedroyc* 162–65; Korek 99–115). A Polish-German memorandum of understanding could have encouraged Poland’s potential allies in Central Europe to accept the federation. The Hungarian conservative émigré politician Tibor Eckhard, for instance, rejected collaboration with the Polish emigration, saying that Hungary could not support Poland in a future Polish-German conflict over borders (Fejtő; Korek 103; Żebrowski).

1956

Giedroyc admitted that *Kultura* made one of its “biggest mistakes ever” after 1956 by believing the patriotic declarations of the Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, Władysław Gomułka, and giving him a “vote of confidence.” As Giedroyc wrote in a letter to Mieroszewski, he thought that “with cunning policy, we can win the battle for the émigrés’ soul and become for the Homeland, or rather Gomułka, a partner and a rather equal partner at that” (Giedroyc & Mieroszewski 435).

It turned out that this “equality” with the communists was a fiction, and Giedroyc quickly had to acknowledge the error. It constituted also a loss of faith in Mieroszewski’s concept of evolutionism, which assumed that the

communist system would evolve naturally into a democracy. (Giedroyc, “Rozmowa” 79). After the bloody suppression of the Hungarian Revolt by the Red Army, and the events in Poland in the years 1956–58, Giedroyc became convinced that the so-called liberalization of the communist system was not an evolution but rather social engineering, that is, controlled change within a framework that communist powers tightly defined. *Kultura* withdrew its support for Gomułka at the end of 1957. “Polish communists,” Giedroyc wrote in a special letter sent to the readership in Poland, “had a literally historic opportunity to show the world that they were able to lead a democratic society. [...] They had the opportunity to discredit the thesis [...] that one cannot collaborate with communists; one can only fight them” (Korek 167–272; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc; Zięta*). “Any step to democracy in Poland, wrote Mieroszewski, will be treated in Moscow as an act against the Soviet Union’s safety.” Nevertheless, Polish society has to demand democratic reforms in Poland, step by step. (“Lekcja węgierska”).

1965–1980

In 1965, Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski, young revisionist Marxists, proclaimed in an Open Letter to the Party that the system was in crisis and that it was imperative to renew the idea of Socialism, because, in their opinion, Stalinism had rendered it hypocritical. They claimed that the Party bureaucracy lived off the workers, and they called for a proletarian revolution to overthrow the parasite. *Kultura*, which published this text in 1966, considered Kuroń’s and Modzelewski’s analysis more accurate than Milovan Đilas’ well-known *The New Class* (1955). Although the letter was not radical, it was the only critical analysis of Communism “from the inside.” Should Kuroń and Modzelewski, members of the Party, put on trial, Giedroyc offered to send funds to help pay for their lawyers. Giedroyc acknowledged that the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP; in Polish PZPR) was successful in linking Stalinist totalitarianism to nationalism, and that potential reformers had lost most of their influence. For Giedroyc, it was obvious that evolutionism, which still had its proponents, would not lead to the desired outcomes. *Kultura*’s assessment was pessimistic: Polish society was intimidated and incapable of self-organizing. As Giedroyc wrote to Mieroszewski in 1963, the revolution was in a sense “more profitable for the Hungarians than the peaceful Polish October was for the Poles” (Giedroyc & Mieroszewski; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*). In the mid-1960s, Giedroyc finally gave up the concept of evolutionism. Various methods had to be applied, but always in view of the most

important goal: the overthrow of Communism in Central Europe and the building of democracy (Korek).

The student protests of 1968 and the workers' protest and revolt in Gdańsk in 1970 rekindled Giedroyc's hopes. As a result of the protests and the March movement of post-revisionists, young intellectuals like Adam Michnik and Stanisław Barańczak emerged, who soon became important contributors to *Kultura* and leaders of the opposition's intellectual life. These young intellectuals came to an understanding with Giedroyc. They wanted to link the democratic opposition in Poland to the Diaspora (Friszke), for they believed that a critical dialogue with the Diaspora might awaken the intelligentsia at home. The partner for the revolutionary intellectuals could only be *Kultura*. The group nicknamed "mountaineers" smuggled *Kultura* books into Poland across the Tatra mountains, but they were arrested at the Polish-Czech border and a number of them were sentenced in an unprecedented trial (Karpiński; Kuczyński; Korek; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Ptasieńska-Wójcik).

According to Korek, the post-revisionists distanced themselves from the ideas of independence promoted by *Kultura* because they had no interest in the state. Instead of independence, they called for the liberation of society and the individual. Social justice, for the post-revisionists, was more important than the state. Giedroyc and the émigrés could not, however, imagine democracy without a sovereign state and an independence that would guarantee democracy. According to the post-revisionists, the most important battle against totalitarianism was not played out in the political arena, but in the cultural and scholarly arenas that create values and are the fundamental ingredients in social bonds and in a national identity based on universal principles. As Leszek Kołakowski wrote, society must first acquire by dint of hard work a democratic consciousness and teach tolerance in order to prevent a national dictatorship after the fall of Soviet totalitarianism (Korek).

Kultura began to publish works by new contributors in the 1970s. One of the most prominent among them was Kołakowski, whom the communist government expelled from Poland. While working at universities in the West he began collaborating with *Kultura* by publishing there his famous essays and books. His essay, "Tezy o nadziei i beznadziejności" (Theses about Hope and Hopelessness) was discussed heatedly among the émigrés and, unofficially, in Poland. It constituted a fundamental reversal in the relationship between the mostly leftist intelligentsia in Poland and the Diaspora, leading to collaboration with *Kultura*. Giedroyc and the intellectuals in Poland soon found a common ground in assessing the social situation in Poland. Mieroszewski and Giedroyc were convinced that the intelligentsia had to cooperate with the workers if change was to occur in Poland. After the student strikes of 1968

and the massacre in Gdańsk in 1970 (on which the official opposition did not take a position), *Kultura* dedicated much attention to the social atmosphere in Poland, believing that it would become even more radicalized. In the mid-1970s, Giedroyc foresaw an explosion of social dissatisfaction. Its progress and fallout, he claimed, would be more significant than in December 1970, because the PUWP had already lost trust. Warning that the consequences of a new workers' protest would be catastrophic, Kolakowski agreed that the intelligentsia must support the workers: we should accept "that today there is no difference between the concerns of the workers and those of the intelligentsia, just as there is no difference between the matters concerning the nation and civil liberty. [...] Here and now these competing claims are coalescing into one" (*Kultura* 1976 nr. 6; see also Kowalczyk, *Giedroyc* 227–240 and K. Pomian *W kregu*).

Recently recruited journalists like Zdzisław Najder (alias Socjusz), Czesław Bielecki (alias Maciej Poleski), and Jakub Karpiński (alias Marek Tarniewski) submitted by the mid-1970s their articles directly from Poland, where the situation was changing rapidly. Several opposition groups (KOR, ROPCiO, KPN, PPN) were formed, with their publishing houses and magazines. It was the heady birth of pluralism in many regions of Poland, as well as the fulfillment of Giedroyc's expectations. The polemics about programs and activities soon started to appear in *Kultura*.

Socjusz pointed to the relics of revisionism in the new opposition programs. He polemicized with their theses, cautioning the opposition against establishing ties with any faction of the Party, even with those that were considered liberal and would be prepared to carry out their social objectives. He applied pressure, by arguing that the cause of Poland's catastrophe was the communist system as such, and no specific group in the Party. The opposition should demand structural changes (Najder; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Korek; Ptasńska-Wójcik).

The theses of the so-called "polrealists," represented in *Kultura* by Stefan Kisielewski (alias Kisiel) provoked the sharpest polemics. They renounced Polish independence and claimed that a Poland neighboring on both Germany and Russia must decide that Germany was the foe and Russia a friend that would guarantee the western Polish border. In Kisiel's opinion, neither evolution nor the fall of Communism would alter the regional balance of power. He proposed that the opposition should bypass the Polish communists and come to terms with the Soviet Union, and he imagined that the Soviet Union would, in return, become an eternal ally of the People's Republic and agree to democratic elections in Poland. Giedroyc polemicized with the "polrealists," invoking *Kultura's* political credo that Poland, though it bor-

dered on the Soviet Union, was a neighbor of the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Belarussians rather than the Russians. Émigré journalists like Mackiewicz, and homeland ones like Socjusz also disagreed with the “polrealists.”

1980–1989: Solidarity

The 1980 strikes confirmed Giedroyc’s predictions. They were planned by the opposition and brought the intelligentsia and workers together. But the opposition was ideologically divided for it included both the liberal-leftist Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej KOR (Workers Defence Committee, established in 1976) and the right-leaning Ruch Młodej Polski (Young Poland Movement), which fastened onto national traditions. Giedroyc appealed to the West for support in 1980, adding: “We do not expect wonder and applause from the West; that is not useful to us in the least.” Recalling that during World War II the West spoke of Poland as the “inspiration for the world” and yet surrendered it to the Soviet Union, Giedroyc reminded the West that declaring Solidarity as an “inspiration for the world” would invoke among émigrés nausea and the specter of the Yalta Conference. He expected concrete, enduring, and sensible solidarity.

As long as Solidarity functioned legally (September 1980 to December 1981), commentaries on the situation in Poland filled *Kultura*’s pages. It demanded reforms in the socialist economy through the privatization of state industries. When the Soviet Communist Party’s politburo warned Poland in June that the “internal situation” (namely, the existence of Solidarity) threatened Poland’s independence, Giedroyc formulated unequivocal conditions to improve the Polish-Soviet relations: transparency, equality, and truth about the Katyń crime, the Warsaw uprising, and the fate of Poles in the Soviet Union (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; K. Pomian *W kregu*).

Giedroyc called the declaration of martial law on December 13, 1981 an “assassination by a licentious Party soldiery,” with Moscow’s agreement and encouragement. *Kultura* took a hardline position: by ushering in martial law, the Polish communists ruled out any national partnership. “The blow, which fell on us December 13, 1981 can be compared only with Hitler’s invasion or with the NKVD’s stunts in 1944–1945” (K. Pomian, “13 grudnia 1981” *Kultura* 1982 nr. 1–2, 12–16). The martial law was Soviet fascism. *Kultura* rejected Jaruzelski’s propaganda that the lesser evil of the martial law prevented the greater evil of a Soviet intervention in Poland. As *Kultura*’s journalists saw it, Solidarity’s unforgivable error in Soviet eyes was its very existence. Herling-Grudziński, who regarded the theory of the lesser evil as a blackmail, devoted

many passages of his *Dziennik pisany nocą* (Diary Written at Night), as well as one of his best short stories, “Dżuma w Neapolu” (Plague in Naples), to the martial law (Herling and Bolecki, *Rozmowy* 56–65).

The introduction of martial law, which signified a dramatic defeat of the hope that the communist system could evolve, generated in *Kultura* very heated discussions about Solidarity’s strategy in dealing with the communists. The émigrés and veterans took a radical position. Solidarity, wrote Giedroyc, was neither organizationally nor psychologically prepared for aggression and for risking to die. The lack of preparation was due not only to Solidarity’s ethos of peace, but also to the limited repertoire of political battle methods: “If we want to avoid the massacre of the defenseless, we will have to be ready to respond to force with force” (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

In the very first months of the martial law, *Kultura* became the intellectual center of émigré discussions on the Polish opposition’s new program of action. From the perspective of émigrés, after 1981 it became most important to save the idea of Solidarity and the moral values that were essential for society to achieve its political identity (Socjusz). Early 1982, Giedroyc refused to publish a feuilleton by Kisiel on Solidarity’s understanding with General Jaruzelski. *Kultura* could not share the hopes of Solidarity’s underground government about a compromise with the communists, because it believed that the communists were interested only in Solidarity’s liquidation.

In the 1980s, *Kultura*’s significance for an independent political and intellectual life in Poland increased dramatically. One reason for this was the government’s decision at the inception of martial law to shut down all magazines and to remove those people from the editorial staff who were suspected of having oppositional leanings. In this context, *Kultura* became for the émigrés the most important, indeed the only, vehicle to discuss Polish affairs, and, for the first time on such a scale, for contributors in Poland as well. Thanks to the contacts that Giedroyc had established over the years it could publish dozens of Solidarity documents, programs of action, commentaries, polemics, and accounts submitted from Poland. *Kultura*’s publications during martial law forged, for the first time, a partnership between the émigré political communities and the opposition in Poland. It became a forum which allowed Solidarity activists and advisors to discuss issues with each other, and it was the only independent, severe, and meritorious judge of the publications and activities of the Solidarity leadership. Its familiar critical relation to people and events, government and opposition in Poland, its insistence on respect for democratic principles and values, its prominent contributors – all of these factors contributed to *Kultura*’s prestige and status during this period. By 1989, *Kultura*’s publications were still illegal, but they circulated freely in Poland.

Kultura's Main Ideas

We can summarize *Kultura's* basic credo in terms of the following six points:

1. In fighting Communism, Poland and the nations of East-Central Europe must collaborate with each other and rely, above all, on one another. This collaboration entails activating the elite and undertaking efforts to reform the future independent states throughout the entire region.

2. Historical divisiveness and national stereotypes, which make understanding among the nations of East-Central Europe impossible, must be overcome.

3. It is necessary to work towards an understanding among all nations of East-Central Europe. The most important result of these ideas was the formulation of the concept of ULB (Ukraine–Lithuania–Belarus) by *Kultura's* most important journalist, Mieroszewski. It proposed linking the idea of Polish independence to the regaining of independence by other East-Central European countries and the gaining of independence by those that had never had it (Ukraine, Belarus) (Mieroszewski “kompleks polski”).

4. A new stage must be ushered in in relations with the Germans, whom communist propaganda represented as a permanent threat to Poland.

5. There must be respect for pluralism in the world and ideologies (with the exception of the totalitarian ideologies of Bolshevism and Nazism).

6. *Kultura* played a major role in the documentation and analysis of historical and artistic Polish-Jewish relations. Articles, memoirs, and books on the shared history of Poles and Jews, as well as translations of Jewish authors, appeared in the monthly itself, and in the books of Biblioteka *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne*. Giedroyc published articles about Polish-Jewish relations already in his magazines of the 1930s, noting the rise of anti-Semitic sentiments in Poland. After World War II, due to the genealogy of *Kultura's* editorial team, many of the memoirs dealt with Polish officers of Jewish origin who, like Menachem Begin, played a major role after the demobilization of the Polish army in 1945 in the creation of the Israeli state and army. Another constant theme was the extermination of Jews by Germans on Polish soil (the German concentration camps in Poland in service of the Final Solution). Moreover, *Kultura* continually concerned itself with the existence of anti-Semitism among Poles, and devoted much attention to anti-Semitism in the Polish Communist Party in 1968 and the ease with which anti-Semitic communist propaganda was accepted by Polish society. *Kultura* led the battle against anti-Semitism, emphasizing that it was a universal evil, that harms Poland because it shuts down contact with the West. Realizing its mission to reach a rapprochement between all nations forging the history of Poland, *Kultura* pub-

lished translations of Jewish poetry, for example the anthology *Israel w poezji polskiej* (Israel in Polish Poetry) edited by Jan Winczakiewicz, and writings on Jewish writers and the history of Jews in Poland, for instance Aleksander Hertz's book *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej* (Jews in Polish Culture), as well as the first documentary novel about Warsaw ghetto (Rymkiewicz, *Umschlagplatz*). It analyzed the political and social situation in Israel, noting the most important Polish-Jewish conferences and meetings. In an attempt to foster cooperation between Poles and Jews as quickly as possible, Giedroyc became in the final years of his life a patron in the establishment of a Polish Chair at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Thanks to these ideas and the articles representing all democratic currents, *Kultura* became, as Mieroszewski wrote, “a parliament of Polish thought in Diaspora.” Josef Mackiewicz sums up the situation well in “Niemiecki kompleks”: the pluralism of views in a mature society is like an open fan: “the more often the fan flings open more than 180 degrees, the better it demonstrates the maturity, dynamism and thus richness of society's thoughts. However, a fan twisted into a tight fist gives the impression of a being short cudgel.” It is difficult to characterize univocally *Kultura's* political voice, as it published both left- and right-leaning authors, socialists and ex-communists, Catholics and atheists, conservative nationalists and progressive liberals. All authors linked anti-Communism with the hope of restoring an independent and democratic Polish state. Over a few decades, as the political situation in Poland and the generations of authors changed, the articles evolved from centrist (in the monthly's first phase) to social democratic (in the final phase); however, the journal had a liberal character throughout its existence. A constant ingredient in Giedroyc's strategy was to preserve a distance to all parties, groups, and political communities, an unwillingness to accept that any topic was a taboo, the constant “poking of a stick in an anthill,” the avoidance of relying on any authority, the decision to regard no institution or people as untouchable (Korek 327–34; K. Pomian *W kregu*).

One instance of this uncompromising critique concerned judging the Catholic Church. *Kultura* systematically published articles on Church and religion, which dealt with the place of the Church in a democratic society, with religion in relation to changing norms and phenomena of civilization, and with the specific role of the Church in the communist system. The authors were most often Mieroszewski, Mackiewicz, Antoni Pospieszalski, Dominik Morawski, and Herling-Grudziński.

The context for these publications was the Second Vatican Council, various attempts in the West to link Catholicism to Marxism, and the progressive movement “liberation theology.” In turn, the situation of the Church in the

People's Republic of Poland was tied to the paradox of the "People's Church," considered in a shallow and conservative religious sense, but having fundamental influence on the preservation of national identity and the building of resistance against Communism. During the martial law, the Catholic Church was the only place where the opposition could meet legally, and organize material and financial aid for those repressed. The majority of the *Kultura* articles on the Church appeared in the column "On Religion without Unction," which broached taboo topics and posed fundamental questions about the future of the Church as an institution, its relationship to Communism, the politics of the Vatican, its relation to other faiths, and the place of Christianity at the end of the twentieth century (G. Pomian vol. 2).

5. *Kultura*: Writers and Literature

Though Giedroyc considered the European democratic tradition, its political ideals, and its cultural achievements as the most important weapon against Communism, he realized that to achieve his goals he needed writers, even if *Kultura* was not a literary magazine. *Kultura*'s Editorial Board thought that the collective life of the post-1945 Polish Diaspora (deprived of a nation like the Jews) would gravitate towards writing, for literature was from the eighteenth century on the fundamental form of collective life of émigré Poles. Stempowski, who wrote in 1955 that "literature is the only form of expression in emigration that did not submit when facing power," was of similar mind. As long as émigré literature exists, it will appear that "some sort of national power stands behind the émigré political institutions." If émigré literature disappears, "emigration will be a fait accompli and the Kremlin will wash its hands" (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*).

Kultura's service to Polish literature has been unimaginably great. In its first decade, Giedroyc drew the most prominent émigré writers to the fold and he created in this manner a diverse, "invisible literary community" of émigrés. Thanks to Giedroyc, writers thousands of kilometers afar, who would have surely remained unknown in their countries of settlement, came to be published in *Kultura*. Giedroyc reached them by mail, persuaded them (sometimes it took several years!) to write for *Kultura*, proposed themes, inspired the publication of books, scrambled to get translations, honoraria, and prizes (he lobbied that Gombrowicz and Miłosz get a Nobel prize). Czapski, Stempowski, and some other older writers began to write again after the war only thanks to *Kultura*. The journal undoubtedly salvaged for Polish literature many exceptional writers, including Gombrowicz, Miłosz, Straszewicz, Bobkowski, and,

after 1956 in a certain sense, Herling-Grudziński. Thanks to their publications in *Kultura* they became known among the émigrés, then in Poland, and even in the world.

Giedroyc contrasted literature to political parties and similar institutions, which do not create moral models and do not inspire people to intellectual work, even if they are essential for organizing public life. Literature's prominent place in *Kultura* expressed Giedroyc's conviction that works of literature, and the ideas contained in them, shape people's attitudes and are able to mobilize them to act on behalf of the community. This was *Kultura's* credo. Giedroyc, like Herling-Grudziński, repeated many times that he was raised on the work of writers interested in social and national affairs, among them Russian writers (e.g. Dostoyevsky, Wasilij Rozanov, Leonid Andreyev), English ones (Joseph Conrad, Gilbert Chesterton) and Polish ones (Stefan Żeromski, Waław Berent and Andrzej Strug). He believed in literature's special mission in societies deprived of sovereignty (the most important Polish Romantic writers wrote in exile); he believed in the capacity of literature to shape social changes, shatter stereotypes, etc. (Giedroyc, *Autobiografia* 15–21, 163–171; Skalmowski; Gorczyńska "Giedroyc literacki"). Herling-Grudziński's 1945 remark about the writer Stanisław Brzozowski fits also *Kultura*: "thought and word are also deed, when they represent not escape, rest, consolation, and solace for 'dejected and battered souls,' but rather a courageous and manly stare straight in the eye of every reality, even the most threatening one" ("Nota o Brzozowskim"*). Though he considered himself a "political animal," Giedroyc never treated literature as a tool. He loved literature, he had an astute sensitivity to the psychology of writers (he understood that the most eminent of them did not want to mix creativity and politics), and above all, he had the talent of a diplomat, which enabled him to keep in close contact with many contributors (Giedroyc *Autobiografia*; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Ptasńska-Wójcik).

Although *Kultura* published and launched many of the most important émigré Polish writers, "*Kultura* literature" or "*Kultura* writers" never existed. Writers retained their distinctiveness and independence. They profited from the publishing and other benefits that *Kultura* offered (many of them lived for a certain period at Maisons-Laffitte), they were in awe of Giedroyc's editorial and publishing accomplishments, but they never created a distinct group around the journal. Even though the views and concepts behind *Kultura* congealed in certain matters, relationships would as often as not deteriorate and lead to confrontations, and, in drastic cases, even to ruptures after many years of collaboration.

In the second half of the 1970s, when an opposition emerged in Poland, political topics came to dominate *Kultura's* pages, while literature and literary

criticism receded into the background. Jeleński could not come to terms with the politicization of the journal, for he regarded it above all a patron of cultural life. Hence he stopped writing for *Kultura*, and forged in the 1980s close ties with another émigré journal, a new intellectual almanac entitled *Zeszyty Literackie* (Literary Notebooks). Miłosz's connections with *Kultura* weakened for similar reasons when *Zeszyty Literackie* was launched. Herling-Grudziński left *Kultura* in 1996, though he had been publishing his diaries in the journal since 1971. Giedroyc demanded that he remove a passage in the new installment of his *Dziennik pisany nocą* that was sharply critical of politicians Giedroyc supported, and Herling-Grudziński viewed this as an attempt at censorship. He broke off all contacts with Giedroyc, and started to publish all his texts in Poland, in *Plus-Minus*, the literary supplement of *Rzeczpospolita* (The Republic).

Giedroyc published writers of all ages. The writers from the generation born at the end of the nineteenth century were represented by Stempowski, Czapski, Stanisław Vincenz, Wańkiewicz, and Stanisław Mackiewicz; the generation born at the beginning of the twentieth century by Gombrowicz, Czesław Straszewicz, Józef Mackiewicz, Miłosz, Zygmunt Haupt, and Kazimierz Wierzyński; those born around 1920 by Herling-Grudziński, Jeleński, Bobkowski, Marian Pankowski, Andrzej Chciuk, Leo Lipski, and Waław Iwaniuk. In addition, Giedroyc helped launch the career of writers who grew up abroad and began to write in Polish during exile, such as Andrzej Busza, Bogdan Czaykowski, and Adam Czerniawski. After 1956, he published more frequently works by writers living in Poland, such as Marek Hłasko, Piotr Guzy, Sławomir Mrożek, Janusz Szpotański, Leszek Kołakowski, Bogdan Madej, Jacek Bieriezin, Stanisław Barańczak, Kazimierz Brandys, Kazimierz Orłowski, and Adam Zagajewski.

The writers who published in *Kultura* were linked by the historical experience of East-Central Europe (next to the ones mentioned above e.g. Henryk Grynberg and Leopold Tyrmand). The literature published by the Instytut Literacki was part (certainly the most important part) of émigré literature, and *Kultura's* contributors also published in other publishing houses. The works published by *Kultura* were part of émigré literature, which differed from the literature published in Poland, as we shall now show.

First, émigré literature was not burdened with “Socialist Realism,” which was a significant problem for the literature in Poland, both as a biographico-literary experience and as a reaction to the Stalinism of the 1950s, between 1956 and 1990. Émigré writers did not encounter this problem. A second characteristic of émigré literature was remembering the fate of Polish citizens on the eastern lands of the Second Republic during World War II. The taboos

in Poland encompassed such topics as the Soviet occupation of Poland in 1939, the Soviet concentration camps, and the fate of Poles in the Soviet Union, especially the murders in the Katyń forest. For émigré writers, these were matters of historical truth and literary language.

With a few exceptions, such as the work of Gombrowicz and Pankowski, émigré literature preserved remembered language; Miłosz, Józef Mackiewicz, Haupt, Stempowski, Vincenz and others salvaged memories of the Republic of many nations, cultures, languages, and religions. Starting with the mid-1950s, the language of literature published in the People's Republic of Poland presented the so-called living post-Yalta speech, including the discourse of marginal groups, colloquial speech deviations from "official" or literary language, propaganda, or news-speak.

Polish émigré literature after 1945 was a continuation of prewar literature. It was created mostly by writers who started in the 1930s and for whom writing in exile became an extension of their earlier work. Works of Miłosz, Gombrowicz, Herling, Mackiewicz, and many others illustrate this continuity beautifully.

It was only after 1956 that émigré literature gradually came to be published in the Poland, in large measure thanks to the activities of *Kultura*. Between 1956 and 1976, the state publishing houses published, however, only few works by émigré writers. A radical change took place after 1976, when an illegal publishing market, outside the reach of the censor, emerged: the communists lost their monopoly over books. After 1976, émigré literature – mostly books published by *Kultura*, such as works by Miłosz, Gombrowicz, Herling-Grudziński, Józef Mackiewicz, Wierzyński, Stempowski, and Wat – reached readers at home and exerted a crucial influence on literature and criticism in Poland.

From the start, literature was constantly present in *Kultura* and was represented by all genres and translations. Giedroyc published poems in every issue; however, the most important and recognizable genres were those of narrative prose: journalism, reportage, the narrative essay, short story, and the diary. *Kultura* also published sociological and philosophical texts, articles on the history of science on political theory, and other subjects.

The essay and diary soon became *Kultura's* "corporate symbols." They made important achievements of today's Polish literature possible in the discursive prose of diaries, essays, and that peculiar hybrid of autobiographical memoir and short story, cultivated, for example, by Gombrowicz, Herling-Grudziński, Stempowski, Vincenz, Miłosz, Jeleński, Haupt, Józef Mackiewicz, Bobkowski, Tyrmand, and Kołakowski.

In the 1980s, twentieth-century émigré literature became not only an active ingredient in a Polish literature that no longer distinguished between the

People's Republic of Poland and émigré literature, it also became a way for an unexpected continuation. One can say that in the 1980s young writers took on issues which seemed, for those abroad, to have been exhausted a long time ago: the condition of émigré, the relationship between émigré and the homeland, or the intellectual responsibilities of an émigré writer. These themes, which the older émigré writers (such as Gombrowicz, Miłosz, Herling-Grudziński, Wittlin, Józef Mackiewicz, Stempowski, and Jeleński) tackled, revived unexpectedly in the 1980s in the essays and poetry of writers born in Poland, like Marek Nowakowski, Stanisław Barańczak, Adam Zagajewski, Wojciech Karpiński, Manuela Gretkowska, Bronisław Wildstein, and Janusz Rudnicki.

Giedroyc never formulated a literary program of his own. Inviting writers to collaborate, he only asked that their work represent the highest literary standards, a variety of themes and political views, and that they distinguish themselves in their originality, even at the price of arousing the aesthetic or ideological indignation of the readership. Giedroyc preferred literature that had a clear social calling, touched on myths of collective consciousness, and provoked discussion. If he disagreed with the author, he would still publish the work of eminent writers, as was the case of Józef Mackiewicz and Gombrowicz. He encouraged writers to break conventions, shatter stereotypes, shape new view points, and demystify. He published writers for whom political freedom expressed itself in free speech. In an important column of *Kultura*, the "Wolna trybuna" (Free Tribune), Giedroyc featured comments on the exclusive responsibility of its writers.

Kultura happily published young writers who were rebellious, considered controversial, but intellectually original, such as Marek Hłasko and Sławomir Mrożek. As early as 1949, Giedroyc wrote about *Kultura's* "ceaseless effort" to publish not writers who belong to the official literary establishment, but young writers who, independent of their age, tried to make their own way, without opportunism, with a hostile attitude to all stereotypes." *Kultura* published works that were politically indifferent, but disliked those that were "politically submissive" (Ptańska-Wójcik).

In attracting the most eminent writers to *Kultura*, Giedroyc linked the problematics of literature with the issues of public life, such as it appeared in the books of Kazimierz Orłoś, Marek Nowakowski, Włodzimierz Odojewski, and Bogdan Madej. Articles about the most important writers and works of twentieth-century literature, discussions about the role of the writer in society, about the writer's place within the community, about the relationship between art and reality, about the moral choices of writers and their consequences for literature were constantly present in the monthly, often in the form of essays by Miłosz, Józef Mackiewicz, Sławomir Mrożek, Wojciech

Skalmowski, and Roman Gorczyński. These themes also appeared in the diaries that Gombrowicz, Stempowski, and Herling-Grudziński published monthly in *Kultura*. Characteristically, one of the first discussions in *Kultura* dealt with Miłosz's 1951 decision to stay abroad, and the assessment he gave in "Nie" (No) of the intellectuals' place in the communist system. All of Miłosz's books, especially *Captive Mind*, Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk* and *Diary*, and Herling's *Upiory rewolucji* (Phantoms of Revolution), *A World Apart*, and *Dziennik pisany nocą* introduced an intellectual dimension into émigré literature that was previously unknown, one that transgressed far beyond the current social and literary affairs. Another important discussion in *Kultura* dealt with the relationship of the émigré writer to Communism in Poland. Émigré writers living in London considered it the duty of émigrés to boycott all institutions in Poland, including the publishing houses. For its part, *Kultura* held on to its idea of transforming the attitude of the intelligentsia in Poland, and stated that the émigré writer must seek readers also in countries governed by communists. This discussion, which took place up until the mid-1970s, was actually without foundation because the communist censors, with negligible exceptions, forbade the publication of émigré books (Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Ptasńska-Wójcik).

Giedroyc's close ties with the Congress for Cultural Freedom were influential in raising the profile of the books published by the Instytut Literacki. Thanks to Jeleński, the periodicals subsidized by the Congress, which played such an important role in Europe, became interested in the work of Miłosz and Gombrowicz, as well as in several writers living in Poland. The critic François Bondy, who was affiliated with *Kultura* and was especially interested in the literature of East-Central Europe, served as facilitator. At the same time, the *Biblioteka Kultury* published with the Congress' financial assistance Polish translations of books by Simone Weil, Raymond Aron, and others. When it came to be known in 1967 that the Congress was partly financed by the CIA, Giedroyc refused accepting all support coming from it.

1969 was an important date in *Kultura's* history. That year two prominent writers affiliated with *Kultura*, Gombrowicz and Stempowski, had died. In place of their diaries, Herling-Grudziński's *Dziennik pisany nocą* began to appear. Mieroszewski died in 1976 (Habielski in Mieroszewski *Final klasycznej Europy*; Kowalczyk *Giedroyc*; Wandycz; K. Pomian *W kręgu*). At the same time, new collaborators joined: Kołakowski, K. Pomian, Wojciech Skalmowski (pseud. Maciej Broński), Michał Heller (pseud. Adam Kruczek), Leopold Unger (pseud. Brukselczyk), Andrzej Chilecki.

Kultura did not separate political from literary discourse. Political issues were presented through journalism as well as in the essays and literary nar-

rative forms. It was similar with moral, philosophical, and cultural issues, for example, in the work of Herling-Grudziński, Miłosz, Kołakowski, and Stempowski.

Faithful to Giedroyc's conception, *Kultura* maintained close contact with writers and readers in Poland. In *Kultura's* assessment, most writers after 1945 collaborated with the Communist Party and were corrupted by it. However, *Kultura* did not renounce contact with the writers who supported the Stalinist regime between 1945 and 1955, if they were willing to change their stance. For *Kultura*, the turning point in assessing the political views of the intellectuals was 1956. It welcomed all intellectuals who opposed the PUWP after 1956. However, the Editorial Board (Giedroyc, Herling-Grudziński, Mieroszewski, and Hertz) had no illusions about the attitudes of most intellectuals in Poland: they considered them to be conformists incapable of making any gestures of opposition against the communist regime; many of them even supported the communists' hostile attitude towards the émigrés. Giedroyc agreed with Stempowski that older writers took advantage of privileges that other professional groups did not have, while at the same time viewing themselves as martyrs. Up until the mid-1970s, the hypocrisy and cowardice of the intellectuals in the People's Republic of Poland were unmasked mostly in the pages of *Kultura*. Herling-Grudziński devoted much space to this topic in his essays in *Dziennik pisany nocą*. "It is necessary to exert some sort of moral pressure on the literati in the homeland," Giedroyc wrote to Stempowski in July 1956, "to prevent them from debasing themselves anew. [...] We cannot allow literature to break the tradition of Strug and Żeromski." But Giedroyc criticized not only writers in the People's Republic of Poland: he also polemicized with émigré writers in London, whom he considered as talentless imitators of the romantics.

Giedroyc conjectured that the articles published in *Kultura* would stimulate opposition against the communist regime in Poland and encourage writers to abandon their opportunism in relation to the PUWP. In the Polish literary tradition, represented by Żeromski and Struga, writing was not a craft but rather an ethos, a social and national mission on the basis of which writers would build their moral authority. For this reason, *Kultura*, most often in Herling-Grudziński's writing and Giedroyc's correspondence, would speak of a rejection of this tradition by writers living in the communist system, inferring that they were subservient and cowardly. In *Kultura's* opinion, it was incumbent on writers to make of themselves examples for readers and other citizens. In 1957, *Kultura* issued an appeal to intellectuals living in Poland: "We appeal to writers, journalists, and scholars – build up the pressure of public opinion, carry motions at meetings, write articles in the press de-

manding that the embargo on the literary and scholarly work of Poles abroad be lifted. Even if your protest does not bring concrete results, it will be a witness of the resistance of Polish culture against stupefaction” (Mieroszewski, “Dwa fortepiany”). *Biblioteka Kultury* was launched with Gombrowicz’s *Trans-Atlantyka*, *Ślub* (Marriage; 1953), Miłosz’s *Captive Mind* (1953), *Zdobycie władzy* (Seizure of Power), *Dolina Issy* (Issa Valley; 1955), Pankowski’s *Smagła pogoda* (Stormy Weather; 1955), and Parnicki’s *Koniec Zgody Narodów* (End of the Understanding of Nations; 1955). The publications that followed, Leo Lipski’s stories in *Dzień i noc* (Day and Night), Miłosz’s *Traktat poetycki* (A Treatise on Poetry), Józef Mackiewicz’s novel *Kontra*, Gombrowicz’s *Dziennik 1953–1956* (Diary 1953–1956), Andrzej Bobkowski’s *Szkice piórkami. Franja 1940–1944* (Pen Sketches: France 1940–1947, all in 1957 – were all difficult works. They shattered the national mythology and demanded a revision of Polish mentality. All of them ignited heated discussions among the émigrés. Today, each of these books belongs to the canon of twentieth-century Polish literature. Very early, in the mid-1950s, Giedroyc began to publish books written in the People’s Republic of Poland. In 1958, those books included Marek Hłasko’s *Cmentarze* (Cemetery) and Stanisław Rembek’s novel *W polu* (In Action).

The profile of *Biblioteka Kultury* crystallized in the early years of the series. Giedroyc published authors of all generations, all writers with radical political and aesthetic views, practitioners of various genres, and, above all, those that broached national taboos and stereotypes, posed existential questions, and searched for a new model of Polishness in contemporary civilization.

After 1956, Giedroyc became the only independent authority for many writers in Poland, and *Kultura* the most important Polish publishing house. Symbolic were the visits by the eminent writers Andrzej Stawar and Aleksander Wat, who were affiliated with the communist movement before the war. Stawar, employing Marxism as a critical methodology already in the 1930s, published his anti-Stalinist journalistic work *Pisma ostatnie* (Final Letters) in the *Biblioteka Kultury*, and shortly died afterwards. Wat, who was a communist sympathizer before the war and was deported during the war by the NKVD, became the author of one of the most important Polish émigré books, an autobiography that unmasked the mechanism of the Soviet system entitled *Mój wiek* (My Age). This autobiography was one of the few eminent books that Giedroyc decided not to publish. It was soon translated, however, into French, German, and English.

Up until 1956, contact between *Kultura* and the writers in Poland was infrequent because few people were allowed to travel outside the country. *Kultura* was under observation by the communist secret police, and every contact

was followed by repression. After 1956, visits by writers from Poland to the headquarters of *Kultura* became more frequent, and in the 1970s *Kultura* became a Mecca for Polish intellectuals (Ptasińska-Wójcik).

Once *Kultura*'s support of Gomułka in 1956 led to disillusionment, it ceased to rely on the legal dissemination of émigré works in Poland. As Giedroyc wrote:

Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that *Kultura* paradoxically has become a source of discomfort [in the People's Republic of Poland]. [...] At any rate, I have observed a sharpening [of communist politics in Poland]. *Kultura* is undoubtedly under the fire from the censor. Its issues are regularly confiscated. [...] As] you know, I was from the beginning quite skeptical about the right of circulation in the homeland. My minimal expectations were only that *Kultura* reach without difficulty magazines, libraries, universities, as well as journalists and literati. (letter to Jerzy Zawieyski of November 17, 1956, qtd in Ptasińska-Wójcik 136)

Giedroyc knew that the communist censor would not allow the import of any work that the PUWP considered as anti-communist. *Kultura*, therefore, began to employ sophisticated means of smuggling its books into Poland, for example, by replacing the covers with those of typical books of Soviet propaganda or by producing them in miniature format with very small type (comparable to the size of a cigarette package). One must remember that in the years when *Kultura* began its "long march" towards achieving a liberalization of Polish censorship, there were as yet no television, internet, photocopiers, videocassettes, tape recorders, or any other means of facilitating the dissemination of information and publications. Even the sale of typewriters was controlled. For this reason, the greatest threats to the governments in communist countries were literature and the public pronouncements of writers. Communists had a monopoly over their content and completely controlled the activities of the magazine editors and publishers. *Kultura* took up the fight to shatter this monopoly. Knowing, however, how brutal the system of communist repression was toward people demanding free speech, *Kultura* did not demand radical activities of writers. It did support all sorts of testimonies of resistance, aware that in a communist country every gesture of protest had a political, symbolic, and moral meaning, and, more than that, it became a model for others to imitate. Giedroyc thought that the only way to force the communists to liberalize censorship was to encourage writers in the People's Republic of Poland to publicly protest against the restriction of free speech. Each such protest laid bare the falseness of the official ideology, and revealed the lies, and, above all, the repressive character of the communist power in Poland.

In the 1950s and 1960s, writers who left Poland for a few weeks or permanently (Miłosz, Stawar, Hłasko, Wat, Kołakowski, Mroźek, Herbert), began to

collaborate with *Kultura*. They risked having their works placed on the index of prohibited authors in Poland, which meant prohibition of publication and reviewing their books in the Polish press; once they returned, their passport could be withdrawn, they could be prohibited from leaving the country, and sometimes even dismissed from their job.

In the 1970s, especially after the establishment of the so-called “underground press,” writers living in Poland would send Giedroyc their book manuscripts. Most of them, for example Kazimierz Orłoś and Marek Nowakowski, published under pseudonyms; the best-known pseudonyms were Tomasz Staliński (Stefan Kisielewski), Gaston de Cerizay (Stanisław Mackiewicz), Pelikan (Zbigniew Florczak), Socjusz (Zdzisław Najder), Marek Tarniewski (Jakub Karpiński), Maciej Poleski (Czesław Bielecki), and Smecz (Tomasz Jastrun).

6. *Kultura*'s Achievements

The communists ruthlessly fought *Kultura*'s work by means of political propaganda, the secret police, and disinformation, both in Poland and in the West. Nota bene, the titles of two of the most important communist weeklies in Poland, *Polityka* and *Kultura*, were borrowed from the two magazines created by Giedroyc (Jeleński “*Kultura*”). The communists most violently attacked *Kultura* throughout the 1950s and 60s. The exception was 1956–57, when *Kultura* could disseminate its publications in Poland, even though it had no right of circulation. Library regulations were liberalized, and the postal service once again began to deliver *Kultura* and books about which the majority of readers had never heard earlier. Information about *Kultura* cropped up in the newspapers, and for a few months one could even import *Kultura* into Poland as customs were practically inexistent. As a result, *Kultura* penetrated into the consciousness of the Polish intelligentsia. However, shortly afterwards, when this liberalism ended, the communist papers began to criticize *Kultura* fiercely, criticizing it emphatically (no other manner of writing was permitted). As a result, *Kultura*, as an institution representing Polish exiles, émigrés, and enemies of the communist system, was treated by western public opinion (which was dominated by the left) with skepticism or indifference. In Poland, it was represented as an institution financed by the CIA to carry out espionage, while its editors and collaborators were depicted as corrupt, frustrated, and working on the basest of motives (Ptasińska-Wójcik).

However, in the 1970s, a side-effect of these ritualized ideological attacks became obvious. Many people thought that since the communist were attack-

ing *Kultura*, it must be a good and important journal. A few, specialist libraries had a collection of the Instytut Literacki's publications; however, special permission was needed to access them. Nonetheless, *Kultura* forged its own legend in the 1970s, based on its accomplishments, and such repressions in the People's Republic of Poland as the trials of Hanna Rewska and the "mountaineers," as well as the attempt to put Stanisław Mackiewicz on trial. Contrary to the communists' intentions, these measures served to integrate the left-leaning intelligentsia in Poland into *Kultura*'s circle and to forge a positive relationship with the émigrés.

The growth of interest in the publications of *Kultura* and in émigré literature in general was linked in the 1970s above all to generational changes and more frequent travels to the West. In 1976, an independent publishing market came about in Poland, primarily reprinting émigré publications. When Solidarity functioned legally (1981), access to *Kultura*'s publications and other émigré books was practically unrestricted, although formally still illegal, as in the years 1956–57. During the martial law, *Kultura* was accessible only through the distribution system of the underground publishing houses, at the risk of severe repression. (G. Pomian "Lata Solidarności"). Of particular importance was Radio Free Europe, which ordered every issue of the monthly and the Instytut's most important books (Tatrowski; Machcewicz).

For several decades, *Kultura* served as an informal center of research for Polish and East-Central European affairs, a publishing house, an archive, a library, and an office documenting the history of Polish emigration. Between 1947 and 2000, *Kultura* published 512 titles with a total print run of five million. The words that Mieroszewski wrote already in 1954 remained pertinent throughout *Kultura*'s whole history:

Everything that was published whenever and wherever in Polish [...] is collected, catalogued, and stored. Against the background of the current crisis in emigration, against the background of the decay and collapse of so many authorities and institutions, the fact that *Kultura* not only continues but is evolving takes on special significance. If our journal was dependent on leaders, heads of state and parties, and other so-called 'agents,' they would have buried it long ago. Happily, *Kultura* is dependent on a wide circle of Readers and friends. ("Budujemy dom").

The publications of the Instytut Literacki were a primary source for independent magazines and publishing houses working outside the purview of the censor. In the years 1977–90, 1,073 volumes of reprints of émigré publications appeared in Poland, not counting magazines. Several hundred illegal magazines benefited from reprinting what *Kultura* published in article or book form years earlier (Supruniuk vols 1 and 2). Giedroyc gladly agreed to the reprint of *Kultura*'s books, insisting only that the copyright belonged to the

Instytut Literacki or that a payment of three percent of the profits be deposited to the account of the Kultura Fund in Poland. The most important publishers collaborating with *Kultura* were NOWA (director Mirosław Chojecki) and CDN (director Czesław Bielecki). The authority and trust that *Kultura* earned in exile meant that international organizations and Polonia institutions abroad entrusted Giedroyc with funds to assist in Poland.

Giedroyc gave significant financial assistance to the Komitet Kultury Niezależnej (Committee for Independent Culture) and the Fundusz Wydawnictw Niezależnych (Fund for Independent Publishers) in Poland. All magazines that dealt with East-Central European issues benefited from *Kultura's* financial assistance; they included the *Niepodległość* (Independence), *ABC*, *Nowa Koalicja* (New Coalition), *Obóz* (Camp), and the *Tygodnik Mazowski* (Mazovian Weekly). The latter was published from around the beginning of the martial law up until the elections in 1989, in a print run of approximately eighty thousand. Its editors launched in the Spring of 1989 the largest daily in Poland, the *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Newspaper of the Electorate).

Most of the aid was directed to publishing houses in Warsaw, Cracow (which was the largest recipient of books and printing equipment), Wrocław, and Poznań. In 1985–86, the program “Video” was launched in Paris, thanks to which current affairs were documented on films that were then distributed in Poland. From 1983 to 1987, when subscriptions to *Kultura* were at their height, Giedroyc helped several dozen magazines, publishing houses, and organizations annually. Their subscriptions fluctuated. As Mirosław Adam Supruniuk has calculated, the minimum monthly subsidy was thirty to fifty dollars; the organizations and the publishing houses received a one-time subsidy of thousand to five thousand dollars, or five hundred to thousand dollars monthly. These were very large sums then: the average salary in Poland was approximately twenty to twenty-five dollars.

Kultura gave much support to Polish translations of scholarly and literary works, particularly from East-Central Europe, and mostly Russian and Ukrainian literary works. By simultaneously publishing books from the West and East, Giedroyc wanted to confront both experiences, and, above all, to show the East European experience. *Kultura* was a mediator between East and West; it was the first Polish publisher to issue many dissident Russian writers, including Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrej Sacharow, Andrei Amalrik, Andrei Siniavski, and Iuri Daniel. *Kultura* also published Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Eugenio Reale, Aleksander Weisberg-Cybulski, Simone Weil, George Orwell, Raymond Aron, Albert Camus, Graham Green, Aldous Huxley, Daniel Bell, Michel Garder, Jeanne Hersch, and Zbigniew Brzeziński, as well as Milovan Đilas, Boris Pasternak, Borys Lewickij, Mihajlo Mihajlov, and others.

Several issues of *Kultura* appeared as monographs in other languages: the Czech and Slovak issue of 1969/nr. 10 was dedicated to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia; a special supplement in the years 1952–1953 and a monograph issue in 1984 were in German; issues in Russian appeared in 1960, 1971, and 1981. The special anthology “Rozstrzelane odrodzenie” (Executed Rebirth) was published in Ukrainian (Ławrynenko), and a Hungarian issue was in the works but did not appear. Giedroyc also rallied Czech, Polish, Russian, and Hungarian opposition activists to support declarations of independence for the Ukraine. Though *Kultura* was located in France, no issue was prepared in French; Poles belonging to the French intellectuals spread the word about *Kultura*’s significance (Jeleński, *Le Debat*; K. Pomian, *Les Amis de ‘Kultura’*). In February 1990, the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich bestowed an international prize on *Kultura* and its Czech sister exile journal *Svědectví*.

The most difficult period for *Kultura* came, paradoxically, after the fall of Communism in 1989 and the lifting of censorship in Poland in April 1990. *Kultura* lost its privileged independent position, and became one of many uncensored periodicals that shaped Polish public opinion. Its voice ceased to be a reference point and the arbiter of national affairs. *Kultura*’s authors now published also in Poland, and the long-anticipated materialization of the monthly’s “political line” had to confront the lightning-quick political transformations in new Poland. In the new political system, *Kultura* took more and more often sides in Poland’s internal, often ideologized, discussions, while former contributors distanced themselves from it.

From a journal focused on the exile, *Kultura* turned increasingly into a national journal, as attested to not only by the issues it dealt with, but also by the growing role of national authors. From a literary-societal monthly, it transformed itself into a political periodical, although the editors never gave up their cultural columns, especially that on literature (G. Pomian)

One could now purchase *Kultura* in Poland’s kiosks as one could other newspapers and periodicals, but it could not increase significantly its readership. Nevertheless, the Polish intellectual elite read it, and so it was able to provoke and generate polemics in political and cultural affairs up to its very last issue. In 1993, for example, it published a questionnaire entitled “Pisarze niedocenieni/pisarze przecenieni” (Undervalued Writers/Overvalued Writers), modeled on a questionnaire in *Le Figaro*. It stirred up intense emotions by confronting the private opinions of known critics with the official literary canon. *Kultura* now also became a subject of interest to historians and artists. Books began to be written about *Kultura*, anthologies were compiled of its articles (Tyrmand; *Zostało*; G.&K Pomian; G. Pomian), documentary films were made about it (Agnieszka Holland; Kuczyński; Szczepański), memoirs were

written by many writers (*Zostało tylko słowo; O "Kulturze";* Giedroyc Autobiografia; Herling-Grudziński and Bolecki Rozmowy w Dragonei*). Giedroyc's correspondence with Bobkowski, Gombrowicz, Jeleński, Miłosz, Stempowski, and Wańkowski was published. Interviews appeared, scholarly articles, and bibliographies were published, conference sessions and exhibits were organized. By the end of the 1990s, *Kultura* was a symbol of the most valued heritage of the post-1945 Polish exile culture. After 1989, it became both trendy and amusing in political circles to confess to the systematic reading of *Kultura*, a matter that the post-communists Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lech Wałęsa both admitted. Giedroyc kept his distance from these ritualistic declarations of recognition. His symbolic gesture was to refuse a diploma bestowed on him in 1989 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for his service in disseminating of Polish culture abroad, and his refusal to travel to Poland after the fall of Communism. Giedroyc died in 2000. According to his wishes, *Kultura* stopped publication after his death.

More than half a century of work made *Kultura's* output the most important testimony concerning the exile attitudes towards Communism, independence, the fate of the East-Central European nations, international affairs, western perceptions of post-Yalta Europe, as well as the evolution of the communist system and society. *Kultura* also had a key role in acquainting Polish readers with western Sovietology, and western economic, literary, and cultural issues.

For several generations of Poles, *Kultura* became a symbolic rescue boat, a raft that helped salvage the most valuable treasures of the national heritage after the catastrophe of World War II. "I am completely convinced," wrote Barańczak, "that if it were not for the books smuggled across the border, secretly circulated, borrowed for one night and feverishly absorbed, my generation would not have been capable of evading spiritual stunting."

Kultura, in Zbigniew Brzeziński's opinion, was a symbol of historical continuity and a weapon in the political battle. Furthermore, it was highly successful in both arenas. As a symbol of historical continuity, *Kultura* kept independent Polish political thought alive in times of unprecedented darkness. Stalinism, even more than Hitlerism, was apparently capable of suppressing fires and demoralizing the spirit. *Kultura* was a shelter and a road sign for those who never lost hope in a free and democratic Poland. It became a symbolic continuation of the great exiles of the nineteenth century, preserving thus a tradition that connected the history of Poland to Paris (G. & K. Pomian 83).

Kultura's power lay, however, in its opening of a Polish public discourse about the future and about a new intellectual and moral challenge after World

War II, rather than about its ability to maintain historical continuity. Its Editorial Board and collaborators were witnesses to the contact between the eastern and western parts of Europe. *Kultura* confronted pre- and post-war Poland from the European perspective, and Western Europe from an East-Central European one. Its contributors described Poland and East-Central Europe from the perspective that represented a cultural challenge to the Western world. *Kultura* showed a society imprisoned after 1945 in a mono-ethnic bell-glass of national Communism, which was shielded from the standards and issues of Western societies: openness, multiculturalism, and tolerance. Its more than fifty years of output turned out to be a unique connection between the historical experience of East-Central Europe and its opening onto modernity.

Translated from the Polish by Diana Kuprel

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