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**PARISIAN CULTURE'S VIEWS ON EASTERN  
EUROPE AS A FACTOR IN CONTEMPORARY  
POLISH FOREIGN POLICY**

*by Iwona Hofman*

When analyzing events which unfolded in the Ukraine during the final months of 2004 and the involvement of Polish politicians and public opinion in the struggle for the preservation of the democratic character of presidential elections, a question arises regarding the connection of their actions with the political projects of Jerzy Giedroyć, the founder and sole editor of an influential magazine and a centre of political thought, which was *Culture*, published in Maisons-Laffitte, near Paris, in the years 1947–2000. Historians and political scientists rightly emphasize the fact that the „Eastern doctrine”, also known as the ULB doctrine (from the abbreviation of „Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus”), has been a constant element of Polish foreign policy since 1989. Generally speaking, Giedroyć was convinced that nationalist impulses would eventually destroy the Russian empire from within, and a sovereign Poland would gain three new neighbours in the East: Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. This process was expected to take place in the near future, as foreseen by *Culture* contributors who called on the émigrés from Eastern Europe to work together in laying solid foundations for the future partnership. Restricted in his political activities, Jerzy Giedroyć believed that words could be translated into actions. He also realized that a magazine whose program is characterized by far-reaching visions based on dismantling the European order shaped in Yalta, must first of all fight national prejudices and stereotypes, present true history and show the common fate of the then enslaved nations. He aimed his efforts at the East, striving – through his brilliant political writings – to mend relations, in particular between Poland and Lithuania, and Poland and Ukraine. He saw the security and position of Poland in Europe as contingent on good neighbourly relations with its

neighbours. Close ties with the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus were also to counterbalance the imperial policy of Russia and reverse the consequences of Poland's geopolitical position. Even before WWII, Giedroyć as the editor of „Bunt Młodych” (*The Youth Revolt*) and „Polityka” (*Politics*) magazines was haunted by the idea best expressed in the title of Adolf Bocheński's book „Między Niemcami a Rosją” (*Between Germany and Russia*, 1937). Political instinct told him that the only way to solve this dilemma was to forge strong ties with nations once living in a multicultural, powerful Poland. On the other hand, the reality of 1920s and 1930s presented him with scenes of forced polonization of eastern areas of Poland, unsound nationalistic policies of the government and a complete lack of understanding of Ukrainian and Lithuanian aspirations.

Born in the East, in Mińsk Litewski, Giedroyć expertly grasped these problems and was highly critical of the contemporary policies of the Polish government. He understood the East and did not feel inferior towards the West, which can be clearly seen both in his government work and his writings. For a short period of time he studied the history of Ukraine at the University of Warsaw. Russian culture fascinated him. Among his friends were Dimitriy Filosofov, Stanisław Stempowski, Ivan Kedryn-Rudnicki, as well as Henryk Józewski, administrator of turbulent Volhynia. Due to fundamental matters of principle, he embraced the federalist ideas of Józef Piłsudski (whose memory he cultivated all his life). In the 1930s, recalling the traditions of Jagiellonian Poland, Giedroyć formulated an outline of a program for Eastern Europe, later to be creatively developed in the pages of *Culture*. Some of its aspects, like antinationalism, respect for the rights of national minorities, support of federative plans, were reflected in Giedroyć's post-war views on Eastern Europe. They went against the expectations of post-1945 Polish emigration and even sparked a serious conflict between the Paris centre and the inflexible London Poles. As early as in 1951, in response to the famous letter written by Father Józef Majewski concerning the symbolic relinquishment of Polish Vilnius and Lvov, Giedroyć firmly stated that he considered borders of post-war Poland final. This opinion was not acceptable to thousands of refugees from Eastern parts of Poland; the Polish government-in-exile, along with public opinion in Polish London, steadfastly, almost until the end of its formal existence, demanded the return to the terms of the Treaty of Riga. From among numerous articles written on the subject, two need to be mentioned: „Przeciw upiorom przeszłości” (*Against the Ghosts of the Past*) by Józef Łobodowski (*Culture* 1952, Nos 2–3) and „Nota redakcji. Nieporozumienie czy tani patriotyzm” (*Note from the Editor. Misunderstanding or Cheap Patriotism*; *Culture* 1953, No 1), as the symptomatic beginning of *Culture's* interest in Eastern Europe.

The idea of Poland reaching agreement with its neighbours in the East on fully sovereign terms soon found an ardent promoter in Juliusz Mieroszewski, „the

Londoner”, Giedroyć’s closest associate, who assiduously used his exquisite penmanship to transform the ideas of his „non-writing” boss. He gave them the air of a rational political prognosis, setting the idea of partnership within the reality of divided and then gradually coalescing Europe. Mieroszewski’s remarks remain relevant until today, which is shown e.g. by the reprint of his 1974 article „Rosyjski kompleks polski i obszar ULB” („Russia’s *Polish complex* and the ULB Area”) in „Gazeta Wyborcza” (No 284.4695, 4–5 XII 2004) as a reflection summarizing discussions about the Polish presence in the Ukraine during the „orange revolution”. In this text Mieroszewski uses for the first time the abbreviation „ULB”, saying, among other things, that this area determined the shape of Polish-Russian relations due to its status as an object of rivalry between these two countries for the domination in Central Eastern Europe, with the assumption of a special cultural role by Poland. Historical-political analyses by „The Londoner”, published in the 70s, established him as a leading expert on Eastern Europe. In his regularly forwarded commentaries, written with the assistance of Giedroyć whose advice he sought by mail, he claimed that, for example, „In right circumstances, to rebuild our status in relation to Russia – it will be possible when nations separating Poland from the heartland of Russia will be certain of our friendship and support” („Może zdarzyć się i tak” (*It Might Happen Like That*), *Culture* 1970, No 4), or „The crux of Polish Eastern policy should be the recognition of the right to self-determination and independent statehood of all nations subjugated by the Soviets” („Polska Ostpolitik” (*Polish Ostpolitik*), *Culture* 1973, No 6). These declarations were highly significant in the light of London Poles’ refusal to recognize Polish post-war borders. Realistically assessing the balance of power in Europe, Mieroszewski saw partnership with the ULB area as an opportunity to form a successful link between Polish Eastern and Western policies. He kept stressing the necessity of replacing the anachronistic concept of the „bulwark of Christianity” with a newly-coined phrase, signalling a change in the vision of Europe: Poland as a bridge, a keystone of Central Europe. He thought that, having found in this formula a new historical sense of Polish statehood, it would be beneficial to sacrifice those elements of the tragic collective memory which weighed heavily on his generation.

The value of Mieroszewski’s writing lies in the fact that it provided a sturdy foundation for future good relations with non-imperialist Russia and independent Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. He wrote about historical disagreements, causes of mistrust, roots of hurtful stereotypes, the political situation in the inter-war period, Ukrainian culture, the tragedy of peoples deprived of their nationality by Russia. His far-sightedness allowed him to see twenty-five and fifty years into the future of Europe and he appealed to the emigrants for tolerance, understanding and support of political nations being reborn in the East. His writings, while forming the intellectual core of the Eastern doctrine, were at the same time of primary

importance to Giedroyc, which fact was reflected in his publishing initiatives and the profile of his monthly. Mieroszewski found many continuators who further developed the study of policy towards Eastern Europe within the context of world politics in the 1980s and 1990s. These matters were discussed at great length by e.g. Bohdan Osadczuk, Benedykt Heydenkorn, Leopold Unger, Adam Kruczek; some of them previously edited „The Ukrainian Chronicle”. The long presence of this column in *Culture* (1952–1999) seems to be the fullest proof of Giedroyc’s engagement in the process of shaping Ukrainian civic society. Periodically appearing „Chronicles” were prepared – apart from the aforementioned authors – also by Ukrainian writers and activists, such as Borys Lewyćkyj, Iwan Łysiak-Rudnicki, and careful attention was paid to the reliability of sources and the credibility and objectivity of the author’s commentary in the situation where, due to the openness of the magazine, uncensored information could reach Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Russian émigrés. Similar role was played by reports and reviews, like for example „Przegląd czasopism ukraińskich” („The Review of Ukrainian Magazines”), „Wydawnictwa ukraińskie” („Ukrainian Publications”), „Niepodległa Ukraina i Polska” („Independent Ukraine and Poland”), „Z prasy ukraińskiej” („From the Ukrainian Press”) or the writings of Józef Łobodowski, Jerzy Stempowski, Jurij Szewelow and Iwan Koszeliwiec. Lithuanian and Belorussian chronicles were also published and, in a particularly significant gesture, the columns of the magazine were made available to representatives of the Eastern European emigration. Constant progress on the road to dialogue and agreement was being made, and various initiatives moved beyond the boundaries of journalistic discourse. Those include, e.g. the participation of Jerzy Giedroyc and Józef Czapski in the Congress of Cultural Freedom in Berlin (1950), which allowed them to establish international contacts, the signing of the declaration on Ukrainian independence (1977), well-planned publications – foreign-language issues of *Culture*, the „Rozstrzelane odrodzenie” (*Executed Renaissance*) anthology, seen in Kiev as the seed of nationalist ferment, and literature and documentation presenting the past and present Russia and the ULB area. The recently published correspondence of Jerzy Giedroyc with Ukrainian activists in exile casts a new light on a number of political circumstances rooted in history which unfortunately made cooperation difficult.

Giedroyc’s political views were fully reflected in the pages of his monthly. Statistical analysis of the 637 issues of *Culture* shows that problems contained within the formula „Poland-Russia-Ukraine-Lithuania-Belarus” were regularly discussed. A special way of implementing his doctrine was the so-called „personal interventionism” in „Notes from the Editor”, undertaken in support of schools, magazines and social and cultural associations of national minorities in Poland, stressing the need for the study of unknown historical facts, and scientific and economic cooperation after 1989. Critical of the foreign policy of the IIIrd Republic, Giedroyc

condemned the verbosity of treaties and official decisions, which showed - on paper only - the desired directions of diplomatic activity. In interviews with Polish reporters he kept returning to the idea of strategic partnership with the Ukraine, the necessity of normalizing relations with Russia, and exercising restraint in dealing with the past.

In the most-quoted passage from „Przesłanie” (*Message*), widely interpreted as Giedroyc's political testament, he says: „(...) our Eastern policy could be our chance. Without succumbing to national megalomania we need to conduct an independent policy, instead of acting as customers of the United States or any other power. Our main task should be to normalize relations with Russia and Germany, while at the same time protecting the independence of the Ukraine, Belarus and Baltic states, with their full cooperation. We need to realize that the stronger our position in the East, the more respected in Western Europe we will be”<sup>1</sup>.

One wonders how Giedroyc - in light of these words - would rate Polish involvement in presidential elections in the Ukraine, taking into account the fact that the significance of his *Message* was stressed by, among others, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in his declaration of the primary aims of foreign policy, and that Giedroyc himself expressed satisfaction with the fact that Poland was the first country to recognize Ukrainian independence (1991).

The calendar of the „orange revolution” is determined by those days in November and December 2004 which irrevocably transformed the image of Ukraine in the eyes of the world. Politicians in Warsaw, ordinary people and the media spontaneously manifest support for the Ukrainian democratic movement, identified with the opposition candidate, Victor Yushchenko. The determination of thousands of people gathered in Kiev's Majdan square is greatly admired. Their resistance and hopes remind Poles of the heyday of „Solidarity”, quarter of a century ago. One cannot but feel moved by the words of prof. Mychajło Bryko „The Ukrainian nation has got up from its knees and stopped crying. It will defend itself (...) Those people are free, they want to live in dignity. And what is most important - they are no longer ashamed to be Ukrainians”<sup>2</sup>.

From the standpoint of political pragmatism it was the facts that mattered: the speech given by Borys Tarasiuk in the Polish Sejm, active efforts of Polish Euro-M.P.s led by Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, presence of observers during the second round of voting and its repetition, and most of all Lech Wałęsa's visit in Kiev and three

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<sup>1</sup> J. Giedroyc, *Autobiografia na cztery ręce (Four-Handed Autobiography)*, edited by K. Pomian, Warszawa 1994, p.228. For a detailed discussion of the ULB concept, see my *Ukraina, Litwa, Białoruś w publicystyce paryskiej Kultury (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus in the Pages of Parisian 'Culture')*, Poznań 2003.

<sup>2</sup> P. Kościński *Wstaliśmy z klęczek (We Have Risen)*. Interview with prof. Mychajło Bryko, the first vice-president of the Kiev-Mohyle Academy, „Rzeczpospolita”, No 275 (6958), 24 XI 2004, p. A. 4

rounds of mediation known as the Ukrainian round table. It was then that good relations between President Kwaśniewski and Leonid Kuchma and Victor Yushchenko were put to good use. The strategy of cautious mediation, in which even bringing together the opposing sides was considered valuable, turned out to be the most efficient way of reaching agreement. Kwaśniewski's pronouncements acquired proper significance because he was supported by Javier Solana, EU's foreign policy representative and Valdas Adamkus, the President of Lithuania. In a special statement, Kwaśniewski, the first president of a EU country to do so, precluded accusations of interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs by saying „Poland does not want to lecture anyone. Poland does not want to meddle in anybody else's affairs”<sup>3</sup>. He was aware of the vitality of negative national stereotypes, reinforced by Russian advisors to Victor Yanukovych, already anointed president by his powerful protector, Vladimir Putin.

In consequence of Polish attempts to set the Ukrainian crisis within a European framework, Polish-Russian relations cooled down considerably. One of the main pillars of Giedroyc's Eastern policy was the priority of close Polish-Ukrainian cooperation while maintaining a normal working relationship with Russia, however never at the expense of Ukraine. Poland's duty, as it was written in the columns of *Culture*, was to promote the Ukraine as a future partner, take an interest in its economic and cultural potential, and prevent it from drifting on the outskirts of Europe.

In spite of opinions presented by some Russian (Sergei Markov, Valeri Fyodorov, Sergei Yastrzembski) and European political scientists (Josep Borrell), European Union was forced to modify its position with regard to the Ukraine, in consequence of actions of Polish Euro-M.P.s (e.g. declaration of December 1st, 2004, or the resolution on future membership of the Ukraine in the EU, adopted on January 13th, 2005). Polish opinions not only lent credibility to Ukraine's European aspirations, but they also reinforced the importance of Warsaw as a „keystone” linking the East with the West. As such they might be interpreted as a continuation of the ULB idea.

Victor Yushchenko, in the first days of his presidency, thanked Poland for its support and promised to end the dispute over Cmentarz Orłąt (The Eaglets' Cemetery) in Lvov. In a special letter, dated from Kiev's Independence Square, on December 7th, 2004, a group of Ukrainian intellectuals stressed the importance of

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<sup>3</sup> cf. *Jak polski prezydent do ukraińskiego prezydenta (Polish President to the Ukrainian President)*. Fragments of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski's statement on the Ukrainian elections, „Gazeta Wyborcza” No 275.4786, 24 XI 2004, p. 13. PW, WBS, „Niezdana lekcja” (*Failed Lesson*), ibidem.

the „titanic work of the Editor-in-Chief of *Culture*”<sup>4</sup>. Analyses of the situation with references to the roots of current Polish policy towards Eastern Europe were published e.g. in „Gazeta Wyborcza” and „Rzeczpospolita”, the most widely read Polish newspapers.

Latest sociological research shows that as much as 81% of Poles believe that lasting Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation is possible, and 67% affirm that close cooperation between Ukraine and the EU lies in the interest of Poland. What is most surprising about these results is the unprecedented rise in sympathy for the Ukrainians (by 21%)<sup>5</sup>.

To recapitulate: the Eastern doctrine of Jerzy Giedroyc should be highly appreciated, for by gradually shaping historical consciousness and the awareness of national interest it paved the way for the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership.

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<sup>4</sup> The letter was signed by, among others, Boris Tarasiuk, deputy to the Supreme Council of the Ukraine, Prof. Mykoła Żułyński, chairman of the Ukrainian-Polish Forum, Dmytro Pawłyczko, former Ukrainian ambassador to Poland, Prof. Myrosław Popowicz, director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Stanisław Kulczycki, deputy director of the Institute of History of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, cf. „Gazeta Wyborcza” No 301.4711, 24–26 XII 2004, p.2. How much political views presented in *Culture* mean to the Ukrainians, is shown e.g. by the exhibition „Literary Institute 1946–2001”, organized in Kiev in 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. „Gazeta Wyborcza”, No 293.4704, 15 XII 2004, p. 8





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**THE PICTURE OF CONTEMPORARY  
NATIONALISM – THE CASE OF CENTRAL  
AND EASTERN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>**

*by Sebastian Wojciechowski*

**INTRODUCTION**

In contemporary Europe, there can be noted the overlapping and rivalry of the two significant tendencies, which are becoming stronger and stronger. On one hand, one can notice multilevel processes of integration and conditions connected with them and that are concerned with democracy, tolerance, globalization, etc. On the other hand, one can observe disintegrative factors of various kind, which refer to actions and postures connected with chauvinism, xenophobia, neo- fascism and separatism. In the second view, especially in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), various aspects connected with nationalism seem to be of great significance. This is clearly reflected by the events which took place in, for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo or Macedonia.

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis is outcome of others my publications on nationalism which were published in Polish as well as in English.

DEFINITIONS AND THEIR CONTEXT<sup>2</sup>

From etymological point of view, the term 'nationalism' is derived from the word 'natio' – the ethnic community, tribe, nation or national group, with which one feels more or less connected.

The above mentioned idea is discussed by Hans Kohn in his study 'The Idea of Nationalism'.<sup>3</sup> Kohn calls attention to the natural and historical tendency in which people become attached to the place where they were born and brought up as time passes by. Following to the author, this attachment is concerned both with the land and the countryside, as well as the group which uses the same language and was raised within the same history, culture and tradition.

However, the notion of nationalism is often seen and defined differently in Western Europe. In this part of Europe, nationalism is viewed mainly as a positive factor, integrating the nation and making it into an entity functioning in a harmonious way. On the contrary, in Central and Eastern Europe nationalism is mainly recognized as pejorative.<sup>4</sup>

The evidence of the above quoted distinction can be found in definitions suggested on one side, by scientists such as Louis Snyder, Hans Kohn, Anthony D. Smith or Elie Kedourie and, on the other side, by Paweł Śpiewak, Kazimierz Dziubek, Tadeusz Sokołowski, as well as many others.<sup>5</sup>

When writing about nationalism, a great number and diversity of its trends as well as of its forms has to be taken into account. One of the most significant distinctions in terminology is the difference between 'positive' and 'negative nationalism'. According to Isaiah Berlin, 'positive nationalism' is a phenomenon that goes beyond national egoism and accepts the right of all nations to their identity and independence. Apart from that, it is characterized by the fact that in case of a conflict of interests of several nations, it aims at peaceful and the quickest possible solution of the conflict.

As stated by Krzysztof Kwaśniewski, 'positive nationalism' is deprived of blindness and it declares that there are no 'better' or 'worse' nations. In this way, 'positive

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<sup>2</sup> See for example *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (eds.) A. Motyl, San Diego 2000; *Nationalism Across the Globe* (eds.) W. Burszta, T. Kamusella, S. Wojciechowski, Poznań 2005.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York 1944, pp. 1–24.

<sup>4</sup> K. Skubiszewski, *Nacjonalizm w dzisiejszej Europie*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe”, 1993, no 3, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, Chicago 1990, p. 124; A. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London 1971, p. 19; E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London 1969, p. 9; P. Śpiewak, *Ideologie i obywatele*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 168–169; about definitions of nationalism see also: *Nationalism*, J. Hutchinson, A. D. Smith (ed.), Oxford - New York 1994; U. Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism, A Critical Introduction*, Macmillan 2000; journal "Nations and Nationalism".