

Milena Przybysz-Gralewska

Wydział Filozoficzno-Historyczny UŁ

Nr albumu 6009

### **Summary of doctoral thesis**

The title of my doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Professor Sławomir Nowinowski at the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Łódź is: „The Roman Catholic Church in the concepts and activities of „Kultura” (1976–2000)”.

„Kultura” was one of the most important Polish emigration periodicals after World War II. The creator and sole editor of „Kultura” was Jerzy Giedroyc. He founded the publishing house the Literary Institute in Rome in 1946. The first issue of „Kultura” was published in Rome. The next issue of the magazine was published in Paris. Since then, „Kultura”'s headquarters has been located in Maisons-Laffitte near Paris.

The editorial circle consisted of only a few people, Giedroyc created around „Kultura” the most important political center in exile. They published in his magazine the most important Polish writers and publicists. The magazine became a forum for the exchange of concepts and political debates.

Jerzy Giedroyc's ambition was to effectively influence the worldview of Poles, shape attitudes and raise a mature society. „Kultura” had a significant influence on the formation of the Polish opposition, inspired discussions and debates on many levels. At the same time, for years Giedroyc was accused of anti-church phobias, ignoring the role of Catholicism and marginalizing religious topics in his magazine.

The aim of my work was to reconstruct the ecclesial policy of the Editor of „Kultura”. I decided to compare the content of the most important texts on the Church of „Kultura” and supplement this picture with material from the editorial kitchen, that is, from the impressive collection of correspondence of Jerzy Giedroyc preserved in the Archives of the Literary Institute.

The chronological framework of the work covers the years 1976-2000. The beginning of this work is associated with the period of the birth of the democratic opposition in Poland (and a significant turn of the editor's interest towards national issues) and the death of his closest collaborator, Juliusz Mieroszewski, whose journalism constituted the main editorial line, also in religious matters. The final date is related to the death of the editor Jerzy Giedroyc and the closure of „Kultura”.

The text consists of four chapters arranged in chronological order. The first, introductory chapter traces the broad outlines of the magazine's line in the years 1947-1975. The first chapter describes the line of the periodical in the years 1947-1975. The following three chapters (in periods: 1976-1981, 1982-1989 and 1990-2000) are devoted to a systematic description of



„Kultura”'s attitude towards the Catholic Church: the situation in Poland, the lay Catholic communities, the pastoral care in exile and the politics of the Holy See.

During the initial period of „Kultura”'s existence, religious topics appeared irregularly on its pages. But the problems of the Catholic Church in Poland were at the center of Giedroyc's interests, because he saw in this institution the main force that still resisted communism. He appreciated the historical role of the Church in Poland and the Soviet Union. The line of writing on religious issues has changed. In the early period in the magazine there was a debate on, among other things: the form of Polish Catholicism, the situation of the Church in Communist-occupied Poland, as well as the problems of emigration pastoral care. It was also discussed on the theme of the Second Vatican Council.

After 1976, there was a significant increase in the presence of religious subjects in the pages of the magazine. Interest in church issues was stimulated by the dynamics of events in the country and the results of the October 1978 conclave.

Due to the diplomatic importance of the Polish pope's action for the country, interest in Vatican policies has also increased.

An extremely cautious line chosen first by Primate Stefan Wyszyński, and after the introduction of martial law, the policy of his successor, Józef Glemp, aroused opposition from the publisher Giedroyc. The policy of the hierarchs encouraged the editorial staff to adopt a critical attitude towards the Church. The following years also brought numerous reasons for journalistic interventions.

After the turning point in 1989, „Kultura”'s interest focused on the question of minorities and interreligious relations, with particular attention paid to the state of relations between Catholicism and Judaism and to the role of the Church in the creation of the country's relations with its neighbors.

During the period discussed, two religious columns appeared in „Kultura”: *O religii bez namaszczenia* [On religion without anointing] and *Korespondencje z Rzymu* [The correspondences of Rome]. The publisher succeeded in bringing together important people linked to the Church and Catholic centers around „Kultura”.

The fact that „Kultura” did not recognize anyone's infallibility or monopoly in defining ideal solutions in socially important areas nor did it know about taboo subjects, earned it numerous criticisms. The bold critical tone towards the Church of „Kultura” journalism (unimaginable for Polish conditions), in Catholic circles aroused suspicions of the editor's involvement in an anti-Church conspiracy and his support for politics of the communist regime.

Criticism of the pole-Catholic model of mentality and national-democratic sympathies, the sources of which were in Polish popular Catholicism, became characteristic of the „Kultura” circle. According to the editor, the Church had enormous authority and moral force. Advantages that he was unable to exploit correctly. Too much compromise, extremely minimalist attitude of Cardinal Wyszyński towards the regime, justified by the fear of intervention, undermined his authority, so necessary for society, especially at turning points in Polish history. According to Giedroyc, the Roman Catholic Church had the chance to play a key role in the process of



normalizing Poland's relations with neighboring countries. The religious situation, incomparably better than in other countries of the bloc, and the considerable margin of freedom that the Roman Catholic Church had in Poland, according to the editor, forced it to act actively in favor of persecuted people. The rise of nationalist sympathies in Catholic circles, according to the editor, has destroyed the chances of a positive development of the situation at the international level.

The worrying issue of religious discrimination against minorities in Poland is also a recurring topic in „Kultura” publications. The editor postulated that the attitude of the Catholic Church in Poland towards the Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Belarusian and German minorities should be a symbol of traditional Polish tolerance and European reconciliation. However, he resignedly concluded that the actions of Catholic priests often inflamed relations with minorities, thus complicating Poland's international situation.

An important issue for the editor was the pastoral activity of the Church among Polish émigrés, and in particular its political dimension. The publisher saw in the vast structure of Catholic parishes enormous potential for educational impact and development of the idea of independence. According to the editor, the educational task of the Church was to develop a mature, empathetic and tolerant society.

Journalistic comments criticizing the policies of Primate Wyszyński and then Primate Glemp, aroused the indignation of the Polish episcopate, unusual for accepting criticism, especially from outside the Church. Perhaps sometimes the editor's picture of reality was incomplete and his assessments were too hasty and categorical. „Kultura” has set itself the main goal of maintaining objectivity and rejecting all taboos. In Giedroyc's editorial policy, no institution or environment could benefit from immunity.

*Młene Angeln-Grotenho*