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**GERMANY, RUSSIA AND THE POLISH CAUSE  
IN JĘDRZEJ GIERTYCH'S ARTICLES  
IN THE PARISIAN MONTHLY *HORYZONTY* (1956–1971)<sup>1</sup>**

Post-war emigrants viewed the Soviet Union as an enemy and an obstacle on the road to Poland's regaining her independence. They deemed it impossible to ally with the state which had invaded Poland along with Hitler, committed the atrocity of Katyn, taken Poland's eastern lands and imposed a foreign system of government. However, the liberalisation of the communist system in the mid-1950s, disillusionment with the policy of the West, fears associated with West German revisionism, and dwindling chances of any change in Central and Eastern Europe contributed to diverse attitudes among Polish emigrants. Some of them, nationalists in particular, voiced the need to seek compromise with Russia (many émigré politicians and journalists saw the Soviet Union as the new incarnation of Russia, the modern form of Russian statehood, and they often used these terms interchangeably). This led to the emergence of a pro-Russian faction alongside the still-dominant pro-Western one.<sup>2</sup>

Those writing in the monthly *Horyzonty* considered an alliance with Russia, i.e. the Soviet Union at that time, not only plausible but also desirable. The first issue of the monthly was published in June 1956 in Paris. Its journalists were authors associated with the nationalistic movement, although their views were becoming further and further removed from the policy of the National Party in exile. Witold Olszewski was the editor-in-chief and publisher of the monthly. Apart from him, Jan Barański (The Congo), Jędrzej Giertych (London), Stanisław Kozanecki (The Congo) and Adam Macieliński (also known as Paweł Polański; Washington) formed the political core of the periodical. The group associated with *Horyzonty*, by referring to the political thinking of Roman Dmowski and the tradition and views of the national camp, questioned the ideological basis adopted by the émigré community. Criticism of that

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<sup>1</sup> The title of the article refers to a book by Roman Dmowski, *Germany, Russia and the Polish Cause*, Lviv 1908, in which the leader and main ideologist of the National Democracy party, pointing to the German threat, advocated the orientation of Polish politics towards Russia. Jędrzej Giertych repeatedly referred to Dmowski's school of political thinking in *Horyzonty*. For more on J. Giertych's views see P. Cugowski, *Myśl polityczna Jędrzeja Giertycha*, Szczecin 2012.

<sup>2</sup> For more see: T. Tokarz, *Zagadnienie polsko-rosyjskie w publicystyce powojennej emigracji (1945–1980)*, Wrocław 2006; P. Wójtowicz, *Obraz Związku Sowieckiego w ujęciu polskiej emigracji politycznej w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1945–1956*, Warsaw 2008.

community, an anti-German attitude, a positive attitude to what was happening in the country, pro-Russianness and a disbelief the West could be of any help caused the civilian intelligence services of the People's Republic of Poland to become interested in *Horyzonty*.<sup>3</sup>

The leading *Horyzonty* journalist who propagated the need for an alliance with Russia and claimed that Germany supported by the West was the greatest threat to Poland was Jędrzej Giertych. Giertych presented his political *credo* in the article *Droga kamienista ale zawsze droga* ('A stony road, but always a road') published in *Horyzonty* in January 1957. Taking into account what had happened in recent months, he argued that new prospects had opened up for Polish politics: "These are the prospects characteristic of a church mouse", he admitted. "But however you look at it, there are some prospects." He accused many emigrants of being focused on Poland's greatness to such an extent that "not being able to see any chances for great Polish triumphs, they would wish for a major Polish disaster, an enormous Polish tragedy." He himself categorically rejected the "all or nothing" option. He claimed that "even a dull, miserable and even humiliating existence of a nation is to be preferred to a disaster." Although Giertych did not rule out the possibility of a new world conflict, a war was not what he had in mind. He associated hopes for greater and greater freedom in the country with a move towards détente in the world. He argued that in October 1956 the People's Republic of Poland had embarked on the road to gradual liberalisation of the communist system: "The road ahead of Poland is long, difficult and rough, but this is a road." The change that took place at that time meant that

"Poland ceased to have a government appointed by Russia and had a government formed at home. [...] This is a communist government, but it was formed in such circumstances that must have taken Polish public opinion into account. [...] A tacit compromise between the government and the public is the source of power today and the basis for an emerging political system. There have been and will be no free elections in Poland, but the tacit compromise must remain. The communist government cannot be purely communist in its policy. Non-communist, or rather anti-communist public opinion cannot overthrow the communist government."

<sup>3</sup> The process of getting the editor-in-chief and the publisher of *Horyzonty* to collaborate with Polish intelligence agencies went through different stages. In the case of Olszewski, it was political reasons, his ambition and the financial incentive that made him establish contacts with the communist secret services. On the outside, the editors of *Horyzonty* claimed that the periodical was financially and politically absolutely independent, but in fact it was subsidised by Polish intelligence; for more see: K. Tarka, *Między emigracją a krajem. Witold Olszewski i paryskie „Horyzonty”*, *Zeszyty Historyczne* 2005, no. 154, pp. 102–152. (reprinted: K. Tarka, *Mackiewicz i inni. Wywiad PRL wobec emigrantów*, Łomianki 2007, pp. 147–196). For the political views of *Horyzonty* see also: T. Kenar, „Droga kamienista ale zawsze droga”. „Horyzonty” wobec sytuacji w PRL w latach 1956–1971, *Glaukopis* 2010, no. 17/18, pp. 90–104; T. Tokarz, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–142; S. Kozanecki, T. Borowicz, *Myśląc o Polsce. Idee przewodnie „Horyzontów” (1956–1971)*, Brussels 2006; *Polska emigracja polityczna. Informator*, Warsaw 1962, pp. 217–226 (for official use within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only, reprinted with a foreword by S. Cenckiewicz, Warsaw 2004).

Hoping for evolutionary changes in the future, Giertych considered it reasonable to maintain the situation that had developed in Poland after October. And this meant the consolidation of communist rule in Poland for the years to come. According to him, the alternative was Russian intervention and the reversal of the changes that had already been made. At the same time, the émigré politician had no doubt that “communism as a native force does not play any role in Poland, it rose to power thanks to Soviet bayonets.” In the opinion of the *Horyzonty* journalist, in 1956 Władysław Gomułka proved to be a smart player thanks to whom Poland ceased to be a Soviet colony. Besides, he had shown “quite a large amount of Polish instinct” a few years earlier. He noted, among other things, that it was the Secretary General of the Polish United Workers’ Party who had carried out “de-Germanisation” of the western territories and opposed the rapid collectivisation of agriculture. He did not criticise Gomułka, now the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, for having too conciliatory an attitude towards the Kremlin; on the contrary, he feared that due to social pressure Gomułka’s policy might not be pro-Russian enough!

Although the *Horyzonty* columnist was an ideological opponent of communism, this did not prevent him from promoting political cooperation or even a permanent alliance with communist Russia, or in fact with the Soviet Union. Giertych did not see it as a contradiction in terms. He believed that Finland, a non-communist country but politically within the Soviet orbit, should be a model for Poland to follow, not the communist Yugoslavia which remained independent of Moscow. Poland’s geopolitical position between Russia and Germany did not enable it to be neutral with respect to its eastern neighbour. Giertych went one step further and drew the following conclusion: he repeated as a mantra that Poland, being a part of the “Russian system”, must be a “sincere, loyal and unambiguous” partner. The alternative would be, in his opinion, the revival of German-Russian cooperation, with disastrous consequences for Poland. He warned against German agents, who supposedly intended to fuel insurgent sentiments in Poland, spread anti-Russian propaganda, and cause Polish-Russian incidents. This is how German propaganda, German politics and German money were supposed to be used against Polish emigrants. For him, an alliance with his country’s eastern neighbour was not of a temporary, tactical nature. He reiterated that Poland is “Russia’s natural ally”. He predicted that in the not too distant future, Russia – threatened by China – would seek support in Europe. In that case, a strong and sovereign Poland should be a safe base for Russia and not an enemy that would like to stab it in the back. He postulated that Russia should voluntarily restore to Poland its eastern lands without which it “cannot exist”, in exchange for lasting and sincere friendship. Russia, he claimed, should also stop seeing Poland as a “potential vassal and the area for its expansion”. His *idée fixe* was the re-Christianisation of Russia. Then the ideological barrier between the two countries would disappear. In any case, Poland was to contribute to the restoration of Christian Europe. According to Giertych, this was its great historical mission.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> J. Giertych, Droga kamienista ale zawszeć droga, *Horyzonty* 1957, no. 8, pp. 25–39.

Giertych's views presented above became the cornerstone of his political programme which he propagated with minor changes in the following years. But he was neither supported nor understood outside his circle – that of *Horyzonty*. In fact, not even all of the journalists of that Parisian periodical shared his extreme beliefs. Although Giertych took his views very seriously, the circumstances in which his fantastic ideas would have had any chance of implementation seem almost unimaginable. However, Giertych was sure (as he wrote in *Horyzonty*) that in fact his opinions and aspirations were supported by the overwhelming majority of Poles in Poland. This testified to his detachment from not only the domestic reality.

Criticising Polish uprisings, starting with the Bar Confederates and ending with the Polish Legions of Józef Piłsudski, Giertych held the opinion that they had been the effect of Prussian (German) intrigues. He argued that accepting Poland's position within the Russian political system was not a manifestation of a conciliatory attitude and capitulation but "a dictate of common sense and the expression of sovereign Polish politics". In his opinion, the "anti-Russian 'independence advocacy'" of some of the émigré elites was a manifestation of a "futile protest". He feared that it could also become a "basis for German provocation" (just as in the past). Giertych surely did not support communism. He repeatedly called that system "one of the greatest mistakes of humankind", an episode that would pass. Was communism supposed to end just like that? The journalist repeatedly advised his countrymen to be patient and moderate in their political views. In his opinion, instead of conspiring against the Soviet Union, they should reduce the Polish-Russian differences and persuade the Russians that the conciliatory tendency towards Russia was "strong, permanent and firm". He reiterated that Poland was not Russia's enemy. But was the Soviet Union not Poland's enemy after all? Contrary to historical experience, Giertych claimed that "there are solid grounds for Polish-Russian cooperation, and permanent Polish and Russian interests converge and will converge in the historical perspective". He explained that it was in the interest of Poland and Russia that Europe should not be dominated by Germany in the future. Additionally, the alliance of the two Slavic countries was to be cemented by the Chinese threat. Giertych was in favour of the "desatellisation" of Poland and the rest of Central and Eastern Europe. He argued that this solution would be beneficial not only for the countries of the region, but for Russia as well. He asked rhetorically whether it would be a better solution for the latter to have a hostile but communist Poland or a friendly and non-communist one.<sup>5</sup> However, the Kremlin understood its own interests differently. For the Soviet authorities only a communist Poland could have been a "friendly" Poland, and the communist government was a guarantee of the maintenance of the satellite status of that state and the sustainability of Moscow's influence and interests there.

Giertych stressed the importance of the "October revolution" in Poland in 1956. He pointed out that it was then that "a crucial and real change for the better took place, which deserves to be sustained and defended." He warned that an alternative to

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<sup>5</sup> J. Giertych, O politykę polską, *Horyzonty* 1957, no. 12, pp. 20–32.

Gomułka's government would be the return of "thoughtless Soviet monsters" or the partition of Poland. Having said that, he went on to persuade emigrants that "stumbling blocks must not be placed in the government's [Gomułka's – KT] way."<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the 1950s, Giertych prophesied that the world was on the eve of a major reconstruction based on a compromise between Washington and Moscow. But a new adversary, China, was beginning to threaten Russia in the Far East. In that case the Kremlin would need a safe base at its western border: "The only form of organisation of Europe that will not threaten Russia", Giertych argued, "is a Europe organised not under the aegis of Germany, but against Germany." Poland was supposed to be one of the pillars of such a Europe, and that made her Russia's natural ally. Poland, the *Horyzonty* writer believed, should always stand up to German politics. He warned that the reunification of Germany and its rebirth as a great superpower would be a "hot-bed of new disasters". This solution did not serve the interests of Russia, or those of Europe or the United States. Moreover, Poland could be a valuable ally for Russia because of African (!) matters. As a well-known defender of freedom and a country with no colonial tradition, Poland could "contribute to the transformation of Europe's collective attitude towards Africa, giving it a new lease of life and thus save it from being conquered by Asia." Giertych certainly overestimated the potential of Polish politics.

On the other hand, Poland needed a strong Russia that would act as a barrier separating it (and Europe) from Asia. If China dominated Russia in the future, Poland would face the "yellow" threat directly. Significantly, according to Giertych, Germany was the only natural ally of Asian superpowers (Japan in the past, China in the future) in Europe. Building an anti-German Europe was also in the interest of America, as it would lead to the reduction of Russian power on the Old Continent. Despite the force of the anti-Russian prejudices displayed by the Poles (to which, by the way, Russia itself contributed greatly), the *Horyzonty* columnist did not consider it a constant factor. He recalled that traditionally the national movement had advocated the need for an agreement between Poland and Russia. Giertych was also convinced that the trend was equally strong in his contemporary Poland. He claimed that if there were free elections in Poland, National Democracy would claim a "triumphant victory". Russia should also give up exerting external pressure on Poland: "The less powerful is Russia's position in our country, the more certain Russia can be of Poland's support". The problem was that the Kremlin had a completely different understanding of the matter. According to Giertych, by solving the problem of the Polish eastern territories, Russia could win Poland over for good. These were lands of "paramount importance" for Poland, but not for Russia. Without them, Poland was "mutilated and devoid of full conditions for its development." However, Giertych did not insist on fighting to regain the Kresy (eastern borderlands). He deluded himself that the Soviet leaders would rectify their mistake themselves. This, however, does not lend him credence as an émigré activist and political journalist. He did not call for the overthrow or questioning of the communist regime in Poland, either. Indeed, he considered Gomułka an outstanding

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<sup>6</sup> J. G[ertych], *Werbalizm*, *Horyzonty* 1957, no. 12, pp. 50–55.

politician. He claimed that as long as Russia wished to have a communist regime in Poland, that wish would be an order for the Poles.<sup>7</sup>

In December 1959, *Horyzonty* published open letter to the head of the Soviet government, Nikita Khrushchev. An analysis of the contents of the letter indicates that Jędrzej Giertych was its primary author. The *Horyzonty* journalists, citing Roman Dmowski's political thought, consistently stated that "Poland naturally and inevitably belongs to the camp of Russia's friends and allies and not to that of its enemies." The German threat was supposed to be the glue for Polish-Russian cooperation. For the authors of the letter, a strong and friendly Russia was a "guarantee of Poland's existence and its defence against the expansion of German imperialism". The wording of this statement resembled the well-known language of propaganda in the People's Republic of Poland. On the other hand, not only could Poland be Russia's valuable ally, the authors argued, but it could also play "a prominent role as a co-organiser of Europe in a way favourable to Russia". What is more, if threatened by China, Russia would obtain a guarantee that its western borders would be safe. *Horyzonty* tried to show that "it was not the communist system in Poland that guaranteed that Poland would remain in the camp of Russia's friends for good. On the contrary, it was the communist ideology, so unpopular among Poles, that discredited the idea of cooperation with Russia in the eyes of the nation, which, in the long run, would not serve Polish-Russian cooperation well, and, what is more, would make it difficult." The letter's signatories appealed to Khrushchev to "remove Russian pressure and allow Poland to become a fully independent state." "Poland", they wrote, "wants to be Russia's partner or its ally but does not want to be its satellite state." They argued that the communist party in Poland was an "insignificant minority" and that "a Polish worker, just like the rest of the Polish nation, does not want communism." The offer made to Russia was in fact detached from the post-war reality. Dreams of an agreement with the Kremlin leaders reached over the heads of Polish communists were groundless. For the Soviet Union, Polish communists had always been a more reliable and credible factor, a guarantor of the maintenance of Soviet dominance in the country. Additionally, the authors of the letter addressed the issue of the Polish-Russian border. Although Poland was a body capable of functioning in its new, post-war borders, the *Horyzonty* team believed that in the future, Russia would challenge the territorial divisions resulting from the German-Soviet arrangements made at the beginning of World War II. "This generous act," they argued, "will consolidate Polish-Russian friendship once and for all and will take the wind out of the sails of those who would like to drive a wedge between Poland and Russia."<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the addressee did not respond to the offer made by *Horyzonty*. The émigré community also ignored the periodical's bizarre initiative. The authorities of the National Party, on the other hand, took a critical stance. In propagating the idea of

<sup>7</sup> J. Giertych, Czy nowe urządzenie świata, *Horyzonty* 1958, no. 23, pp. 3–18.

<sup>8</sup> List otwarty do pana Nikity Chruszczowa, przewodniczącego rady ministrów ZSRR, *Horyzonty* 1959, no. 43, pp. 3–14.

a Polish-Russian alliance, the editors of the Paris monthly referred to Roman Dmowski's political thought and the tradition and views of the national movement, but they were more and more distant from the current policy of the National Party in exile. The publication of the *Open Letter to Khrushchev* was, in this respect, a watershed. In December 1959, Witold Olszewski, the editor-in-chief of *Horyzonty*, was dismissed from the National Party. Jędrzej Giertych was expelled at the beginning of 1961.<sup>9</sup>

Wojciech Wasiutyński spoke against *Horyzonty* in *Myśl Polska* (the organ of the National Party). The renowned journalist and National Party activist criticised the rebellious group for propagating the idea of a Polish-Russian (Soviet) agreement, yet he did not deny that German revisionism posed a threat:

“To be Russia's ally”, Wasiutyński said, “cannot mean anything else today than being an ally of world communism and working for the victory of communism in the world. [...] As long as Russia remains a communist country and wants to turn Poland into a communist country, the place of the latter is with the opponents of the communist bloc and Soviet Russia.”<sup>10</sup>

In response, taking full responsibility for the contents of the open letter to Khrushchev, Giertych clarified that the publication in *Horyzonty* was not an offer for the Russian leader to take over power in Poland. He stressed once again that “geopolitical reasons place Poland in the camp of Russia's friends, so it is in Poland's interest to pursue a policy of sincere, loyal and lasting friendship with Russia.” A real, not merely apparent, Polish-Russian friendship, however, required a shift in Russia's policy towards Poland first. Russia, Giertych emphasised,

“must treat Poland as a partner and not as a vassal. It must recognise Poland's right to have such government as it wishes to have and not one imposed on it by means of foreign bayonets. As the communist system and doctrines are foreign and repulsive to Poles, Russia must stop imposing them on Poland, which is a Catholic nation and belongs to the world of Latin civilisation.”

At the same time, however, he believed that a free Poland had to remain in the Russian camp. Giertych also attacked those who published *Myśl Polska* and spoke on behalf of the National Party, claiming that the periodical “in fact has nothing in common with the political doctrine and the political traditions of the Polish national camp.”<sup>11</sup>

Despite the apparent suppression of the liberalisation of the communist regime in Poland, Giertych consistently stressed the importance of the “October revolution” of 1956. He believed it to have been a “turning point”. Contrary to the opinions prevailing among emigrants, he did not consider the “thaw” a tactical manoeuvre. He pointed out that because of the specific demands and situation, the communists had been forced to accept an increasing number of deviations from their doctrine. The

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<sup>9</sup> Komunikat, *Myśl Polska* 1960, no. 6, p. 3 and Komunikat, *Myśl Polska* 1961, no. 7, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> W. Wasiutyński, Miejsce Polski, *Myśl Polska* 1960, no. 15, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> J. Giertych, O liście do Chruszczowa, *Horyzonty* 1960, no. 53, pp. 69–74.

liberalisation and evolution of communism were, in his opinion, inevitable. Changes took place not only in the economic sphere. Giertych considered the nativisation of the ruling class in Russia and the revival of religious and social life equally important. Based on observations made by Western tourists (!), he argued that it was moral Puritanism and not promiscuity that prevailed in the Soviet Union. It was much harder to get a divorce there than in the West, abortion (“disposing of a foetus”) was condemned, and mothers who had many children were awarded orders. The new young generation was his hope for change. He believed that in due course it would overcome communism through internal evolution. On the other hand, the idea of overthrowing communism by means of an “armed crusade” was viewed by him as both unrealistic and undesirable, with regard to the disastrous effects of a nuclear war.<sup>12</sup>

Giertych stressed that “hostility towards communism does not necessarily imply hostility towards Russia.” He declared himself a friend of the Russian people and was against the division of Russia (the Soviet Union) into several separate states. In his view, the status of Ukraine was of fundamental importance to the Kremlin. Losing Ukraine would strike right at the heart of Russia, because “without Ukraine, Russia will not be a great power any longer.” The proposed restoration to Poland of its eastern lands, actually a part of Soviet Ukraine, would not, in his opinion, have such far-reaching consequences for Russia. Besides, Giertych refused to acknowledge that the Ukrainians en masse exhibited features distinctive enough to consider them a separate nation. He considered Red Ruthenians living between the Carpathians and the Zbruch River, i.e. in the lands of the former Second Polish Republic, to be the only nationally conscious Ukrainians. On the other hand, “a huge portion of the population speaking Ruthenian, Rusyn, Ukrainian dialects or whatever we call them, do not identify themselves with Ukrainian patriotism and do not desire Ukrainian national identity.” Moreover, he thought that the claim for an independent Ukraine was neither just nor in the interest of Poland. He held that “Ukrainian independence violates many more moral laws than it is able to satisfy.” Only the Ukrainian nationalists, he argued, wanted an independent state. And how many of them were there? He remarked ironically: “How many other people must be enslaved to fulfil their desire? And how many eternal laws, feelings, bonds and traditions must be trampled underfoot?” He argued that Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was “the cradle and Ruthenia and Russia”. He asked rhetorically whether it would be fair to deprive Russia of that city. According to Giertych, an independent Ukraine would be an artificial construct which could not be created and sustained without American, and above all German, help. For him, the creation of Ukraine meant the weakening of Russia and the strengthening of Germany. Yet another negative consequence would be Poland’s renunciation of the eastern territories and thus the elimination of Polish presence in the Kresy (borderlands) once and for all. Giertych still hoped that one day Russia would restore to Poland the cities of Lviv and Vilnius.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. Giertych, *Ewolucja komunizmu*, *Horyzonty* 160, no. 46, pp. 3–23.

<sup>13</sup> J. Giertych, *Do pana Wojciecha Zaleskiego*, *Horyzonty* 1960, no. 49, pp. 29–43.



He also argued that Moscow would finally come to the conclusion that a colonial policy towards Poland did not serve its own interests "and it would withdraw from Poland". He explained to his countrymen that despite the Russian injustices against Poland, they should patiently and persistently work on establishing Polish-Russian cooperation. Though not accepting the communist system and colonial dependence on Russia, Poles must not be drawn into becoming part of an anti-Russian front. According to Giertych, Germany was and would be Poland's greatest threat and main enemy. It did not recognise Poland's western border: "It was Russia that negotiated this border for us and it is Russia that defends it", Giertych stressed. In his rage and his anti-German obsession, Giertych somehow forgot that there had been two German states since 1949 and that the German Democratic Republic had recognised the Oder-Neisse border in a treaty concluded in Görlitz in 1950. Disregarding the post-war reality, Giertych held on to the mythical image of Germany, that of the eternal enemy of Poland, constantly striving to annihilate the Polish state and destroy the Polish nation. Germany was dangerous for Poland both when it acted as an enemy and as a friend: "Experience has taught us", Giertych warned, "that the greatest calamities come upon Poland when Germany acts as our friend. Then their intention is invariably to trap us, drive a wedge between us and Russia and then reach an agreement with Russia over our heads." The pro-Western option was, according to him, tantamount to a German orientation in Polish politics. Poland's place, as the journalist repeatedly said, was at Russia's side.<sup>14</sup>

After visiting West Germany, Giertych noticed positive changes that had taken place there after World War II. In his view, they were the consequence of the Anglo-American occupation and the liberation of Germany from Prussian domination. "It must be said", he wrote at the beginning of the 1960s, that "West Germany, once you are there, wins your respect and even makes you like it. You see there a great deal of reliable work, order, conscientiousness, honesty and reason." The journalist did not see any pro-Nazi sympathies in the new Germany (West Germany). He even noted that above all the Germans enjoyed their prosperity and wanted nothing more than peace. However, these were only fleeting and superficial impressions which did not blur the true face of Germany to Giertych. Despite his first-hand experience, his views and opinions were not subject to reconsideration: "The German conciliatory manner, German European inclinations, German dissociation from Nazi or even Prussian memories are not complete: this is conciliation with some reservations", the *Horyzonty* writer claimed. The Germans' prime inherent feature was their anti-Polish attitude, expressed in aversion or even hatred towards the Poles, disrespect, feelings of superiority and lack of inclination towards reconciliation. Luckily, in the face of imminent danger Poland had a natural ally to back her up.<sup>15</sup> Giertych kept coming back to the idea of Polish-Russian cooperation in almost every single article.

At the beginning of 1964, the *Horyzonty* journalist disapprovingly noted the emergence of a "pro-German faction" among the Polish political émigré commu-

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<sup>14</sup> J. Giertych, W jednym obozie z Niemcami?, *Horyzonty* 1961, no. 60, pp. 10–28.

<sup>15</sup> J. Giertych, Dzisiejsze Niemcy, *Horyzonty* 1963, no. 81, pp. 13–39.

nity. Its proponents (Giertych did not mention any names) claimed that Poland and Germany were not hereditary enemies as there is no such thing in the world as hereditary enemies. They further argued that both nations, threatened and oppressed by the Soviet Union, had been joined by a natural commonality of interests. Giertych took issue with these assumptions. He recalled that (West) Germany did not recognise the Oder-Neisse border and that it might also lay claim to Gdańsk, Poznań, Łódź or Katowice. In fact, this attitude implied an implacable hostility towards Poland. The journalist also argued that there was no natural commonality of interests between Poland and Germany. Germany, according to Giertych, wanted to establish its hegemony in Europe, which was dangerous to Poland. Poland, on the other hand, shared a commonality of interests with Russia. It would be much easier for Poland to deal with contentious issues with Russia's approval than with the help of Germany: "The policy of seeking German assistance in our dispute with Russia would be suicidal for us", he stressed.<sup>16</sup> The journalist persisted in his anti-German obsession.

A few months later, Giertych criticised the "Germanophile action" of Aleksander Bregman, the renowned émigré journalist, former editor-in-chief of the London *Dziennik Polski* and *Dziennik Żołnierza* and former head of the Polish Journalists Association. Writing in the West German press, Bregman demanded that the Bonn government recognise the Polish western border: "It is neither necessary nor desirable to seek Germany's recognition of the Oder-Neisse border", Giertych claimed, "because such endeavours would grant Germany the right to refuse its consent." Poland, he argued, did not need German recognition at all. In his opinion, putting forward such a claim would actually undermine the political meaning of the frontier and the Polish status of the lands on the Oder and Neisse. The support given to Bregman by Edward Raczyński, member of the Council of Three and former ambassador in London, testified to the fact that, according to Giertych, the elite of "Polish" London was "politically completely corrupted".<sup>17</sup>

In considering which option, a pro-German or pro-Russian orientation, was better for Polish politics, Giertych had no doubt that "a German orientation in Polish politics is not possible." He stressed that the Germans posed a "deadly threat" to Poland. Russia, on the other hand, "only" reduced and constrained Poland territorially. Giertych admitted that the "hindrance" was intolerable, but it would come to an end one day. A few years earlier he had expressed the hope that Russia would willingly return Lviv and Vilnius to Poland. For years, he used to say that "even the fiercest Russian policy" was "less evil for Poland than German policy". He still hoped that in the future communist Russia would evolve into a Christian and traditionally Russian country. Fighting communism was supposed to be a battle for the soul of the Polish nation, waged by bringing up children, praying or building churches rather than creating atomic barriers on the Vistula River. Giertych regarded the reunification of Germany as a signifi-

<sup>16</sup> J. G[irtych], Orientacja proniemiecka, *Horyzonty* 1964, no. 96, pp. 60–64.

<sup>17</sup> J. Giertych, Falszywa droga, *Horyzonty* 1965, no. 107, pp. 40–47.

cant threat to Poland and Europe, and therefore he supported the idea of its permanent division.<sup>18</sup> Not only in this case but in some others as well, the real course of history did not confirm his expectations.

In 1966, analysing Poland's position in the world and the changes that had taken place in international politics over the previous ten years, Giertych pointed primarily to the revival of German power. In his opinion, Germany was not only an economic power, but a political and military one as well. He exaggerated by saying that the West German army was hardly inferior to both superpowers in its number of soldiers, and even superior to them in terms of weaponry. The pacifist sentiments on the Rhine also belonged to the past. The *Horyzonty* columnist almost obsessively recalled that "Germany is our enemy." He did not see the change in the attitudes of the West German public and in the approach of that country's authorities. Consistently citing the German threat, he argued that not only did the Germans seek to regain the lands across the Oder-Neisse line, but they also wanted to annihilate and conquer Poland. Besides, Germany posed a threat not only to Poland. Giertych warned that they could also seek to annihilate Russia, for instance, in an alliance with China. If Germany invaded Poland in the future, obviously Russia would be the latter's natural ally and support. He said of his political opponents in exile that by acting against Russia they practically became a part of the pro-German camp, or even foreign agents. He claimed that various émigré organisations, magazines and individuals were "using other people's money". The camp of "people bought" in exile, in practice pro-German, was numerous. Being consistently opposed to the reunification of Germany, Giertych argued that this would not be a step towards the liberation of Poland. On the contrary, Poland would then be even more deeply immersed in the Soviet system or left to its own devices and a prey to German aggression.

The *Horyzonty* columnist considered East Germany a buffer that protected Poland against Western attacks. However, if Germany were to become united one day, he proposed that a Lusatian country under a Polish-Czech protectorate should be created in return for Poland's consent to the reunification. Giertych also demanded that the Kiel Canal be an international waterway garrisoned by, among others, the Polish army. On the other hand, he considered emigrants' calls for German recognition of the Oder-Neisse border unnecessary.

He was also sceptical about plans for the political and economic integration of Europe. He regarded the concept of a united Europe as a German scheme. "If we were to be a part of this united Europe", he warned, "we would end up in a German grip. Not to mention the fact that we would be unmercifully exploited." Polish political and economic interests were linked to the East. For years Giertych preached that "Poland should politically stick to Russia." He admitted, however, that "Russia is not, by its very nature, a friendly ally, especially for a weaker country and a neighbour." Cooperating with Russia in foreign policy and remaining in the Russian political camp was not, according to Giertych, tantamount to compliance, subordination to the eastern

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<sup>18</sup> J. Giertych, *Z Niemcami czy z Rosją?*, *Horyzonty* 1965, no. 109, pp. 3–14.

neighbour. Poland should pursue its own economic interests and make sure that Russia does not interfere with its internal affairs and impose its own political system: "Our fight against Russian influences", he stressed, "must be persistent and carried on without any interruption and step by step." Promoting cooperation between Poland and Russia, Giertych referred to political realism. He claimed that the relationship should be assessed dispassionately and for the mutual benefit of both parties involved. He even admitted that "Russia is not our friend". He was pleased to see that "Russia is not able to interfere with our internal relations as much as it used to. The situation in Poland less and less depends on Russia and more and more on the Polish nation itself." In Giertych's opinion, Poland was a sovereign country, though humiliated and under foreign influence, disorganised by anti-national governments and devastated by disasters, especially World War II. There was no need, however, to build the state from scratch. It was enough to strengthen it – not only politically and economically, but also ideologically. According to the *Horyzonty* columnist, Poland must "show more national pride and feel how powerful it actually is."<sup>19</sup>

Taking issue with Aleksander Bregman once again, Giertych argued that the recognition of the Oder-Neisse border by the West German government was "completely unnecessary" from the point of view of international law. Although he admitted that "this act would be desirable", he was of the opinion that "Poland should not even lift a finger in order to secure it." He claimed that Polish efforts taken to this end in Bonn did more harm than good, giving an impression that "restoration of these lands to Poland by the German people or government is necessary for the stability of Polish rule over these lands." Giertych stressed that the Polish western border was already an absolute fact in the light of the international law, and German recognition or the lack of it basically did not change anything in that matter. An acknowledgement of the fact by the West German government would be of only political significance.<sup>20</sup>

In the June 1967 issue of *Horyzonty*, Giertych envisaged a war in the Far East, and he went on to explain that it could happen either very soon or only after many years. China would be on one side of the conflict and Russia and America on the other. Russia, bordering on China, would fight for its life in this war. He warned that Germany would undoubtedly benefit from the weakening of Russia's position in Europe and could make a new attempt to establish its hegemony over the Old Continent. In the first place, Germany would seek to right the "wrongs" of Versailles and Potsdam, that is, to regain the lands it had lost in the east. He cautioned that in order to achieve its goal, Germany would act as Poland's alleged friend and it would try to drive a wedge between Poland and Russia by instigating an anti-Russian uprising or at least provoking a Polish-Russian political conflict. Then Russia would have only one way out, namely to come to some sort of agreement with the Germans over the heads of the Poles, and "our ruin", Giertych prophesied, would be a consequence of that. Two forces were supposed to be at the core of the German scheme, pro-Chinese Polish

<sup>19</sup> J. Giertych, *Położenie Polski w świecie*, *Horyzonty* 1966, no. 123, pp. 3–32.

<sup>20</sup> J. Giertych, *Szukanie aprobaty niemieckiej*, *Horyzonty* 1967, no. 128, pp. 60–64.

communists (the followers of Kazimierz Mijal's doctrine) and the seemingly pro-American, but in fact pro-German émigré community in London. Giertych hoped that this "black" scenario would never become fact, and the Poles in the country would successfully resist the political pressures or even armed threat posed by Germany. While criticising the émigré government for their anti-Soviet policy, he praised the communist authorities in Warsaw. He claimed that the foreign policy adopted by the authorities of the Polish United Workers' Party was "essentially right".<sup>21</sup>

When President Charles de Gaulle visited Poland in 1967, Giertych stressed that the rapprochement with France was not a viable alternative to the alliance with Russia. He argued that de Gaulle's policy would not guarantee Poland's border along the Oder-Neisse line. On the contrary, it would significantly increase the threat posed to that border. Giertych pointed out that the French president was in favour of the reunification of Germany. In his conclusion, he emphasised that: "It is high time we stopped being Russia's satellites, but this does not mean that we should not be its allies."<sup>22</sup>

Giertych had an ambivalent attitude towards a student revolt in Poland in 1968. In his opinion, protests and riots were "the work of the machinations of a politically organised group." On the other hand, this manipulation awakened real and true forces. Internal conflicts within the ruling group led to a "little coup". The *Horyzonty* journalist considered the closure of the play *Dziady* to be an imprudent step by the authorities, since it was bound to provoke social outrage. As an advocate of the conspiracy theory, he believed that the anti-Russian demonstrations during the performances were initiated by "some organised clique". The provocation was supposed to lead to a Polish-Russian conflict or friction and the Zionists were supposed to be the instigators of the disorders. The provocation that they organised was also a revenge for the position of the Polish People's Republic authorities during the six-Day War of 1967. He added, however, that student demonstrations in defence of *Dziady* also revealed the true sentiments of young people in Poland, a desire for freedom, the easing of fear and a strong patriotic instinct. However, the excess of anti-Russian feelings among the demonstrators was dangerous and harmful. Giertych indicated that the organisers of the protests were students of Jewish origin whose fathers were dignitaries in the communist party. The reduction of Jewish and cosmopolitan influences in the Polish United Workers' Party as a result of internal party competition was, in Giertych's opinion, "an unquestionably positive fact". He was pleased that the "cosmopolitan clique" associated with "world Jewry, extremely influential in Poland but foreign to Polish patriotic feelings" was removed from power. Its "rule in Poland was dangerous to Polish politics, harmful to Polish culture and vexing to Polish social life." Giertych hoped that Polonisation and nationalisation of the communist party would cause liberalisation of the communist system in Poland, meaning relaxation of censorship, greater religious tolerance, and greater cultural and political freedom.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> J. Giertych, Na co się zanosi, *Horyzonty* 1967, no. 133, pp. 3–15.

<sup>22</sup> J. Giertych, De Gaulle w Polsce, *Horyzonty* 1967, no. 138/139, pp. 65–70.

<sup>23</sup> J. Giertych, Skala przewrotu, *Horyzonty* 1968, no. 143, pp. 16–23.

For Giertych, attitude towards German reunification was a criterion for dividing the political scene into a pro-German and an anti-German faction. Contrary to what the supporters of reunification thought, Giertych consistently claimed that it did not serve freedom in Poland and Europe. He considered it a “serious danger”, even if revision of the Oder-Neisse border was not a real prospect in the near future. The reunification of the two German states would significantly weaken Poland’s position. Because of its population and economic potential, Germany would become a hegemon on the Old Continent and a threat to other nations: “Europe’s common interest”, Giertych stressed, “requires that it [Germany] should not be a unified superpower.” He was in favour of East Germany as a separate country, though not necessarily a communist one.<sup>24</sup> However, the future would show the *Horyzonty* journalist’s fears associated with the reunification of German to have been unfounded.

Looking back at the Polish October, Giertych stressed that the transformation that had taken place then was “essential and significant”. In particular, the situation of the Catholic Church improved (which does not mean that it enjoyed complete freedom), kolkhozes (collective farms) were closed down, terror ceased, and Poland was no longer isolated from the world. At the same time he admitted that the changes did not prove to have been as profound and permanent as some (including him?) had thought. He did not believe, however, that this was reason enough to revise *Horyzonty*’s programme. In his opinion, the “stony road” programme formulated many years ago by those associated with the monthly was still valid. Moreover, Giertych even claimed that it was “the only programme that shows our nation the road towards a better future.” Unlike the “indomitable” émigrés, since 1956 he had considered the People’s Republic of Poland a Polish state and not a Soviet colony, as it used to be in the first years of Bolesław Bierut’s rule. He emphasised that Poland was located on the Vistula River and not on the Thames, the Seine or the Potomac. He regarded the idea of a state in exile, which was justified during World War II, as an absurd one in the new reality. He accepted the communist authorities in Poland as a fact, yet he opposed them. However, he continued to stress that he opposed the system and not the state. Giertych believed that Poland needed a strong Russia: “Without such a power”, he argued, “Poland would be left to its own devices and threatened with annihilation from Germany.” Russia (the Soviet Union) was Poland’s natural ally and a guarantor of its security: “It is Russia that by its mere presence protects us against a new and likely German expansion.” Giertych hoped that in the future Russia, threatened by China in the east, would have to consider winning Poland over and not so much controlling it. It would not be able to achieve this by relying on the communists in Poland (“its men of confidence; or even independent people considered agents by the Polish nation”). Then Poland would regain its true freedom, cease to be a Russian vassal and become a Russian ally. This was the essence of Giertych’s concept, who kept repeating that “Russia is a natural ally of Poland, and Poland is a natural ally of Russia.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> J. Giertych, *Z Niemcami czy przeciw Niemcom*, *Horyzonty* 1969, no. 154, pp. 39–44.

<sup>25</sup> J. Giertych, „Horyzonty” – z mego punktu widzenia, *Horyzonty* 1970, no. 172, pp. 46–56.

In the last issue of *Horyzonty*, published in spring 1971, Giertych announced a new stage of the “rocky road” programme. The journalist argued that after the second twist of history in December 1970, it was time for a “second stage” of transformations in the country. Although as many as fourteen years had passed between the “first” and the “second” stage, Giertych was pleased with the fact that “Poland steadily continues along the ‘stony road’” and “gains more and more freedom”. With hindsight, he could not deny that Gomułka’s government had lasted too long, yet he added that “too much” had been expected of the October. He stressed that despite many unfulfilled hopes and promises, Poland in the year 1970 did not by any means resemble the Poland of 1957. In his opinion, during those years, Poland had become a “freer and more independent country, more firmly rooted, with a stronger sense of its separate being and distinct character, or its strength.” Reporting the “workers’ revolution” in the Polish coastal cities in 1970, he suspected, as was his habit, a conspiracy. He implied that the Trotskyists, the Jewish camp in communism, could be its initiators. He thought it very likely that it was “Jewish hands” that had contributed to the overthrow of Gomułka. According to Giertych, the Jews were always plotting against Poland. Bearing these new circumstances in mind, he asked his countrymen in Poland to be patient and not to succumb to various instigators. This should be done so as not to provoke military intervention by the Kremlin. On behalf of the nationalists he declared:

“We do not want conflicts with Russia. We believe that Russia is our natural ally and we want to be its loyal ally. Russia should think of us as devoted and reliable allies; it is not only the Polish communists that have made such declarations but also, since Dmowski’s time, political circles far removed from communism.”

Should Poland’s natural ally be the country whose military intervention Giertych considered quite plausible several lines earlier?

Mocking the “big politics” of the emigrants, the émigré journalist declared the political bankruptcy of... the émigré community. He emphasised that everything that the Polish nation had achieved after the Second World War it owed to itself: “The émigré community did not contribute to all this in any way.” However, Giertych did not deny the need for and the role of the émigré community. He even said that it “must exist”, because it was there that an independent centre of Polish political thought or Polish culture could be shaped. He noted that the cultural heritage of the émigré community was impressive and no one would erase it from the pages of Polish history books. That the émigré community was absolutely independent from the dictatorial authorities in the country, he considered a great value.

He did not intend to go back to a Poland governed by the communists; Giertych recognised the inviolability of their power. However, he expected that the “second stage” would make it possible for non-communist movements in the country to exist and operate. In his view, the nationalists were the most oppressed and persecuted group in Poland. He found this inexplicable, because, as he claimed, they were a decidedly pro-Russian camp fighting against international Jewish influences. Calling for total religious freedom, he regretted that it was not possible in Poland to build as

many new churches as the faithful needed to be able to develop free organisational and social activity in the Catholic spirit, that there was no free press and no Catholic publishers. In the same article, though, Giertych said that the communists exercised dictatorial power in Poland; so could a free press, even if only a Catholic one, exist in such circumstances? He criticised Gomułka primarily for legalising the “great crime”, namely abortion. He warned that “Poland is literally dying out.” Not questioning the irreversibility of the nationalisation of major industry in Poland after World War II, he considered that fact useful. He recalled that before the war that industry had been mostly in foreign hands, primarily German and Jewish. Supporting the reconstruction of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, he criticised the “indomitable” for being opposed to émigrés’ making donations for that purpose. He argued that Gierek’s government should not be afraid of seeking explanations in the Katyn case. He also called for the rehabilitation of Adam Doboszyński. He drew attention to the issue of Polish schools and churches for Poles in the Soviet Union, especially in Belarus, the Polish university in Vilnius, and the protection of Polish monuments in the Kresy (eastern borderlands). Assessing Gomułka’s government, Giertych said that he had “deserved to leave”. He also recognised the services of the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party for Poland: “There was a time when he was simply a kind of a saviour for our nation.”<sup>26</sup>

Despite being ostentatiously anti-German and avowedly pro-Russian, Giertych was not considered a potential secret collaborator by the Polish intelligence services. His committed anti-communism and ultra-Catholicism put the communist secret services off recruiting him. An interior ministry memo issued in 1966 says:

“In his publications, he [Giertych] strongly and consistently opposes the retaliatory efforts of the Federal Republic of Germany and German infiltration of the émigré community, firmly defending Polish rights to the Western and Northern Territories. As regards foreign policy, he is in favour of the alliance with the USSR. In many cases, however, his good assessment of political affairs is obscured by his extreme pro-clerical views.”<sup>27</sup>

When the *Horyzonty* monthly ceased publication in 1971, Giertych did not end his mission. He was relentless in voicing his views. This ideological opponent of communism and fervent Catholic remained at the same time a keen advocate of cooperation with Russia, that is, with the Soviet Union. Consistently pointing to the need for an agreement with his country’s eastern neighbour, he perceived the alliance with the Kremlin as the strategic goal of Polish politics, and he saw West German revisionists supported by the West as the greatest danger to Poland. Dreaming of Christianising Russia, he also hoped that it would voluntarily return to Poland its eastern territories. On the other hand, he did not notice the change in public and political opinion in West Germany regarding the Oder-Neisse border and relations with Poland, which

<sup>26</sup> J. Giertych, Nowy etap kamienistej drogi, *Horyzonty* 1971, no. 177/179, pp. 25–54.

<sup>27</sup> The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, 01227/698, a memo dated 4 February 1966 concerning J. Giertych.



took place at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. Ostentatious pro-Russianness and an obsessive anti-German approach, as well as a phobia of the Jews, remained constant features of his journalism. In the following years, in the periodical *Opoka* which he published at his own expense, or in long open letters to the Polish public written in 1976 and 1982 in a tone of fervent patriotism, he still cautioned his compatriots about the danger of an anti-Soviet uprising, exposed “plots of world Jewry”, cited the German threat and revealed the “true” face of the Trotskyists. Faithful to the conspiracy theory of history, he warned against provocations, praised the imposition of martial law, and considered General Wojciech Jaruzelski a Polish patriot.<sup>28</sup>

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#### ABSTRACT

*The liberalisation of the communist system in the mid-1950s, disillusionment with the policy of the West, fears connected with West German revisionism, and dwindling chances of change in the situation of Central and Eastern Europe contributed to diverse attitudes among Polish emigrants. Some of them, notably among the nationalists, voiced the need to seek compromise with Russia. This led to the emergence of a pro-Russian faction alongside the still dominant pro-Western one. The thesis of the need for an alliance with Russia was propagated by Jędrzej Giertych in his writing in the Paris-based monthly Horyzonty. This ideologically committed opponent of communism and staunch Catholic was at the same time an ardent champion of an alliance with Russia, which in those circumstances meant an alliance with the Soviet Union, although he did not see this as a contradiction. He claimed that the greatest threat to Poland was Germany, supported by the West. He hoped that in appreciation of Poland's sincere friendship and loyalty, Russia would restore to it the cities of Lviv and Vilnius. For him, an alliance with his country's eastern neighbour was not of a temporary or tactical nature. Giertych consistently repeated that Russia was Poland's natural ally, and Poland was Russia's natural ally. Cooperation between the two countries was to be cemented by the Chinese threat.*

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<sup>28</sup> For more see: K. Tarka, Antykomunistyczny rusofil. Jędrzej Giertych o opozycji politycznej i polityce polskiej, *Zeszyty Historyczne* 2007, no. 159, pp. 135–169. (reprinted: K. Tarka, *Mackiewicz i inni...*, pp. 309–343).

