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*Stefan Kisielewski in “Kultura”*

**KEY WORDS**

emigration, Literary Institute in Paris, feuilleton writing, censorship, anticommunism

**ABSTRACT**

Stefan Kisielewski (1911–1991) began his regular work with the monthly *Kultura*, edited by Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000), in the 1970s, although his occasional presence did not go unnoticed at least a decade earlier. The two editors knew each other since before the war and from the bi-weekly *Bunt Młodych* (later *Polityka*). Despite differences in political views, which further increased after 1945, Giedroyc printed Kisielewski’s fiction, articles, columns, interviews, letters and opinions about the Parisian circle. His largest collection of work is the series of columns “Wołanie na puszczy” [*A call on the wild*] and “Widziane inaczej” [*Seen differently*]. This was the type of journalism that Giedroyc most highly valued in Kisiel. Disputes concerned articles on the role of the emigration, possible system reforms in Poland and the consequences of the country’s geopolitical position. In the name of the editor-in-chief, Juliusz Mieroszewski had “protested” against them. Kisielewski’s work was published during the period of heightened censorship of his work in Poland.

Recently we commemorated two anniversaries: 20 years since the death of Stefan Kisielewski (1911–1991) and 10 years since the death of Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000). Their cooperation began in the pre-war editorial office of *Bunt Młodych*, from 1937 published under the title *Polityka*, which Kisielewski noted in the story *Sprzysiężenie*, and also in his memories from March 1950: “In this road [near Długa street – note I.H.], today sullen, dark, brick ruins, was the office of the magazine where I took my first publishing steps [...]. I see a closed, silent door, a door to nowhere – because behind it the brick emptiness piles up, the sagging walls. Next to this wall sat the kind and wise Editor”<sup>1</sup>. This memory imposes itself instantly, as it comes from the collection of personal archives of Jerzy Giedroyc – the famous files [*teczki*] – regarded as the basis for reconstructing the political profile of the founder of *Kultura*<sup>2</sup>. This

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<sup>1</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Materii pomieszczenie*, Londyn 1973, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Teczki Giedroycia* were published 10 years after the death of the Editor, i.e. 14 September 2010 by Wydawnictwo UMCS and the Literary Institute in Paris (*Teczki Giedroycia*, ed. by I. Hofman, L. Unger, Lublin–

trail, and strictly – the location and meaning of Giedroyc’s collection – confirms the nature of the ongoing relationship of the Editor [*Redaktor*] and Columnist [*Felietonista*]<sup>3</sup>. A meaningful relationship for both, as it lasted despite reservations: Kisielewski – “I argue with him practically my whole life, but I owe him everything”<sup>4</sup> and Giedroyc – “His views were foreign to me. But at the same time, I had a weakness for him, for his courage. And his spite. These are traits which I very much like and strongly value”<sup>5</sup>.

Stefan Kisielewski met Giedroyc, at the time a ministerial counselor, in 1936 through Witold Małcużyński, a student of the Warsaw conservatory, and Paweł Zdziechowski, a beginning journalist. He took up writing music reviews for *Bunt Młodych*, the first of which appeared on 10 February 1936. After only a few attempts, he abandoned this form of journalism, expanding issues and forms to political and literary articles which “paid a lump sum of 30 zloty no matter their size”<sup>6</sup>. In an interview kept in the Giedroyc files, Kisielewski recalls: “In 1934, I began writing in *Bunt Młodych*. It was a well-edited magazine. The three Bocheński brothers and the two Pruszyński brothers published there, as did Kazimierz Studentowicz, Stanisław Stomma, Konstanty Łubieński and Jan Frankowski. I was mostly interested in political issues. I wrote a very vicious review of *Ferdydurke*; Czesław Straszewicz, who was head of the literary department and an admirer of Gombrowicz, didn’t want to run it, so I published the review in *Czas*”<sup>7</sup>.

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Paryż 2010). Obligated by the testament of his brother, Henryk Giedroyc gave them to Leopold Unger and the author of this article was invited to participate. *Teczki...* contains substantial source material in the form of press clippings, notes, stenographic records of conversations, etc. which Giedroyc thought were especially important. In the most diverse and chronologically stretched period, described by Giedroyc as “Clippings 1975, 1965–1972 to 1988”, there are five texts by Kisielewski. Apart from the mentioned in footnote 1, these are from *Tygodnik Powszechny*: “Dyskretny urok burżuazji” (20.03.1977), “Okrucy polemiczne rozsypane” (25.11.1984), “Soczewka, podwójność”, „Jerzy” (13.12.1987), “Rozmowa ze Stefanem Kisielewskim. W czterdziestolecie działalności publicystycznej” (2.04.1972).

<sup>3</sup> This is the term I used in the chapter of my book *Szkice o paryskiej „Kulturze”* (Toruń 2004, pp. 73–90), building this stylistic figure based on the popularized by Krzysztof Pomian – “Redaktor i Publicysta [Editor and Journalist]”, and referring to Giedroyc and Juliusz Mieroszewski. For more on the relations between Kisielewski and Giedroyc see: I. Hofman, *Dwugłos o Peerele. Dzienniki Stefana Kisielewskiego i Mariana Brandysa*, Lublin 1999.

<sup>4</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Abecadło Kisiela*, Warszawa 1990, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> J. Giedroyc, *Autobiografia na cztery ręce*, ed. by and afterword by K. Pomian, Warszawa 1994, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A.S. Kowalczyk, *Giedroyc i „Kultura”*, Wrocław 1999; M. Urbanek, *Kisiel*, Wrocław 1997; S. Kisielewski, *Spotkania z Jerzym Giedroyciem*, [in:] *O „Kulturze”. Wspomnienia i opinie*, coll. and arranged by G. Pomian, K. Pomian, book prepared for print by A. Kowalska et. al., Londyn 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Conversation with Stefan Kisielewski (Wojciech Karpiński, personal archive of Jerzy Giedroyc, author’s collection). Worth noticing are parts of the conversation, in which Kisielewski discusses writers important for him. He mentions Henri Rochefort, Karol Irzykowski (“with constant anxiety he watched if his own opinions are not becoming numb. He fought with himself. And with the entire world”), Stefan Kołaczkowski, Artur Górski, Marian Zdziechowski, Adolf Bocheński, Adolf Nowaczyński, Stanisław Stroński, Stanisław Mackiewicz (“with

Describing *Bunt Młodych*, Kisielewski emphasized the following programme features: anticommunism, being pro-Lithuanian and pro-Ukrainian, the idea of Russia's division into national states (visible here are important parallels to the ULB programme of *Kultura*, which was good neighbor relations between independent Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, these last three surfacing after the collapse of the USSR), and “the cult of the lonely believer of the German orientation” by Waław Studnicki. In terms of organizing the work of the editorial office and intellectual atmosphere, he underlined: “Giedroyc managed everything discretely, yet irrefutably, he inspired and set the tone [...], he liked being surrounded by a staff of gifted people”, he was liberal and radical, liked tough discussions and sensations<sup>8</sup>. Interesting is the juxtaposition of the image of Giedroyc and Jerzy Turowicz in the publication for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the editor-in-chief of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (again the personal archive of Giedroyc!): “I was always an enthusiast of dual-thinking and my two editors reassured me in this: before the war it was Jerzy Giedroyc, after the war – Jerzy Turowicz. Both, what's interesting, very stubborn people. Giedroyc in *Bunt Młodych* or *Polityka* already had very firm views and goals, yet he allowed (for training, that is consolidation?) publishing things provokingly different. Unfortunately, he's changed and it's rather difficult to publish something that he doesn't approve of in *Kultura*”<sup>9</sup>.

Kisielewski described his interest in *Bunt Młodych* as political, recalling three important works: “Terroryzm ideowy”, “Dlaczego Piłsudczycy nie kierują życiem Polski” and a letter to the editorial office on the issue of the agriculture reform by Juliusz Poniatowski<sup>10</sup>. By definition, Giedroyc remembered the time differently: Kisielewski did not participate in club meetings, did not take a stand even in drastic cases, like Bereza, he focused on the issues of culture and economy<sup>11</sup>.

The years of the the second world war were for Giedroyc a journey with the government to Romania, next the trail of the Polish II Corps, and information and propaganda work for the army of General Władysław Anders. For Kisielewski – the anguish of daily life

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whom I never agreed with, but who appealed to me as a species: a combination of journalism, literature, politics”), Antonii Gołubiew, Jerzy Zawieyski, Artur Sandauer, Kazimierz Wyka. Kisielewski smuggled more opinions on journalism in the overview of the book by Kazimierz Koźniewski *Historia co tydzień, Dyskretny urok...*, the article is also in the “files”.

<sup>8</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Spotkania...*, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, “Soczewka...”. For accuracy, the complete description: “While Jerzy Turowicz, my second writing godfather, despite a hidden stubbornness, maintained flexibility, pluralism, free-thinking”

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *Spotkania...*, pp. 66–67.

<sup>11</sup> J. Giedroyc, *Autobiografia...*, p. 153.

in occupied Warsaw, the death of his father and marriage with Lidia Hintz, the birth of his son Waclaw and the exodus after the Warsaw Uprising.

In 1946 the first letter from Kisielewski addressed to Giedroyc arrived in Paris (passed on by chance), in which he referred to, among others, attempts to pass independent Catholic candidates in the *Sejm*, his cooperation with *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Based on the analysis of archives kept at Maisons-Laffitte, it can be said that a fairly regular correspondence began in 1953. Their first post-war meeting took place on 27 April 1957, when Kisielewski, as an MP of *Znak* visited Paris. The discrepancies in evaluating the events of October 1956 in Poland started the “dialectical-spiritual” conflict with Giedroyc, which in time gained the magnitude of an ideological antagonism with the *Kultura* circle, embodied in Kisielewski’s polemics with Mieroszewski’s publications. Giedroyc confirmed this state as follows: “We resumed our cooperation and our quarrels. But we quarreled our whole life, which he actually described very well”<sup>12</sup>.

In 1960, on an invitation of Giedroyc’s, Kisielewski took part in the Congress of Free Culture [Kongres Wolności Kultury] in Copenhagen. At the time he published a novel *Historie żydowskie* under the pseudonym Teodor Klon. The atmosphere around a series of reportages published in 1962, after his return from the few-week trip to West Germany blocked the writer’s passport and also caused an escalation of censorship pressure. Cut off from the possibility of trips and a dynamic, ongoing comment on reality, Kisielewski dedicates himself to writing. In the years 1967–1982 he published five novels under the pseudonym Tomasz Staliński in the Literary Institute in Paris. These were: *Widziane z góry* (1967), *Cienie w pieczarze* (1971), *Romans zimowy* (1972), *Śledztwo* (1974), *Ludzie z akwarium* (1976) and the sixth – *Podróż w czasie* (1982), under his own name. The author commented the circumstances of their publication as follows: “I decided to finally be myself and write without censorship [...] novels about contemporary, hence communist Poland”. He adds: “And thus, after many years, my true relations with the Editor, now the Publisher were revived. I suspected that the Prince did not entirely relish in my novels, but yet he published them, which is what I value in most of all”<sup>13</sup>.

Indeed. Giedroyc was not an admirer of Kisielewski – the Writer. Apart from the novel *Widziane z góry*, none of them gained his recognition, and *Sprzysiężenie* – as is known

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Spotkania...*, p. 73.

– he was outraged with<sup>14</sup>. The Editor appreciated Kisielewski's articles. He wrote: "Kisielewski was fine journalist. Although, terribly uneven. He should have spent his life writing just articles instead of getting carried away with novels and politics. He was an exceptional journalist and the article was a form in which he expressed himself the fullest"<sup>15</sup>.

Kisielewski described his relations with *Kultura* as "dialectical, that is, volatile". He rebuked the Editor for his distrust towards the Polish Radio Free Europe [*Radio Wolna Europa*], an excessive tolerance towards former Marxists, attacks on the Church, a utopian vision of the demise of the USSR, "180 degree shifts"<sup>16</sup>, criticism of the parliamentary work of *Znak*. For Giedroyc, Kisielewski's views on the priority of Polish-Russian relations at the expense of policies towards ULB and the belief that far-fetched political transformation under socialism are possible, were unacceptable.

Before I move on to listing the work of Kisielewski in *Kultura*, I will underline that the close collaboration began in 1976<sup>17</sup> with the inauguration of the series of articles "Wołanie na puszczy" (by January 1982 49 works were published). After proclaiming martial law in Poland, Giedroyc rejected the article "Bić się czy rozmawiać", published later on in *Zeszyty Literackie*. In 1983 Kisielewski published two extensive essays in *Kultura*: "Bezsilność publicystyki" and "O nadwiślańskim poplątaniu" (confiscated in *Tygodnik Powszechny*), a year later – "Wstęp do programu opozycji". Due to the unquestionable rank of

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<sup>14</sup> Commonly recalled was Giedroyc's characteristic statement, made in the novel as a counsel Gieysztor, which was as follows: "I could not forgive him that he credited me with great ambitions to settle the Polish-German relations and influencing Hitler – some completely incredible stories. The book repulsed me also due to its extensive homosexual and impotence motif, which play an important role in the hero's life". J. Giedroyc, *Autobiografia...*, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193. Kisiel himself, with an element of nonchalance, began one of the articles from the series "Widziane inaczej" as follows: "I write and send the following articles in bundles – five in one – so therefore they are published no earlier than within a few weeks after being written and they have little accuracy, often they simply have no connection whatsoever with what's going on. They account for a counterpoint to events, a kind of personal diary of an egocentric, who rather consequently engages in himself than in a perfect life. I stick to this type of writing, since the patient audience buys it...", *idem*, "Okruchy..." (the last example in the "files").

<sup>16</sup> This refers to the popular statement by Giedroyc "one should know how to maintain his rules and change his opinions", J. Giedroyc, *Autobiografia...*, p. 193.

<sup>17</sup> Courtesy of Wojciech Sikora, the current director of the Literary Institute, I had the opportunity to become familiar with Kisielewski's correspondence with Giedroyc from that year. It was only seven letters dated 22 February, 29 March, 3 April (two letters), 22 May, 18 July, 12 September. Not much in the epistolary practice of the Editor. Probably Giedroyc called in return, as Kisielewski was at the time traveling around Europe (in Paris, Hamburg, Berlin), or simply did not write back. The letters concern problems usually brought up in the correspondence to the Editor, such as book orders, volumes of *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne*, impressions after trips and meetings (e.g. in Germany, spring of 1976 Kisielewski met with Paweł Hertz, Władysław Bartoszewski, Jerzy Pomianowski, Andrzej Chilecki). They contain mini-reviews of books by Andrzej Sacharow, descriptions of the actions undertaken by the opposition with Adam Michnik (letter in defense of the Ursus and Radom workers). Here I thank Wojciech Sikora for providing this correspondence, despite the ongoing archivization of the collection in Maisons-Laffitte.

the paper as a platform of free speech, these statements gained the status of nearly ideological and circulated Poland as transcripts. In 1985 Kisielewski showed in Paris the typescript of his new book *Wszystko inaczej*. However, due to the lack of establishing a print date, it appeared in the London *Puls*, with a dedication to Jerzy Giedroyc.

In order to mark the grounds of Kisielewski's presence in *Kultura*, I conducted a genre division of the collected material: columns, articles – including those censored in Poland, interviews, letters and polemics with the author, statements on the subject of the *Kultura* circle, and letters to the editorial office.

Placing journalism at the top of the hierarchy results not only from the above recalled superior opinions of the Editor, who even used the description “history of post-war Poland”<sup>18</sup> with reference to this form of Kisiel's art, but also from the fact that this form mastered by Kisielewski dominated the universal reception of his work. It is enough to remind the known story that many began and ended reading *Tygodnik Powszechny* with Kisiel's columns. In *Kultura*, understandably, his works had a different role. They were not as known (a monthly production mode!) or as transparent as in Poland. Nevertheless, the recognizable style and temper of the columnist author caused a stir among readers<sup>19</sup>. This attraction was determined by the subject matter. As Kisielewski put it in the mid 1960s, “the synthesized motto of his political life” was: “hold on tight to the People's Republic of Poland and fuss about it with all your might”<sup>20</sup>.

The first article entitled “Mój głos w dyskusji” appeared in the September edition of *Kultura* in 1976 with the proper label marked as unacceptable for print in Poland<sup>21</sup>. This was how the series *Wolanie na puszczy* was initiated and continued in the magazine between 1977–1981. From the ninth edition of the 1981 number, there appeared still a few articles with the heading “Widziane inaczej” (up to No. 1/2 from 1982). Some titles are characteristic, e.g. (in chronological order): „Pochwała kłamstwa”, “Zmierzch patriotyzmu”, “Historii uśmiech

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<sup>18</sup> *Kisiel Wprost. 10 lat nagród Kisiela*, auth. of texts J.K. Bielecki et. al., ed. by A. Cebulska, Poznań–Warszawa 1999.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Kisielewski sent a letter from Warsaw from a reader Wanda Chylicka as a response to the article “Gorczyki dwa ziarna”, published in *Kultura* (later *K*) 1979, No. 5, pp. 112–116. The letter was published in No. 9 in the same year. Cf. also the article by Artur Bieruntowicz, “Glossa do prorocstwa”, *K* 1979, No. 3, pp. 135–139.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the article by S. Kisielewski, “Jak jest w tej Polsce”, from the collection *Głową w ścianę* from 1964 [in:] idem, *Felietony zdjęte przez cenzurę*, Warszawa 1998, p. 80.

<sup>21</sup> In the unpublished correspondence, which I discuss above, Kisielewski complained about censorship and sending this column, asked it be printed anonymously. He sarcastically added: “This is how Mr. Jaroszewicz's encourages a *national discussion*”. The column was to be printed in *Tygodnik Powszechny* on 18 July 1976.

ironiczny”, “Rosjanie i inni”, “Wschód i Zachód – światy nienormalne”, “Historii krok leniwy”, “O Rzeczypospolitej naprawianiu”, “O podwójnym myśleniu i działaniu”, “Bajki dla dorosłych”, “Czy mamy ideologię czy socjalizm”, “Szczekanie aż po Sekwanę”, “Pan chce naprawiać błędy systemu”, “Strachy wschodnie na Zachodzie”, “Nadzieje i złudy”, “Piaskiem w oczy”, “Entuzjizm i niemożność czyli młyn polski”. Their choice points to a broad spectrum of Kisielewski’s interest, persistence in hunting down the absurdities of daily life, Giedroyc’s favorite defiance, witty jokes and fantasies. That is why Wojciech Skalmowski (pseudonym Maciej Broński), discussing in *Kultura* the annual anthology of articles, wrote that they are one of the factors shaping Polish intellectual life after the war, and their consideration only in terms of politics would be an unjust simplification. “Kisiel is a spiteful, stubborn and consistent apostle of the virtue of normality in Poland”<sup>22</sup>. He interweaves trivial and serious subjects, granting the ephemeral form a certain gravity. And although these words concern the series *100 razy głową w ściany*, appearing up to 1972 in *Tygodnik Powszechny* and were often numbered down by bureaucrats from Mysia street<sup>23</sup>, they can be used as a generalization of the phenomena known as “The Kisiel Columns”.

Apart from them, Kisielewski also published articles in *Kultura* containing all of his views on the development of the socio-political situation in Poland, longer analyses and even programme drafts of the opposition. *Mój Testament* written in 1962 played a certain part as a hasty summary of the over two-month trip to France and Germany. The editorial office found it so controversial that it published a text entitled “Oprotestowujemy testament Kisielewskiego” [*We protest against Kisielewski’s testament*]<sup>24</sup>, claiming however, that the vague, at times carefree message was an excuse to deal with “repenting myths and half-truths in many minds”. Drawing the description of Western prosperity, Kisielewski smoothly glided over regional development disproportions to prove the success of the communist “experiment” in post-war Poland. These were: industrialization, starting new branches of

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<sup>22</sup> To commemorate it, a collection of 100 columns by S. Kisielewski from the years 1945–1971 (S. Kisielewski, *100 razy głową w ściany*, Paris 1972) was published. The volume was reviewed by [W. Skalmowski] M. Broński, “O felietonach Kisiela”, *K* 1973, No. 3, pp. 127–129.

<sup>23</sup> On Mysia street in Warsaw was the headquarters of the Main Office for the Control of the Press, Publications, and Public Performances [Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk], a government institution commonly referred to as simply “censorship” – translator’s note.

<sup>24</sup> Both statements were important enough for the political discussion in the establishment of *Kultura*, Grażyna Pomian chose them to illustrate the topic “Emigracja i Kraj o PRL” in the 2-volume anthology *Wizja Polski na łamach Kultury 1947–1976*, published by the Towarzystwo Opieki nad Archiwum Instytutu Literackiego w Paryżu and UMCS, Warszawa–Lublin in 1999 (vol. 2, pp. 345–353).

heavy industrial development, modernizing the social structure, urbanization, educating specialist personnel, accumulating internal investment capital. Using the volt, typical for his style, already on the next page he in detail described the pains and serious “social illnesses”, actually undermining the legitimacy of his previous statements. At the end of his “Testament” Kisiel carried out an equation between political and economic issues in Poland, declaring himself an evolutionist, convinced about the pragmatic circumstances of systematic changes, lastly appealing to the emigration: “He who does not know modern-day Poland at all, let us call it communist, does not know his homeland, but only its vision, a vision from the past. Is it enough, especially if one wants to influence the life in one’s homeland? [...] Do not leave us be, come and visit, look, listen, inform us, inform yourselves, yes – we could use it, You, us and Poland. Contemporary Poland, which is just one – that on the map”<sup>25</sup>. The answer of the editorial office brought to light all the inconsistencies of the “Testament”: “In order to leave the area of disturbed concepts, one should reduce Kisielewski’s question to one simple form: how does Poland look today economically?” Counter-arguments concerning mainly defending the achievements of October 1956 (“we are aware of the invaluable nature of these achievements, from agriculture to abstract art. But how to maintain them in a distrusting and unwilling communist environment”) and fighting against the view that “the worst, the better”<sup>26</sup>.

The next article remaining in the tone of political proposals appeared in *Kultura* only after twenty years. In December 1981, after the first part of the issue entitled “Obserwatorium” there appeared the article “O nowe hasło”<sup>27</sup>. In it, the author considers the lack of conceptual social-economical and systematic thought in unions representing the striking workers. Kisiel suspected that they did not have any alternative prepared for the current system. “The symbol of preserving aspirations”, he claimed, is the attitude of Wojciech Jaruzelski (maintain power at all costs in fear of the Russian intervention), Lech Wałęsa (demand, not engaging in governing) and Primate Józef Glemp (first and foremost caution!). Thus – says Kisiel – centers with actual influence on the political life of Poland run from the obvious truth that the only chance at defeating the crisis is rejecting “Marxist socialism”.

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<sup>25</sup> S. Kisielewski, “Mój testament”, *K* 1962, No. 6, p. 105.

<sup>26</sup> “Oprotestowujemy testament Kisielewskiego”, *K* 1962, No. 7/8, pp. 147–156.

<sup>27</sup> S. Kisielewski, “O nowe hasło”, *K* 1981, No. 12, pp. 3–8.



The next statement – “Bezsilność publicystyki”, a text written first for *Tygodnik Powszechny*, entirely rejected by censorship, can and should be recognized as Kisiel’s voice in terms of Polish turning points. Composed of two disproportional parts, in the first, justifying the title, an attempt is made to define political journalism exemplified in the author’s own creative stages<sup>28</sup>. The core of the article is an analysis of the cause of the current crisis (through numerous historical references), ridiculing the traits and successes of the system (“experiment”). With this in mind, Kisielewski writes about “Solidarity” (“young workers finally believed in their Marxist Promethean role and created a class organization” (which “the entire nation joined”), the economic freedom it neglected, its original project of “New Economic Politics” based on the grassroots activity of small and medium entrepreneurship, lastly, about the drawbacks of the economic reform, the upheld social conviction of “welfare state”, the expansion of bureaucracy, and shortcomings of the centrally-steered economy etc. These problems were present in other appearances by Kisielewski in national press. The new element stated *expressis verbis* was the thesis which Giedroyc clearly did not agree with, and was the following: “strive to change the system [...], remaining in the block, in an alliance, in geopolitics. The word *socialism* [...] can be maintained [...], the social and economic content should be changed – this is absolutely necessary for Poland. These changes need to be fought for, underlining that it will be a combat with mistakes, unaccustomed to the specifics of our economic and political system [...] not a fight with geopolitics, alliances and the postwar arrangement of Europe”<sup>29</sup>.

In 1983 there appeared two articles in *Kultura*: “Życie na niby czyli opcja obojętna”<sup>30</sup>, entirely dedicated to the rash – according to the author – demilitarization plans in Western Europe, and “O nadwiślańskim poplątaniu”, in its essence refereeing to the previously announced by Kisiel political repair programmes (also confiscated in *Tygodnik*). The starting point of thought is the criticism of welfare state in the Eastern and Western-European version.

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<sup>28</sup> These reflections, though marginal in the entire tone of the statement, are very interesting, e.g. the description of a political columnist – “a person constantly writing about politics only in his own name and account, a kind of fan – an expert fully granted the possibility of individual concepts, and dreaming up discussion theories, thinking out-loud, attacking public strongmen, also killing one’s own ideas and opinions voiced as the situation evolves. The aim of his writing is influencing [...] readers, society, the nation and also [...] the political establishment and people holding power. On condition, of course, that the writing is of undisturbed persistence, accessibility and most of all freedom of the most harsh even statements”. Cf. idem, “Bezsilność publicystyki”, *K* 1983, No. 1/2, pp. 116–136.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 133–134.

<sup>30</sup> Idem, “Życie na niby czyli opcja obojętna”, *K* 1983, No. 4, pp. 70–74.

Kisielewski believed that the most recent example of bankruptcy of the concept of the poor welfare state is the loss of political power by Edward Gierek's crew. In relation to "Solidarity" he claims that its activists "did not see that a true revolution in the system, moving towards economic justification of production, would hit them, leading to a downfall of the uneconomic motives of welfare". It's hard not to notice that this voice became an assertion of usefulness in journalistic work, in the sense of verification received *post factum*. In the ending of "O nadwiślańskim poplątaniu", Kisielewski also wonders about the costs of bankrupting companies, growing unemployment and early-retirement solutions for selected professional groups. He believed that "if political changes did not work, the only thing that could interest society and draw its attention from the historical and freedom-related relation, would be the possibility of individual work for big money, which is achieving personal freedom"<sup>31</sup>.

An especially important statement made by Kisielewski was "Wstęp do programu opozycji", which caused a direct reaction from Michał Heller (ps. Adam Kruczek), Waldemar Kuczyński and Leopolda (ps. Roman Zimand). It's not a surprise, taking into account that already in the first sentence the author announces: "I treat the following text as an introduction [...] to the programme of the NEW opposition, one that has to be born after the political fall of "Solidarity"<sup>32</sup>. This fact, accomplished in December 1981, did not overcast the historical achievements of the movement, such as leading a bloodless uprising, awakening a national-consciousness, un-telling the language of propaganda and the street. Why then did "Solidarity" so quickly become history? Kisielewski believed that the cause was the class and worker nature of their gatherings, "one cannot at once fight the concept of a state overwhelmingly welfare, arbitrarily employing everyone, and at the same time, fall back on that welfare, demanding from this state more generous benefits". The task of the new opposition, according to Kisiel, is first of all "checking" – at the smallest social expense as possible – the authenticity of Wojciech Jaruzelski's assertions that introducing martial law really saved Poland from a Russian intervention. The presented here programme was based on two postulates: the internal opposition cannot be identified with the anti-Russian movement ("we will remain under Russia and in this Eastern situation we must seek a solution") and it must free itself from the phraseology of the worker movement. Kisiel warned moreover

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<sup>31</sup> Idem, "O nadwiślańskim poplątaniu", *K* 1983, No. 5, pp. 87–95.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, "Wstęp do programu opozycji", *K* 1984, No. 1/2, pp. 100–111.

against the widespread demoralizing fear confined in the question “will the Russians agree”. The first, hot comment to the article was written by Michał Heller. In “Spotkanie trzeciego typu” he accused the author of primarily lacking a clear addressee of the dialog “against barriers”, due to Kisiel’s arbitrary use of the terms Russia – Soviet Union<sup>33</sup>. Next, a polemical correspondence was sent by Waldemar Kuczyński – “Kisiela spojrzenie na opozycję” – who was outraged by disqualifying the workers, over-valuing farmers as the only party directly interested in “economic democracy”, the division into class and national “Solidarity” and evaluating the reasons for its failure<sup>34</sup>.

Leopolita took an interesting stand towards Kisielewski’s articles, narrowing down the essence of the issue to... the economic level. To begin with, in his polemical work “Sedno i kilka innych ważnych spraw”, he claims that the fundamental dilemma, towards which Kisielewski sets the opposition, is reduced to a choice between market or some form of socialist economy. He also precisely points out faults in Kisielewski’s assumptions, especially in the description of the division of social forces in Poland and in view of the obvious truth that the legend of “Solidarity” is still strong and only minutely suppressed<sup>35</sup>.

A separate and undoubtedly interesting record of Kisielewski’s presence in the Parisian *Kultura* are interviews. The first – “Rozmowa ze Stefanem Kisielewskim” – appeared in 1957 and took place during the journalist’s visit to Paris, a city he had not seen since 1939. Kisielewski’s interlocutor was the Editor of *Kultura*, probably Jerzy Giedroyc. Specifying who the government in Poland (Political Bureau) and parliament (Central Committee of the Polish United Worker’s Party – PZPR) actually are, the interlocutors evaluate the perspectives of post-October 1956 democratization of life in Poland, fully expressed in the liquidation of the Security Office [Urząd Bezpieczeństwa] political domination, the denunciation and blackmail system, annulling economical and cultural repressions. According to Kisielewski, a huge threat to this process were economic difficulties. Giedroyc’s interviewee also spoke on the subject of irreversible geopolitical changes (“we are in the Eastern Block and will be in it as a result not of our geographical position [...], but simply from the natural course of historical development. You cannot have your feet East and your head West: despite our Latin culture we belong to the East”). He

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<sup>33</sup> M. Heller, “Spotkanie trzeciego typu”, *K* 1984, No. 1/2, pp. 111–113.

<sup>34</sup> W. Kuczyński, “Kisiela spojrzenie na opozycję”, *K* 1984, No. 3, pp. 110–117.

<sup>35</sup> [R. Zimand] Leopolita, “Sedno i kilka innych ważnych spraw”, *K* 1984, No. 7/8, pp. 148–163.

evaluated the work of Catholic parliamentary members in the Sejm, explaining the differences between *Znak* and *Pax*, and finally spoke for close cooperation with emigration. He gave the host a superior note for *Kultura* (the best and most interesting magazine published in the world in Polish; at the same time, universal and important for the contemporary history of Poland, “one might not agree with it, but cannot not read it”)<sup>36</sup>.

The next published conversation was connected with Kisiel’s second visit to Paris, again after a long break. The discussion revolved around the situation in Poland after suppressing the strikes in Ursus and Radom, which the guest of *Kultura* rated negatively (they did not bring any political-structural changes). Kisielewski bitterly claimed that we are a hostage of the *status quo* in Eastern Europe (“on our backs peace is held [...] and that is most important for these Western sybarites”), in society, as in the party, there no longer are any dynamic forces capable of taking on a long-term opposition war. He believed that even due to pragmatic reasons there will not be a grassroots “*kielbasa*” revolt. He protested against any attempts to differentiate the KOR, ROPCiO and PPN circles because emigration did not know the reality in Poland. The atmosphere of the conversation was best expressed by the descriptions used in *Kultura*: “psychological safeguards”, “you have dreadfully cornered yourself”, “this is some kind of a conspiracy theory of politics brought to absurdity”, “so this is the role that you so graciously defined for the political emigration”, “you rather outdo yourself”, “I see that you indeed have an obsession, a complex on the subject”<sup>37</sup>.

In 1978 Giedroyc published *Rozmowa Kisiel–Michnik*. In the most part it concerned resonating opinions towards Adam Michnik’s book *Kościół, lewica, dialog*, which – with an introduction by Stefan Kisielewski – was published in the Literary Institute in Paris. It’s author debated opinions that its purpose served “involving the Church in a quarrel” and was against calling KOR activists “former Marxists”. The tactical programme expressed by Michnik at the time assumed a gradual reclaiming of human rights, self-organization of society against spiritual sovietization and applying ongoing civic pressure on the ruling communists<sup>38</sup>.

The interviews so far presented remain in the sphere of *Kultura*. “Nie tylko o pielgrzymce” was a reprint from the underground paper *Wola*. This conversation was very

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<sup>36</sup> “Rozmowa ze Stefanem Kisielewskim”, *K* 1957, No. 6, p. 27–35.

<sup>37</sup> “Rozmowa ze Stefanem Kisielewskim”, *K* 1978, No. 3, p. 14–22.

<sup>38</sup> “Rozmowa Kisiel–Michnik”, *K* 1978, No. 5, pp. 10–15.

typical for the columnist nature of Kisiel, e.g. when asked about the best political ideas of recent years, he mentioned: introducing martial law without bloodshed, amnesty for prisoners of conscience and the pro-church attitude of state authorities. He believed that the visit of John Paul II would not bring systematic or socio-economical gains, but will by contrast, strengthen the position of general Jaruzelski<sup>39</sup>.

The last of the interviews, revealed by Wojciech Skalamowski five years after Kisielewski's death, is a replay of a magnetic tape recording from a conversation that took place in Paris in 1985, and concerned novels published under Kisiel's pseudonym Tomasz Staliński. Skalamowski, reviewing them as Maciej Broński, collected information showing their origin, hero prototypes, tropes of authentic events and places. The novel's author admitted that his task was to "establish the picture of communism, as a normal person sees it – not a communist, but someone who lives here and has accustomed to it somehow. And this is a point of view from which no one actually wrote – at least no one in this country. [...] These are photos"<sup>40</sup>.

The novel theme will return while reporting on other's opinions about Stefan Kisielewski in *Kultura*. In this part of the materials are – alongside articles dedicated to different episodes in Kisiel's life or the voice of journalists and readers on subjects taken up by him – numerous reviews, among others, Staliński's novels.

Six authors dedicated their memoirs and occasional works to Kisielewski. Chronologically first was the report on the meeting of Warsaw writers, made famous by the daring expression "the dictatorship of dunces" [*dyktatura ciemniaków*]<sup>41</sup>. As its result, the former MP was assaulted, which was described by Leopold Tyrmand in his correspondence "Kopanie i mówienie". Depicting the image of Kisiel, Tyrmand used the high-strung statement: "Who is this man, towards whom the Polish communist regime makes such an effort, instead of just handling him with good-old methods? [...] He is 57. Comes from a family with leftist traditions, which gave the Polish culture outstanding writers and intellectualists [...]. He is a composer and musical critic, known and appreciated in Europe.

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<sup>39</sup> S. Kisielewski, "Nie tylko o pielgrzymce", *K* 1987, No. 10, pp. 74–75, quoted after: *Wola* 1987, No. 19 (1.06).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. W. Skalamowski, "Stefan Kisielewski o Stalińskim", *K* 1996, No. 1/2, pp. 142–165.

<sup>41</sup> In the report numerous parts of Kisielewski speech were quoted, among them – the most well-known: "History in Poland is retrospectively corrected based on the interests of some political party [...]. The blockheads in Poland are armed with the power monopoly. 22<sup>nd</sup> July is celebrated annually, while the July Manifest is prohibited in print. There is the dictatorship of the dimwitted. Censorship is a state within a state and is a secret and illegal institution.

He is also a writer [...]. A superb journalist, social critic and explorer of contemporary culture. For over 20 years he has been publishing a weekly column in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, censorship confiscated them all the time, nonetheless [...] independent Polish intelligence believes that what remains of them is practically their ideological and cognitive Decalogue". He points to Kisielewski's simple and difficult to follow political philosophy concentrated on revealing the mistakes and abuse of communist doctrinaires in order to create mechanisms of social control and responsibility. Tyrmand uncovers the behind the scenes of the "resolution" demanding removing from ZLP among others Kisielewski and Paweł Jasienica. The article has great documentary value<sup>42</sup>. Similarly as – for entirely different reasons – the report by Bogdan Brodziński from the writer's stay in London<sup>43</sup>. Due to its unquestionable comical value, it is worth mentioning the rephrased verse by Marian Hemar, who Brodziński used as illustration for Kisiel's author evening: "Kisiel jako powstaniec / Kisiel – misji narodowej posłaniec / Kisiel jako kompozytor retro / Kisiel jako wróg budowy metro / Kisiel jako poseł »Znaku« / Kisiel jako znak epoki braków / Kisiel jako pianista / Kisiel jako cyklista / Kisiel jako ekonomista / Kisiel jako traktorzysta / Kisiel jako redaktor / Kisiel jako atomowy reaktor / Kisiel w Paryżu, Kisiel w Rzymie / No i wreszcie – Kisiel w Londynie<sup>44</sup>".

The amusing atmosphere was dominated by the speech made by Andrzej Szczypiorski during Kisielewski's 75th anniversary (the event took place on 28 February 1986 in the hall of the University of Warsaw), announced by *Kultura*. "Well, one should begin – says the speaker – that Kisiel is a great columnist. To that we can all agree. There is however something startling in this long and brilliant career [...], there are no slips, no falls or failures. It is exceptionally stable and sure, and it does concern a person, who fights, provokes and offends. For his entire life, he poked a stick where he shouldn't, called in the wild and banged his head against a wall. All these being provocations"<sup>45</sup>. He accurately imitated the of the laudation's addressee and proved that Kisiel's great writing is the source of his failure because instead of the expected quarrels and ferment... everybody agreed with him, also in the recent battle for the free market or demythologizing "Solidarity".

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. L. Tyrmand, "Kopanie i mówienie", *K* 1968, No. 5, pp. 90–96.

<sup>43</sup> B. Brodziński, "Kisiel w Londynie", *K* 1976, No. 1/2, pp. 198–199.

<sup>44</sup> "Kisiel as an insurgent/ Kisiel – the national mission messenger/ Kisiel composing retro / Kisiel as an enemy of the metro/ Kisiel as an MP of *Znak* / Kisiel as a sign of the age of lack/ Kisiel as a pianist/ Kisiel as a bicyclist/ Kisiel as an economist/ Kisiel as a tractor driver/ Kisiel as an editor/ Kisiel as an atom reactor/ Kisiel in Paris, Kisiel and Rome/And finally – Kisiel in London" – translator's note.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. A. Szczypiorski, "O Kisielu", *K* 1986, No. 4, pp. 115–120.

The remaining two memoirs were published after Kisielewski's death. Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "inheritor" of the column of *Tygodnik Powszechny's* mocker, with zest describes the times of their post-war friendship in Kraków, cafe social gatherings in Sukiennice, the canteen in Dom Literatów near Krupnicza street, the editorial office and the Planty park. Later when "the politician emerged" and Kisiel joined the *Znak* circle, personal contacts – he admits – lost their former intensity. Yet letters from that period spark with humour and paradox. Overall, in his last words Chrzanowski admitted: "for me [...] he will remain the Master, who was a light in the darkness, and in the brightness of his great mind, a believer in the free mind"<sup>46</sup>. Equally moving was Włodzimierz Sznarbachowski's farewell<sup>47</sup>.

The second group of articles printed in *Kultura* and dedicated to the extraordinary columnist are polemics and discussions concerning his statements (also in the national press) and Kisiel's parliamentary activities. Intriguing content is in e.g. "Wizyta u Luboniów" by Juliusz Mieroszewski, dedicated to Kisielewski. The article, also being a voice in the discussion on the attitudes of emigration and locals towards Polish reality, attacks Kisiel: the anticommunist, but state dignitary and part of the establishment. The symbolical *Lubonie* are those who – convinced in the wrongness of the ruling system – forget about the moral duty to go against it because it remains a historical necessity. According to Mieroszewski, Kisiel also betrayed this rule, presenting a peculiar defense of censorship ("after two months, there would be written everything there is to write, and after this time, puzzled citizens would assume that there is nothing more to do and that things did not go even a step forward") and accepting a seat in Parliament. The accusing tone of the article was underlined by phrases such as: "Dearest Kisiel – you underestimate yourself. As a writer you are someone – as an MP in the communist *Sejm* you are a zero. There lurks the danger that the zero-MP Kisielewski will exert pressure on Kisiel the writer. I am afraid this is already happening"<sup>48</sup>. The growing and obvious conflict between the journalists was revealed also in the article *Wybór*. Analyzing Kisielewski's "orientation", he writes: "Given just – he caused greater devastation during emigration than all the organizations and bulletins by Hanke and Hrubyk combined. Kisiel

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. T. Chrzanowski, "Stefan Kisielewski", *K* 1991, No. 11, pp. 80–87.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. W. Sznarbachowski, "Wspominając Kisiela", *K* 1992, No. 1/2, pp. 196–98.

<sup>48</sup> J. Mieroszewski, "Wizyta u Luboniów", *K* 1962, No. 3, pp. 9–19. The symptomatic dedication was not incidental – in 1982 Tadeusz Mianowicz "addressed" his article "Jeszcze raz o Polsce" (*K* 1982, No. 10) to Kisielewski the bard of geopolitics. Additionally, there once appeared by mistake in the Parisian monthly an article by Zenon Mieroszewski "W polskich oczach" but the author was labeled Tomasz Staliński. Cf. *K* 1970, No. 5, pp. 3–41.

represents a certain ideal. He is a catholic, not a communist [...]. He is *Polish-sick* [...]. There is no intellectual purge in him, but he does exemplify a certain grit, humour. Everything he writes has the appearance of so-called common sense. Kisiel flirts with his readers at home and abroad by occasionally crossing the line, but never outside a safe margin [...]. The audience [...] prefers Kisielewski because Kisiel embodies the national slogan *death to suckers*. Only a sucker goes outside the safety margin. Only a sucker gets it over the head – a sound man is always on top. He will cross the line, write in *Kultura*, renounce communism, and still be a member of the Sejm and *have it made*<sup>49</sup>. In the conclusion, Juliusz Mieroszewski differentiates three possible types of attitudes towards Polish issues: “steadfast” emigration immersed in past perfect, Kisielewski’s “collaboration model for non-communists, but in communist circumstances”, and the idea of evolutionism promoted in the social circle of *Kultura*.

Of course, Kisiel defended himself in the monthly and in *Tygodnik Powszechny* where he published the text “O pisaniu prawdy i o śmierci liberalizmu”<sup>50</sup>, which was commented by the Londoner in the recent “Kronika angielska”<sup>51</sup>. Today it is clearly visible that refuting attacks before a foreign public did not improve relations between the two great individualists.

Another article by Kisielewski resonated in *Kultura* – “Polska wymaga reklamy”, published in the monthly *Na Antenie*<sup>52</sup>. In it, the author reached the controversial conclusion that Poland is a communist country without ideologists because it had no Jews “the true holders of Marxism”. Maria Hirszowicz retorted the issue in an extensive, sociologically and statistically documented draft “Śladami mitu (W odpowiedzi Panu Stefanowi Kisielewskiemu)”<sup>53</sup>. Its core was a statement on the harmfulness of repeating the historical idea connecting the history of communism and Jews yielding towards this concept.

Worth discussing is also the polemic by Socjusz (ps. Zdzisław Najder) entitled “Polskie kwadratury koła”<sup>54</sup>. I previously indicated that Kisielewski’s ideas on the opposition’s need to “get along” with Russia were foreign to Giedroyc. In his programme projects for the opposition Kisiel reduced the thought to a smart formula – “let us change the

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<sup>49</sup> J. Mieroszewski, “Wybór”, *K* 1962, No. 7/8, pp. 103–111.

<sup>50</sup> S. Kisielewski, “O pisaniu prawdy i o śmierci liberalizmu”, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1962, No. 27.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. S. Kisielewski, “List do Redakcji”, *K* 1962, No. 4, pp. 72–80; [J. Mieroszewski] Londyńczyk, “»Majcher«. Kronika angielska”, *K* 1962, No. 9, pp. 93–100.

<sup>52</sup> S. Kisielewski, “Polska wymaga reklamy”, *Na Antenie* 1974 (Maj–June).

<sup>53</sup> M. Hirszowicz, “Śladami mitu (W odpowiedzi Panu Stefanowi Kisielewskiemu)”, *K* 1974, No. 10, pp. 114–124. Reprint: *Wizja Polski...*, pp. 157–167.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. [Z. Najder] Socjusz, “Polskie kwadratury koła”, *K* 1980, No. 6, pp. 109–120.



system and govern our way, and we will still stay with you”, thus taking away the only hope of the nation for future independence, when inward tendencies crumbling the monolith of the USSR. Socjusz apparently does not accept the only and realistic theory of Kisielewski, proving its weaknesses, such as: underestimating the influence of the opposition, discarding the possibility of internal pressure on the state apparatus or assuming the permanent nature of the political balance of power in Europe.

Readers were not indifferent to Kisiel’s theories. When he criticized Czesław Miłosz in *Tygodnik Solidarność* for his statement “Bałtowie; problem dla Gorbaczowa”, Zofia Ziemięcka answered with a few page long draft evaluating the presence of Polish culture in Lithuania<sup>55</sup>.

I found an unexpected punchline of this sphere of interest of Kisiel’s among the opinions of Helena Zaworska, who while searching for the justification of his columnist passion of preserving everyday Polish life wrote: “He was not a utopian, or not even an optimist [...] he believed that we can count on larger changes in one hundred years. But he did not let down his hands, he wrote so that the nation would not fall in apathy, boredom or slumber. He acted, got mad, abused justly and unjustly [...]. That is when he felt alive”<sup>56</sup>.

Very often in *Kultura* there appeared reviews of Stefan Kisielewski’s novels and studies of his works. From those published in Poland only the selection *Z muzycznej międzyepoki* was discussed, a discarded collection of articles and, as the last work – *Dzienniki*. Volumes stored at the Literary Institute were usually popularized by printing certain chapters in the magazine<sup>57</sup>. Tomasz Staliński’s novel *Cienie w pieczarze* were the subject of review, among others, Jacek Salski, who thought it was one of the most interesting and important works in many years, as it drastically settled the so far concealed question of constraining words and actions in Poland, the condition of intelligence, the mechanism of upholding the system. The fascination of critics with the distinctness of *Cienie* (exposing the illusions about the post-October renewal) is so strong that its authorship is attributed to Witold Gombrowicz and interpreted as a symptom of independent literary rebirth in Poland. Czesław Miłosz

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Z. Ziemięcka, “Czytając prasę”, *K* 1991, No. 4, pp. 104–108.

<sup>56</sup> H. Zaworska, *Szczerłość aż do bólu. O dziennikach i listach*, Warszawa 1998, p. 86.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. J. Gajek, “Kisiel i muzyka współczesna”, *K* 1967, No. 3, pp. 132–134; [S. Kisielewski] T. Staliński, *Sejm*, [part of the novel *Widziane z góry*], *K* 1967, No. 9, pp. 42–55; [idem] T. Staliński, *Romans zimowy* [part of the novel under the same title], *K* 1972, No. 6, pp. 12–16; [idem] T. Staliński, *Ludzie w Akwarium*, *K* 1975, No. 12, pp. 21–35; idem, *W podwarszawskim lesie* [part of the novel *Podróż w czasie*], *K* 1981, No. 9, pp. 14–23; idem, *Gdy znów nadchodzi listopad* [part of the novel *Wszystko inaczej*], *K* 1985, No. 12, pp. 60–67.

distinctly named traits determining the novel: it opens accounts long closed, posing anew the problem of intellectuals involved for hundreds of years in the same drama of the Russian annexation. Appraise for *Cienie w pieczarze* corresponds with the opinion of Maciej Broński, according to whom Staliński moved the deepest level of communist hypocrisy, giving the dilemmas of the main hero a fictional and conventional dimension. Entirely different was the highly critical voice of Józef Czapski, who not only did not agree with the significance of Miłosz's review, but also undermined the novel's idea of dealing with intellectuals<sup>58</sup>.

Maciej Broński explained also in *Kultura* the complexities of Staliński's next work, e.i. *Romans zimowy*, primarily finding in it the draft of the production novel, and bringing together the works of the author before the premiere of *Śledztwo*. About the title *Ludzie w akwarium*, he wrote: "a kind of recollection on the Polish-issue", *Przygoda w Warszawie*<sup>59</sup> was qualified, against *Zbrodnia w Dzielnicy Północnej*, as a sensational novel for intellectuals<sup>60</sup>.

Janina Katz-Hewetson encouraged to read selected columns by Kisielewski from 1945–1969 published by *Znak* entitled *Z literackiego lamusa*<sup>61</sup>, intrigued by the precision of language, humour, dignity of the authors attitude, free spirit, style of intellectual activity<sup>62</sup>. Finally, the Parisian monthly mentioned *Dzienniki*. The most personal work, reflecting the temper and change in Kisiel's sympathy, full of hurtful judgment, offending remarks, gossip, and hence the most difficult to discuss without being labled as biased. Maciej Broński did it the best, gracefully introducing Lem's metaphor "wyszalnia" which is a practical place, something of a muted telephone booth, "where everyone who is angry can easily go wild, pounding the imaginary antagonist and throwing curses at him"<sup>63</sup>.

For balance, it should be mentioned that Kisielewski commented his co-workers in the magazine: he reviewed the book by Leopold Unger *Orzeł czy reszka*, published a memoir

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. J. Salski, "Słowo niepodległe", *K* 1972, No. 9, pp. 127–137; Cz. Miłosz, "Duże cienie", *K* 1972, No. 10, p. 32; [W. Skalmowski] M. Broński, "Sprawy cieniste", *ibid*, pp. 197–204; J. Czapski, "Dwie prowokacje", *K* 1972, No. 12, pp. 3–8.

<sup>59</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Przygoda w Warszawie. Powieść*, Londyn 1976.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. [W. Skalmowski] M. Broński, "Szkic węglem", *K* 1972, No. 9, pp. 138–140; *idem*, "Nowa powieść Stalińskiego", *K* 1974, No. 6, pp. 135–137; *idem*, "Nauka o Polsce współczesnej", *K* 1976, No. 3, p. 131–134; *idem*, "Stefan Kisielewski – powieściopisarz", *K* 1977, No. 6, pp. 111–114.

<sup>61</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Z literackiego lamusa*, Kraków 1979.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. J. Katz-Hewetson, "A Kisiel został tak jak był Kisiel", *K* 1980, No. 7/8, pp. 212–216.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. [W. Skalmowski] M. Broński, "»Wyszalnia«. O «Dziennikach» Stefana Kisielewskiego", *K* 1997, No. 9, p. 159–166.

about Zygmunt Mycielski<sup>64</sup>. In *Abecadło Kisiela* he created interesting portraits of Józef Czapski, Gustaw Herling Grudziński, Zofia and Zygmunt Hertz, Konstanty Jeleński, Juliusz Mieroszewski, Czesław Miłosz, Leopold Unger, Melchior Wańkowicz, thus the strict circle of Maisons-Laffitte.

The all-around presence of Kisiel in *Kultura* can be concluded in letters. They concerned formal rules of cooperation (correction, print deadlines), were at times a quick retort directed towards Gombrowicz or Mieroszewski, who was the object of criticism due to little knowledge of domestic life<sup>65</sup>.

In light of the collected material it should be mentioned that Stefan Kisielewski had close ties with Maisons-Laffitte. The pre-war relationship with the Editor, supported by publications in *Bunt Młodych* and *Polityka*, despite the years apart, different fates that partially determined the point of view on Polish issues, developed into respect for the consequence and logic of different opinions. Jerzy Giedroyc thought highly of Kisiel's columns, denying him however the political talent. He printed books by Tomasz Staliński without conviction, but from the duty of supporting independent literature, all the more that it was a faithful depiction of communist life. The Editor did not deny Kisiel a voice when he sent in works confiscated by censorship. He gave him a chance to defend his opinions, although he mostly did not agree with *Realpolitik* of the *Znak* MP. Not concealing these antagonisms, especially between Kisielewski and Mieroszewski, he gave both equal access to the magazine.

For the author of novels published thanks to the Literary Institute in Paris, every stay in Maisons-Laffitte was refreshing, a deep intake of an atmosphere of uninhibited freedom and honesty. Even *Dzienniki*, reflecting the frustration of the helpless journalist, note an euphoric mood after rare meetings with Giedroyc and his co-workers. A perhaps less important, but more meaningful in the budget of the "gagged" author after 1968, were the royalties paid by *Kultura*.

Based on the lecture of *Dzienniki*, one can risk the theory that the debates often taking place on its pages with the Editor were for the columnist, devoid of the possibility to print, a

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. S. Kisielewski, "Brukselczyk z Warszawy widziany", *K* 1987, No. 3, pp. 129–141 (and L. Unger's response, "»Orzeł« – i mała reszotka", *ibid.* p. 141); *idem*, "Ci, co odeszli. O Zygmuncie Mycielskim", *K* 1987, No. 10, pp. 135–137.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *K* 1959, No. 4, pp. 157–158; 1962, No. 3, pp. 72–80; 1978, No. 3, p. 148; 1979, No. 7/8, pp. 226–227; 1985, No. 3, p. 166; 1985, No. 4, p. 149. The editorial offices commented briefly: "Discussions with Stefan Kisielewski are something very difficult", *K* 1985, No. 4, p. 149.

substitute of a real conversation with readers. They created an illusion of participating in matters of real politics, which were known as Kisiel's passion. Jerzy Giedroyc is a frequent and active hero of the journal narration as "Old Prince" who does not understand or know today's Poland ("by the way, such a capable man, and he can't imagine how he cannot imagine today's Poland"), he is too far, without strength, should resign from politics, and at the same time – "is a bit like Don Quixote, although noble, full of enthusiasm and dedication", continuing "resistance in void", one of the largest and most distinguished Poles of our times<sup>66</sup>. The amplitude of emotions and invectives that Kisiel called the founders of *Kultura*, in no way hurt their long-term relationship. Close relations between the sons of the writer and the circle of *Kultura* are proof<sup>67</sup>.

Giedroyc entitled his memoirs of Kisielewski „Bez niego życie będzie bardziej szare”. Recapping the fifty-year-old friendship and cooperation, the Editor wrote: “It was a strange collaboration, with constant quarrels and discussions. We were connected by a common non-conformism and a stubborn pursuit of changes and reforms, both in the cultural and political life of Poland [...]. Mean, walking his own, sometimes strange paths, provoking and inspiring, Stefan Kisielewski became an indispensable element of Polish reality”<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. I. Hofman, *Dwugłos o Peerelu...*, p. 197–198.

<sup>67</sup> Thanks to international relations and numerous travels, the popular pianist "Wacek" Kisielewski (from the duo with "Marek" [Tomaszewski] helped in organizing events supporting the Polish opposition. Already after Kisielewski's death, a frequent guest in Maisons-Laffitte was Jerzy Kisielewski.

<sup>68</sup> J. Giedroyc, "Bez niego życie będzie bardziej szare", *Nasza Rodzina* 1991, No. 11, p. 19.