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How to Defeat the USSR? Richard Wraga's Analysis of Soviet Russia and Communism, the Relevance of His Studies, and His Impact on the US Intelligence Community*

Zarys treści: Artykuł poświęcony jest Ryszardowi Wradze, czyli Jerzemu Antoniemu Niezbrzyckiemu (1902–1968), najdłużej pełniącemu swoją funkcję kierownikowi Referatu „Wschód” Oddziału II Sztabu Głównego (1931–1939). Wraga był autorem ponad 1500 artykułów, kilkuset niejawnych analiz, setek wykładów oraz wystąpień radiowych, w których starał się w rzetelny sposób informować na temat specyfiki systemu sowieckiego oraz zagrożenia komunistycznego. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu naświetlenie jego dorobku jako analityka, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem jego aktywności w środowisku amerykańskich naukowców i analityków, w tym przedstawicieli służb i administracji amerykańskiej.

Outline of content: This article is devoted to Ryszard Wraga, or Jerzy Antoni Niezbrzycki (1902–1968), the longest-serving head of the ‘East’ Desk of the Second Department of the General Staff (1931–1939). Wraga was the author of over 1,500 articles, several hundred classified analyses, hundreds of lectures and radio broadcasts, in which he sought to provide reliable information about the specificity of the Soviet system and the communist threat. This article aims to shed light on his achievements as an analyst, with particular emphasis on his activities among American scholars and analysts, including representatives of the American special services and the administration.

Słowa kluczowe: Rosja, ZSRR, dezinformacja, strategia, komunizm, wywiad, Wraga

Keywords: Russia, USSR, disinformation, strategy, communism, intelligence, Wraga

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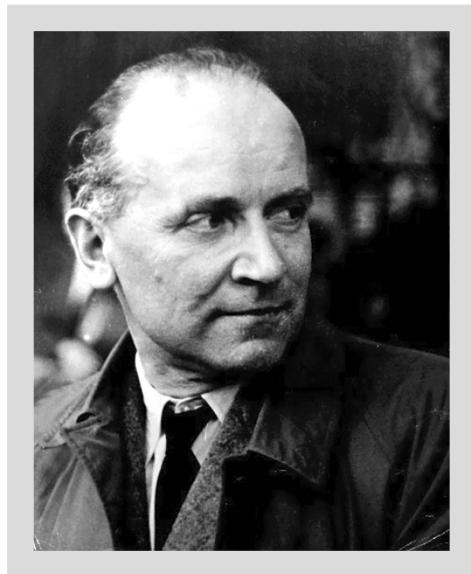


It's just a shame that Richard Wraga came to be recognized as a fighter against disinformation too late to protect the émigrés and their friends from things like the Trust, networks like the 'Red Orchestra', underhanded operations like the Canadian network exposed by Igor Guzenko, and from people like [Kim] Philby and Victor Louis.

Natalie Grant-Wraga¹

Introduction

Captain Jerzy Nieużborski, alias Ryszard Wraga, is one of the best-known Polish intelligence officers, attracting the interest of many researchers. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that he was the longest-serving head of the 'East' Desk of the Second Department of the General Staff – he took up the post at the age of just twenty-nine – at the same time finding fulfilment as an analyst and journalist, publishing in the press and hosting programs on Polish Radio. He built his analytical career during the Second World War. After the war, his expertise was used by the intelligence services of France and the US, and perhaps, indirectly, by those of the United Kingdom. For nearly a decade, he worked as an expert at the Soviet Studies Centre of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and for over a decade, he provided analyses for the CIA. His recommendations were taken into account when the American Psychological Warfare Program was set up. He had extensive contacts in the American special services and the international expert community, but primarily among officers, public officials, and politicians holding important positions in the formulation of French and, above all, American policy towards the USSR. There is one more noteworthy reason why this officer is so interesting: *he was a pioneer in research into Soviet disinformation, inspiration, and propaganda*. His articles, published in 1947–1950, publicized and prompted the Western secret services to discuss the significance of an offensive counterintelligence operation codenamed 'Trust'.



1. Richard Wraga in exile (source: Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, New York, Colonel Ryszard Wraga Archive, 1)

¹ N. Wraga, [letter], 'Iz redaktorskoy pochty', *Russkaya mysl'*, 22 May 1975, no. 3052. Translated from Polish.

mounted in the early 1920s by the VChK/OGPU to misinform Western intelligence services. As early as the 1930s, he conducted theoretical studies of the methods used by Soviet intelligence and counterintelligence, and utilized the conclusions drawn from them in the work of the desk he headed.

Despite the many reasons he deserves a biography, the dispersion and sheer volume of sources that need to be taken into account have meant that, until now, he has been the focus of only isolated articles analyzing various aspects of his work. The present author has, in recent years, been preparing a selection of Niezbrzycki's writings on Russia and communism, as well as his émigré correspondence of 1939–1968, uncovering his many links to the world of Western secret services and think tanks focused on the USSR.² It is to this particular aspect of Niezbrzycki's work that the present article is devoted. A key question will be to what extent his unique knowledge and concepts influenced the perception of the USSR among Western, mainly American, intelligence services, and whether his methods of analysis and recommendations for combating Soviet/Russian influence are still relevant today.

Military service (1918–1939)

Jerzy Niezbrzycki was born Antoni Ryszard Niezbrzycki.³ However, it has become customary in the literature to refer to him as Jerzy Niezbrzycki or Ryszard (Richard) Wraga (in 1952, after anglicizing his name to Richard, he adopted Richard Wraga as his new name and surname when he became a British citizen).⁴ He was born on 28 July 1902 near Vinnytsia, which had been part of the Russian Empire since 1793. From the sixteenth century, the region was part of the Polish Crown, and before that of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, both of which were joined in a union, first personal, and since 1569, real, forming the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Today Vinnytsia is part of Ukraine. This is a noteworthy detail, as the history of the region where Niezbrzycki was born and raised had a significant impact on both his worldview and his preparation for counter-Russian intelligence work. Niezbrzycki was a Polish patriot raised on Christian values and in the republican

² In the meantime, two selections of Niezbrzycki's writings have been published. The first, by Marek Kornat, brings together Niezbrzycki's Sovietological studies from 1941–1950: J. Niezbrzycki, *Pisma sowietologiczne. Wybór pism*, ed. M. Kornat (Kraków, 2023); the other, by Bogusław Polak, focuses on studies relating to political science: *Z archiwum politologii XX w. Jerzy Niezbrzycki (Ryszard Wraga) o Związkach Sowieckim, socjalizmie i sprawach polskich w 1945 r. Wybór pism*, ed. B. Polak (Koszalin, 2024).

³ Ł. Ulatowski, 'Niezbrzycki – wybrane aspekty biografii wywiadowczej kierownika Referatu "Wschód"', <http://www.historycy.org/index.php?act=Attach&type=post&id=16066> (accessed: 23 Aug. 2025), p. 2.

⁴ 'Niezbrzycki, Jerzy Antoni (known as Richard Wraga); Poland; Journalist; Norfolk Hotel, Harrington Road, London. S.W.7. 14 Oct. 1952', *London Gazette*, 9 Dec. 1952, p. 6493.

tradition of the pre-partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. That is why in his fight for Poland's independence, he always stressed the need to liberate all the peoples oppressed by tsarist and then Soviet Russia. Niezbrzycki grew up in a multi-ethnic environment, typical of the eastern provinces of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and joked on many occasions that the very understanding of his origins was highly problematic for people from outside Central and Eastern Europe: a Pole of Tatar descent, born into a noble family in Ukraine, which was part of the Russian Empire at the time.

Like many of his peers, he began his service to Poland when the country was still ruled by the partitioners, first by being active in the scouting movement, and from September 1918, joining the ranks of the underground Polish Military Organization when he was not yet sixteen. He joined the organization at a very turbulent moment, during the civil war in Russia. In addition to the armies of the 'Reds' and 'Whites', other troops were active in Russia as well; those operating in Ukraine after the German withdrawal included anarchists, troops of Symon Petliura's Ukrainian People's Republic, and Polish self-defense units.

In this highly dangerous and dynamic environment – due to the constant changes of administration and the passing of localities from hand to hand – Niezbrzycki performed intelligence and then sabotage duties, often in the rear of the Red Army. At that time, he mostly appeared in the uniform of a *sotnik* of the Ukrainian People's Republic's army; in addition, he took a course for cavalrymen in Denikin's Army as well as a course for *krasnye komandiry* or red commanders. He crossed the front line several times, got wounded, and escaped from Bolshevik captivity. His service earned him the Cross of Valour twice.

Despite the excellent results he achieved during his front-line service, from the beginning, he showed a predisposition to theoretical and training work, giving his first lectures on intelligence theory to his subordinates when he was still a teenager.⁵ That his superiors regarded him as an above-average individual is evidenced by the fact that in 1920, he was presented by his superior, the head of the Polish Military Organization's Third Supreme Command, Henryk Józefski, to Józef Piłsudski, Poland's Chief of State.

As many other members of the Polish Military Organisation, after its dissolution on 1 March 1921, Niezbrzycki went on to serve in the Second Department of the General Staff. In the same year, he began his studies at the Faculty of Law, University of Warsaw; as an opponent of the Treaty of Riga, he took part in Yurko Tyutyunnyk's winter march, the aim of which was to spark an anti-Soviet uprising in Ukraine. Miraculously, he managed to escape the Ukrainian army's

⁵ Antoni Jerzy Niezbrzycki, 'Moje wykłady o wywiadzie wojskowym na terenie Ukrainy Sowieckiej, opracowane na podstawie doświadczeń własnych w r. 1918–1919–1920 prowadzone na Kursie Wywiadowczym PB w r. 1920 (maj–czerwiec spisane w r. 1921)', in P. Libera, *Wywiadowca na Ukrainie. Ryszard Wraga (Jerzy Niezbrzycki) przed Komisją Historyczną KN III, Arcana*, no. 95 (2010), 93–132.

pogrom near Bazar and cross the Polish border. On 15 February 1922, he was sent to a course at the Central School for Non-Commissioned Officers No. 2 in Grudziądz, which he completed with honors, ranked third, and then was promoted to second lieutenant and assigned to the 21st Children of Warsaw Infantry Regiment.⁶ He finished his university education after four semesters of law;⁷ in addition, he attended lectures at the School of Political Science as an unenrolled student,⁸ reportedly submitting a thesis on Tsar Peter the Great.⁹

His regular regimental service was interspersed with special assignments. In 1923, he was transferred for about four months to the Descriptive Division of the Office of the Inner War Council to reconnoiter the Polesie region (the Chief of the General Staff spoke highly of his findings).¹⁰ From November to September 1925, he was again assigned to descriptive work at the Descriptive Department as a clerk; at that time, he also took an information and intelligence course at the Second Department of the General Staff.¹¹ Between June 1927 and April 1928, he was back at descriptive work at the Descriptive Division of the Second Department (Operations) of the General Staff. During that period, he visited the USSR at least twice, using the material he collected to write a study of Polesie and to include his observations in his reports to the Second Department.¹² He wrote numerous

⁶ According to the company commander, he was "Very diligent, hardworking, conscientious, and dutiful. V[ery] intelligent [...] – ease of learning v. high. Quite energetic. As an instructor – good. A very good lecturer. Calm, cheerful character. Ambitious and honest. A bit of a chatterbox, generally well-liked. Very presentable. He is suitable officer material, but he can be of greater benefit as a lecturer at a military school", Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe – Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Central Military Archives – Military Historical Bureau) (hereinafter: CAW WBH), Personal Files, 1769/89/3673, n.p.

⁷ "In all of the above-mentioned positions, he consistently achieved the highest performance level of great importance to the interests of state defence. In addition to his professional activities, he has a wide range of social interests and works very effectively in the field of state propaganda. The overall value of Captain Niezbrzycki's work far exceeds the horizon that would correspond to his rank. I am, therefore, putting forward a motion to award Captain Niezbrzycki, by way of exception, with the Golden Cross of Merit", *ibid.* Motion for the second award for the Silver Cross of Merit, signed by the Head of the Intelligence Division, Second Department of the General Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Dipl. S. Mayer, [1937], n.p.

⁸ Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (hereinafter: PISM), BI.6g/13, *Zeszyt Ewidencyjny*, Niezbrzycki Jerzy Antonii, n.p.

⁹ Hoover Institution Library & Archives (hereinafter: HIA), Natalie Grant Wraga Papers (hereinafter: NGW), R. Wraga to Dr Blackstock, 6 June 1965, draft letter, n.p.

¹⁰ CAW WBH, Personal File, 1769/89/3673, Daily order, M.S.Wojsk. no. 124/24, concerning commendation by the Chief of the General Staff, Major General Stanisław Haller, for Lieutenant Niezbrzycki Jerzy, copy, n.p.

¹¹ Ulatowski, 'Niezbrzycki', p. 4.

¹² CAW WBH, Oddział II Sztabu Głównego (Second Department of the General Staff, hereinafter: OII SG), I.303.4.1774, File title: Records of intelligence material, 1927/28, Lieutenant Niezbrzycki's journey to Russia, date of receipt 27 Nov. [1927]; Lieutenant Niezbrzycki's stay in Moscow, date of receipt 1 Dec. [1927], fol. 15.

studies in the field of terrain science,¹³ including the most serious military study to date devoted to the Polesie theatre of operations, entitled *Polesie: opis wojskowo-geograficzny i studjum terenu* [Polesie: a Military and Geographical Description and Study], foreword by H. Bagiński, illustrations by H. Dybczyńska-Niebrzycka, graphs and maps by O. Hryniwicki (Warszawa, 1930).

In August 1928, he was seconded to the 'Dnieper' intelligence base at the Polish consulate in Kyiv, where he was very active.¹⁴ People he met at that time included Elias Vinogradov, cousin of Isaac Babel,¹⁵ and Konstantin Rokossovsky, future Marshal of the Soviet Union.¹⁶ Following a GPU provocation against him, the Headquarters of the Second Department decided to withdraw him.¹⁷

In late 1931, Niebrzycki, who was only a lieutenant, became the head of the 'East' Desk, remaining in this position until the Soviet aggression against Poland, on 17 September 1939.¹⁸ He was not promoted to the rank of captain until 1 January 1935. The intelligence work of his desk was conducted not only in the USSR, but also across Europe, as well as in the Middle and Far East. Niebrzycki's subordinates and agents operated in Athens, Harbin, Bucharest, Tallinn, Prague, Vienna, Paris, Istanbul, Tehran, Lisbon, London, Spain, and even Switzerland and Italy during the Civil War. In addition, the 'East' Desk collaborated with French, British, Japanese, Finnish, Estonian, and Romanian intelligence services. Its agents were also present among White émigrés. Niebrzycki was in direct contact with émigré leaders like Vladimir Burtsev, Mikhail Georgievsky, leader of the National Union of the New Generation (later NTS), and General Yevgeny Miller, head of the Russian All-Military Union. The 'East' Desk's most trusted collaborators included Dmitry Filosofov, who had been in contact with the Second Department since 1920, and Colonel Vladimir Brand, who played an important role in infiltrating and recruiting members of the National Union of the New Generation (NSNP) to cooperate with Polish intelligence. Its resources slightly improved the personnel situation among Polish agents operating in the USSR, deteriorating since the

¹³ *Mapa administracyjna Rosji europejskiej (Związku Socjalistycznych Republik Rad)*, ed. T. Teslar, O. Hryniwicki, and J. Niebrzycki (Warszawa, 1928); J. Niebrzycki, *Nauka o terenie: wykłady dla Oddziałów Przysposobienia Wojskowego* (Warszawa, 1928); id., *Nauka o terenie: wykłady i ćwiczenia dla hufców szkolnych i oddziałów przysposobienia wojskowego* (Warszawa, 1928).

¹⁴ T. Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Heaven – London, 2005), p. 114; Ulatowski, 'Niebrzycki', p. 5.

¹⁵ Ryszard Wraga to Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Washington DC, 4 Feb. 1962, in J. Mackiewicz, *Listy*, vol. 36, ed. N. Karsov (London, 2024), p. 419.

¹⁶ Konstantin Rokossovsky (then still a captain) came to the Polish Consulate in Kyiv in connection with an inheritance he had in Polish Volhynia. Niebrzycki, who was acting consul at the time, took advantage of this opportunity to have a longer conversation with him; R. Wraga, 'Czwarty marszałek Polski', *Kultura*, 27, no. 1 (1950), p. 122.

¹⁷ Ulatowski, 'Niebrzycki', p. 10.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

early 1930.¹⁹ Following the Czech-Soviet rapprochement, from 1936 the remit of the 'East' Desk also included Czechoslovakia.²⁰

In addition to his duties associated with intelligence work relating to the USSR, Niezbrzycki was assigned various additional tasks – from 1938 he was responsible for liaising with the British. In late 1938, he was appointed "officer for special (political) assignments of the Gen[eral] Inspector", in March 1939 he was put in charge of *Polska Zbrojna* (from 5 September, he became its editor); in addition, he became the General Staff officer for liaising with the Czech and Slovak Legion being formed under General Lev Prchala. On the day of the Anschluss of Austria (12 March 1938), following an order of the Head of the Second Department, Colonel Tadeusz Pełczyński, he met with a representative of the Abwehr. The day of the meeting was deliberately chosen by the Germans to coincide with the seizure of Vienna – the intention was to put additional pressure on the Pole to start anti-Soviet cooperation (the Polish side rejected this possibility outright).²¹

Working methods and analytical expertise

An analysis of Niezbrzycki's biography leaves no doubt that he had a particular aptitude for analytical work, which became apparent at the very beginning of his military service, and was recognized and used on many occasions by his superiors. However, any talent can be wasted if there is no sufficient determination to nurture it. When he took charge of the 'East' Desk, Niezbrzycki could have limited himself to strictly defined duties relating to managing his unit. Instead, he intensified his studies of the USSR, including the methods used by the Soviet secret services, devoting much time to examining the dossier of the 'Trust' affair. He was certainly assisted in this by his subordinate at the time, Colonel Czesław Pawłowicz, former head of the 'Russia' Desk of Division III of the Second Department of the General

¹⁹ "The Germans made special efforts to persuade the 'National Union of the New Generation' to cooperate with them, but these efforts were unsuccessful, as the organisation remained under our exclusive and unquestionable influence, while also being the most significant human resource for working directly in the USSR", Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, New York (hereinafter: JPIA), Colonel Ryszard Warga Archive (hereinafter: RWA), 1, Captain J. Niezbrzycki, [Note on German intelligence], London, 22 July 1941, p. 9, n.p. On the contacts between the NSNP/NTS and the OIISG, see Ł. Dryblak, *Pozyskać przeciwnika. Stosunki polityczne między państwem polskim a mniejszością i emigracją rosyjską w latach 1926–1935* (Warszawa, 2021), pp. 173–183; id., *Szermierze wolności i zakładnicy imperium. Emigracyjny dialog polsko-rosyjski w latach 1939–1956: konfrontacje idei, koncepcji oraz analiz politycznych* (Warszawa, 2023), pp. 70–75.

²⁰ G. Mazur, 'Kpt. Jerzy Niezbrzycki (1902–1968)', in *Kontrwywiad II RP (1918–1945)* (1948), vol. 2, ed. Z. Nawrocki (Warszawa, 2014), p. 418. The 'East' Desk had extensive knowledge of the network of communist organisations operating in Czechoslovakia, as is reflected in Wraga's article, R. Wraga, 'Praga – filią Moskwy. Czechosłowacja – arsenalem kominternu', *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 101, 11 Apr. 1938.

²¹ See JPIA, RWA, no. 34, [Conversation before the Anschluss], pp. 1–15,

Staff, who in 1926 forged the mobilization plan of the 52nd Rifle Division acquired by Captain Michał Talikowski, the then head of the 'East' Desk.²² In addition, he implemented new analytical methods, providing for verifying first the reliability and only then the content of a source,²³ which, given the prevalence of disinformation, was by all means a valid assumption.²⁴ As Łukasz Ulatowski has pointed out, the method was abandoned already in the early 1930s.²⁵ Such an approach was opposed by Niezbrzycki, who, when acquiring information, always examined his sources for possible inspiration, understood not only as feeding recipients with false information, but also as giving them accurate information in a context that led them to the conclusions desired by the inspiring center.

Undoubtedly, his thinking and his assessment of the intelligence work of the Polish intelligence services were significantly influenced by the case of the head of the In.3 intelligence unit of the 'West' Desk. In early 1938, Niezbrzycki, alongside Lieutenant Colonel Wilhelm Heinrich, was called to serve as an expert witness in the trial of the head of this unit, Cavalry Captain Jerzy Sosnowski. The trial records have not survived, having been burnt after the German attack on Poland in September 1939.²⁶ We know, however, that the experts' analysis of the activities of the 'In.3' unit was negative and revealed numerous violations, including those committed by the officers who supervised it at the Headquarters. However, this thread did not surface in the trial because, as Niezbrzycki suggested, 'someone' in the Second Department was keen to limit the case solely to establishing Sosnowski's guilt.²⁷ Paradoxically, despite numerous violations of operational procedures and methods, Sosnowski did obtain the original 'Organisations-Kriegsspiel'.²⁸ Had the Germans not arrested Sosnowski but used him as a channel of inspiration instead,

²² See an analysis of the finale of the 'Trust' operation in Dryblak, *Pozyskać przeciwnika*, p. 289.

²³ Ł. Ulatowski, 'Niedziński – wywiadowcze elementy kariery wojskowej podpułkownika dyplomowanego kawalerii', p. 10, <https://www.academia.edu/41212641/Niedzinski> (the article is currently unavailable).

²⁴ Polish intelligence, too, used inspiration and techniques used by foreign intelligence services. See, for example, CAW WBH, OIISG, I.303.4.2615, 'Inspiracja i aktywność jako metody nowoczesnego wywiadu', Warsaw, 1 May 1926, fol. 158. The Second Department of the General Staff itself distributed forged documents; from 1925 the Chief of the General Staff approved 178 documents relating to German affairs, 133 to Soviet affairs, and 11 to English affairs; CAW WBH, OIISG, I.303.7837, 'Sprawozdanie z pracy inspiracyjnej za czas od dn. 1 I 1927 r. do dn. 1 III 1929 r. oraz plan na rok 1929', fol. 1. Drawing on an analysis of the 'Trust' operation, an analogous operation targeting the USSR was drafted in May 1927 in the OIISG; W. Stanisławski, 'Myśl polityczna emigracji rosyjskiej w II Rzeczypospolitej: interpretacje przeszłości i koncepcje polityczne', PhD thesis, University of Warsaw (Warsaw, 2002), p. 263, fn. 173.

²⁵ Ł. Ulatowski, *Berlińska placówka wywiadowcza „IN.3” (1926–1934). Oddział II i działalność majora Jerzego Sosnowskiego w Niemczech* (Bydgoszcz, 2025), p. 178.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 32–33, 195.

²⁷ R. Majzner, T. Dubicki, A. Suchcitz, *W labiryncie oskarżeń. "Sprawa majora Żychonia" przed Morskim Sądem Wojennym w Londynie 1942–1943* (Częstochowa, 2015), pp. 43–44.

²⁸ Ulatowski, *Berlińska placówka*, p. 406.

the damage to the Polish state could have been more serious than the value of the document he provided. For Niezbrzycki, who faced very different challenges in the East, the ease with which Sosnowski operated was unbelievable; however, this was not just a matter of the head of the 'In.3' unit. The trial had a considerable impact on Niezbrzycki's thinking about Polish intelligence in the West. As a result, he began to accuse the head of the Bydgoszcz branch of the Second Department, Major Jan Żychoń, that the ease of his successes could indicate that he was a conscious or unconscious tool of German intelligence. To defend his good name, Żychoń brought an action against Niezbrzycki before the Naval Court Martial on 29 April 1942. The main weight of the accusations formulated by Niezbrzycki at the time, including the failure to analyze documents with regard to inspiration, regardless of whether they were genuine or false, hit at the leadership of the 'West' Desk and the Intelligence Division.²⁹ As a result of the investigation, Żychoń was not cleared of the unfounded allegations against him, while Niezbrzycki did not suffer any serious consequences of spreading unconfirmed information about him.³⁰ The case is often treated as a personal dispute, but it had, in fact, a broader background.³¹ The voluminous case file contains a number of documents not directly relating to the charges brought against Żychoń – they show that this was a dispute over the methods and effectiveness of Polish intelligence before and during the war. While Wraga was wrong about Żychoń, he was right in his criticism of the working methods and failure to observe procedures by the Polish intelligence services.

On the other hand, it should be said that Captain Niezbrzycki also had to face accusations, for example, of the failure to provide information about the Soviet aggression.³² Information about the existence of the secret protocol found its way to the press, which did not escape the attention of the Press Office of the General Inspector of the Armed Forces' Inspection Bureau, which between 27 August and 1 September informed Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, on the basis of information

²⁹ Minutes of the interrogation of the accused, Captain Jerzy Niezbrzycki, London, 29 Apr. – 21 May 1942, in R. Majzner, A. Suchcitz, T. Dubicki, *Oskarżam majora Żychonia* (Radomsko, 2017), p. 55.

³⁰ Literary Institute 'Kultura' (hereinafter: LIK), PoJG 08.04, Niezbrzycki confidential, vol. 2, Naval Court verdict (copy), [1942], n.p.; PISM, A.XII.88/848r, 'Protokół przesłuchania skazanego spisany w trybie art. 425 K.W.P.K. w dniu 9 grudnia 1943 r., w Morskim Sądzie Wojennym', fol. 9

³¹ A similar position has been adopted by Łukasz Ulatowski: "Assessing Niezbrzycki's behaviour from the perspective of the eternal rivalry of the 'East' with the 'West', the associated professional envy, the desire to dominate the Western section, the emphasis on real and alleged guilt, simplifies the overall picture", Ulatowski, *Berlińska placówka*, p. 377. It seems that this conflict is too easily reduced to the level of a personal dispute, with an emphasis on Niezbrzycki's frustration; P. Ołstowski, 'O genezie i istocie konfliktu między mjr. Janem Żychoniem a kpt. Antonim Jerzym Niezbrzycki. Garsć refleksji', in *Studia nad wywiadem i kontrwywiadem Polski w XX wieku*, vol. 1, ed. W. Skóra, P. Skubisz (Szczecin, 2012), pp. 461–478; Majzner, Dubicki, Suchcitz, *W labiryncie*, pp. 157, 245–292.

³² LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, Niezbrzycki confidential, R. Wraga to J. Giedroyc, London, 17 Nov. 1943, n.p.

from five newspapers, about the planned division of Poland, as well as Central and Eastern Europe between the Third Reich and the USSR.³³ If we were to treat this leak as deliberate German inspiration, this would be in line with Niezbrzycki's observation that in 1938–1939, Germans deliberately emphasized their potential.³⁴ Their aim may have been to weaken the Allies' willingness to fulfil their commitments, or even to break Polish resistance without a fight. This did not happen, however. On 1 September 1939, the Polish Army began its fight against the German forces, and on 17 September, the Soviet forces invaded Poland, while on 3 September, the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany. The Polish authorities did not yield to pressure, realizing that this would be the first stage of a protracted global conflict.

Wręga did not provide unequivocal evidence of Soviet aggression,³⁵ but in his analyses of various aspects of the USSR's functioning, he always stressed that the USSR, intensifying its preparations for war throughout the inter-war period (this was also the purpose of a series of purges), was the state that pushed for a world conflict the most.³⁶ He believed that the Third Reich and the USSR, regardless of their ideological differences, could return to the Rapallo policy, stressing from 1933 onwards that in the event of a German attack on Poland, the USSR would not remain passive.³⁷ Whether he presented his thesis in a sufficiently emphatic manner remains a matter of dispute.³⁸

³³ M.P. Deszczyński, 'Biały wywiad nie zawiódł', *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 3 (2023), p. 19.

³⁴ IPMS, Sztab NW and MSWojsk/MON, A.XII.88/848/L, Captain J. Niezbrzycki to General I. Mołdelski, London, 4 June 1942, fol. 17.

³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Mayer's account in G. Łukomski, *Szara eminencja polskiego wywiadu wojskowego. Pułkownik dyplomowany Stefan Mayer (1895–1981)* (Łomianki, 2020), p. 136f.

³⁶ He pointed to the purges within the state and outside its borders, among Trotskyists and 'White' émigrés. According to him, Stalin eliminated political leaders who could have formed alternative political centres during the war; M. Lipski, 'Moskiewskie klucze do paryskich tajemnic', *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 21 Oct. 1937.

³⁷ Niezbrzycki was preparing for war with the USSR by developing a network of intelligence outposts around the USSR and establishing cooperation with the NTS, members of which could play the role played by Boris Savinkov in 1920. The Polish branch of the NTS had over 150 members, who – as some of them write in their memoirs – were also being prepared for sabotage; Ł. Dryblak, 'Czy tylko prometeizm? Polityka państwa polskiego wobec wybranych kół emigracji rosyjskiej w latach 1926–1935', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 51, no. 1 (2016), pp. 99–111.

³⁸ On 28 September, Colonel Roman Umiastowski noted: "On the sixth day of the war, the Chief of Staff summoned the officer in charge of Russian intelligence to report on the situation. Captain Niezbrzycki presented it in a pessimistic light, ending with the words that Russia would undoubtedly attack. 'What is your evidence?' asked General Stachiewicz. 'In an authoritarian regime [replied Niezbrzycki], like the one in Russia, where the decision depends on the will of one man, it is impossible to find evidence. I've been working on Russia for sixteen years and my knowledge of it as well as of people running it, of their methods prompts me to formulate such a thesis. Russia will attack.' Stachiewicz agreed with this assessment, but already on the following day he said that it was too pessimistic", R. Umiastowski, *Dziennik wojenny 18 IX 1939 –*

The fact that Poland's leadership underestimated the likelihood of the worst-case scenario for Poland, namely, bilateral German-Soviet aggression, is often explained by the possible operation of high-ranking agents of influence working for the Soviets.³⁹ However, one individual would have been unable to impose their views on the most important people in the country. A Russian historian with whom Wraga corresponded in the late 1950s and early 1960s drew his attention to the existence of such an agent in Walery Ślawek's government (he had learned about this from a report by Ambassador William Bullit).⁴⁰ Niezbrzycki treated the Russian scholar's information with reserve.⁴¹ He himself considered it more dangerous for people's views to be shaped by disinformation and inspiration. It is worth adding that in practically all the famous cases, from Sosnowski, Żychoń, to Czesław Miłosz, he is criticized for accusing them of being agents. *In fact, Niezbrzycki was more concerned with inspiration, which often occurs outside the consciousness of the person acting as a transmitter, who sometimes, simply under the influence of propaganda and disinformation, begins to generate content favorable to foreign secret services on their own.*

Niezbrzycki's sidelining during the war intensified his suspicions about his own institution, which he increasingly viewed from the perspective of the mistakes made,

³⁹ IX 1945, ed. P.M. Żukowski (Warszawa, 2009), p. 121. A member of the French branch of the NTS, Arkady Stolypin, recalls that during his visit to Warsaw in August 1939, he wanted to warn the Poles of the Soviet danger: “[Würler] said to me in all seriousness that I would not achieve anything. Having faithful friends in the Polish General Staff (such as Colonel Wraga, whom I later met, head of the Russian section), he then tried to open their eyes”, A. Stolypin, *Cesarstwo i wygnanie* (Warszawa, 1998), p. 209. Describing his conversation with Niezbrzycki on 16 September in Kuty, Zabiełło recalled: “We both expressed surprise that, contrary to expectations, there had been no Soviet intervention of any sort. Niezbrzycki also informed me that Marshal Rydz-Śmigły had made Colonel Wenda an organiser of underground activity under German occupation, assigning him, Niezbrzycki, to similar tasks on the Soviet side”, S. Zabiełło, *Na posterunku we Francji* (Warszawa, 1967), p. 19.

⁴⁰ For many years the main suspicion has been focused on Lieutenant Colonel Tadeusz Kobylański. Konrad Paduszek has concluded that there is no hard evidence to confirm the revelations of Russian historians cited by Paweł Wieczorkiewicz. Yet there is evidence to suggest that the Soviet intelligence had an informer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although it did not have to be a high-ranking official; K. Paduszek, ‘Sprawa Tadeusza Kobylańskiego – stan badań, nowe dokumenty i hipotezy’, *Dzieje Najnowsze*, no. 3 (2015), p. 190. Another figure attracting attention is Colonel Józef Englisch, Deputy Head of the Second Department, who supervised the work of Division III.

⁴¹ It is hard to say whether the man in question was a prominent politician, but the fact is that it was at that time that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hired Tadeusz Kobylański, suspected by some historians of having collaborated with the Soviets, although this is only a hypothesis based on information from Russian historiography. For Niezbrzycki, the very fact that the source of this information is Russian would have been suspicious (in his conversation with Nicolaevsky he writes that one of the methods of Soviet inspiration is ‘exposing’ alleged or real Soviet agents).

⁴¹ HIA, Boris Nicolaevsky Coll., box 508, fol. 48, R. Wraga to B. Nicolaevsky, Washington DC, 1 Dec. 1958, n.p.

and it was this aspect, rather than the desire to return to a prominent position in the intelligence service, for which there was no hope for him, that was the driving force behind his actions.⁴² Niezbrzycki was ambitious, but he was no opportunist.

Was it the case – as some believe – that inspiration was his obsession? It does not appear so, as he was one of the few people to correctly discern the future course of events. Drawing on a multifaceted analysis, and *being capable of distinguishing between the actual strategic goals of states and false (inspired) content*, he predicted as early as the mid-1930s that Hitler's Reich and Stalin's USSR would make a turn towards Rapallo,⁴³ and then that the future war would be won by the USSR, while Europe would have to face the threat of communism. He saw the détente in the Polish-Soviet relations after the 1932 non-aggression treaty as a unilateral act. Not only did the USSR not cease its anti-Polish operations, but it even intensified them, especially in the field of propaganda and ideological sabotage, which had a negative impact on the assessment of Soviet intentions.⁴⁴ Niezbrzycki was one of the few commentators who believed from the outset that the Third Reich would lose the conflict with the USSR,⁴⁵ in addition, he predicted the outbreak of a war in Korea in 1950,⁴⁶ the spread of the conflict to other countries in the Far East, and then to other continents,⁴⁷ as well as *the rise of China, which, in his view, was a second*

⁴² LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, Niezbrzycki confidential, J. Niezbrzycki to J. Giedroyc, London, 5 Sept. 1943, n.p.

⁴³ R. Wraga, 'Gwarancje Pana Otmara', *Bunt Młodych*, no. 10 (77), 13 May 1935; cf. id., *Sowiety grożą Europie* (Warszawa, 1935), p. 26. Marek Kornat has described the reflections to be found in this piece as some of "the most important commentaries of pre-war Polish Sovietology on Soviet strategy and policy", M. Kornat, *Wacław Grzybowski Ambassador in Moscow (1936–1939). Biografia polityczna* (Warszawa, 2016), p. 124.

⁴⁴ R. Wraga, 'Dwugłowy orzeł w leninowskim kąciku', *Bunt Młodych*, no. 47/48, 1 Nov. 1933, pp. 8–9. Cf. e.g. R. Wraga, 'O akcji przeciwsowieckiej', *Polska Zbrojna*, 18 Feb. 1937.

⁴⁵ The accuracy of his predictions concerning the course of the German-Soviet conflict is evidenced by the articles published in *Wiadomości Polskie* and *Dziennik Żołnierza*, collected in 1945 in a single pamphlet (*Soviet-German War 1941–1945*, Italia 1945). Stefan Mękarski, who was also interested in Soviet matters, noted on 8 Aug. 1940: "I think that Wraga-Niezbrzycki was right in arguing once to our officers that the Chinese war was not a show war for Russia. Russia, with its two hundred million people and over two hundred divisions, possessed by the mystical goal of a global social revolution, recklessly squandering human resources in the name of this goal, will deliver a historic surprise to Germany. The old, dead Europe is fleeing in panic to the shores of the Atlantic and the problem of tomorrow is the problem of a communist Europe", S. Mękarski, *Zapiski z Rothesay 1940–1942* (London – Piotrków Trybunalski, 2003), p. 39.

⁴⁶ R. Wraga, 'Sojusz dwóch rewolucji', *Kultura*, no. 4 (1950), p. 13.

⁴⁷ "For Moscow, it [the war] is, in fact, a local operation in a long-distance war plan, one of numerous operations envisaged or even already concretely planned and prepared in Asia, Europe, Africa, and even both Americas", R. Wraga, 'Sprawy sowieckie. Korea', *Kultura*, no. 9 (1950), p. 56. "It is to be expected that irrespective of the developments in Korea itself, in the nearest future such aggressions will occur in other places as well; above all, the campaign in Indochina will be intensified", LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, R. Wraga to J. Giedroyc, Paris, 28 June 1950, n.p.

center of revolution, though strategically inseparably linked to Moscow.⁴⁸ Its main objective was to destroy the US,⁴⁹ which Niezbrzycki thought possible in the long term unless the West understood the essence of the Communist Bloc's policy.⁵⁰ It is worth noting that the formal break-up of the USSR did not undermine the Russian-Chinese alliance and did not prompt a revision of its strategic objectives. What has changed since is only the emphasis, as China is the stronger partner today, an element taken into account in the Polish expert's forecasts as well:

I have done my homework on China quite thoroughly, "from scratch", and read whatever contemporary Chinese literature I can get my hands on. *I think that in 50–100 years the city where I live [Washington] will be the capital of a Chinese province. Most importantly, this will happen without pain and violence, and everyone will think that it was the only and indispensable necessity.* And I feel anger all the more when I read what the local "experts" write about the "Sino-Soviet conflict". What conflict? Who? With whom? Nikita with Mao? In a few years, perhaps not Nikita [...], but his successor will travel to Mao or to his successor for Yarlyks and conferences on "Marxism". But the one thing that saves us here is the belief that we "capitalists" are "strong, tightly-knit, and ready", while the others are at each other throats. If we didn't believe that, this would no longer be a threat but panic. But across this huge continent, there is not a single magazine or journal, no paper where you can write that this is a bluff. This is precisely what I call the "power of the dwójka" [colloquial term for Polish intelligence – Second Department of the Polish General Staff].⁵¹

In order to repeatedly formulate such correct conclusions (and not *ex post*), Niezbrzycki had to accumulate a great deal of knowledge through independent study (he repeatedly emphasized the importance of source research), which allowed him to analyze Soviet as well as German inspirations (because the two directions can never be studied separately).⁵² His method of analysis was close to that of a historian, the difference being that before 1939, he also used in his investigations knowledge acquired by the intelligence apparatus.

⁴⁸ "In 1960-61, I had occasion to mention to your assistants my opinion that the weakest point in the Western approach to Sino-Soviet problems was the denial a priori of the existence of a strategic unit common to Moscow and Peking. A point which has attracted my attention more than once is the fact that numerous 'sources' in Europe and Asia, which I know to be direct or indirect channels of communist misinformation, constantly attempt to prove that no strategic ties bind Moscow to Peking", HIA, NGW, 3.2, R. Wraga to A.W. Dulles, Washington DC, 17 Dec. 1962, copy, n.p.

⁴⁹ Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie (National Museum in Kraków; hereinafter: NMK), Archiwum Józefa i Marii Czapskich (Józef and Maria Czapski Archive; hereinafter: AJMC), 2256, R. Wraga to J. Burnham, n.p., February 1950, fol. 11.

⁵⁰ LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, R. Wraga to J. Laskowski, Washington, 4 Apr. 1962, n.p.

⁵¹ LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, R. Wraga to J. Laskowski, Washington, 4 Apr. 1962, n.p.

⁵² The 'East' Desk used Russian agents in Belgium (for example, Vasily Orekhov) and Vienna (Stepan Vasiliev) in order to get to know the German methods and narrative lines; JPIA, RWA, 1, Captain J. Niezbrzycki, [Note on German intelligence], London, 22 July 1941, p. 14, n.p.

From an intelligence officer to a leading expert on Soviet affairs (1931–1948)

In the 1930s, Wraga published several booklets⁵³ as well as a number of Sovietological articles in the quarterly *Wschód-Orient*, edited by Włodzimierz Bączkowski (the second Polish Sovietologist whose analyses attracted the interest of the American special services), *Bunt Młodych* and *Polityka* of Jerzy Giedroyc, later editor of *Kultura*, the most important Polish émigré monthly published in Maisons Laffitte near Paris. Niezbrzycki's articles also appeared in daily newspapers. His lengthy pieces would often find their way onto front pages. His most frequent topics included foreign policy, Soviet armaments, sabotage and disinformation, the state of the economy, nationality issues, and 'White' émigré community. Particularly valuable were his articles published in *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* and *Polska Zbrojna*, on the pages of which he regularly commented on the situation in the USSR in the second half of the 1930s, usually under the pseudonyms Ryszard Wraga or Michał Lipski.⁵⁴ His activities, however, were not limited to writing; he was also the author of many papers delivered to the army and to expert circles, including the Promethean milieu,⁵⁵ and hosted a series of anti-communist talks on Polish Radio intended for audiences in the USSR.⁵⁶ He may have used them for inspiration purposes (in a 1950 letter to James Burnham, he mentioned that his pre-war broadcasts were geared towards generating tension among party members):

Well, the most important thing is to construct a broadcast for members of the Bolshevik party, for high-ranking central and local dignitaries, and, above all, to engage in sabotage and cause a threat in the security apparatus. I did that in my time, not without success, as head of Russia intelligence, and had fairly good results.⁵⁷

Wraga formulated most of his theses in the 1930s, and in the following decade, he organized and elaborated on them, presenting them in booklets published as part of the 'Biblioteka Orła Białego' (White Eagle Library), 'Eastern Affairs Course' course books, and articles in *Kultura* and *Eastern Quarterly*. His fundamental thesis concerning the nature of Soviet statehood drew on the concepts of Prof. Jan Kucharzewski, who was the first to provide a detailed explanation of

⁵³ R. Wraga, *Sowiety grożą Europie* (Warszawa, 1935); M.M. [J. Niezbrzycki], *ZSSR. Rzeczywistość* (Warszawa, 1936); id., *ZSSR. Rzeczywistość* (Warszawa, 1937); id., *O imperializmie rosyjskim* (Warszawa, 1938).

⁵⁴ He also published as Michał Lipski, W.-Z. (jointly with Stanisław Zadrożny), George Neighbour, J. Antonowicz, Wincenty Maliniak, Bernard Andreus, George Kremer, B. Giżycki, R.W., RWR, M.M., Capt. M.M., and Bohdan Andrycz.

⁵⁵ *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, ed. P. Libera (Warszawa, 2013), p. 448.

⁵⁶ Cf. K. Paduszek, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki – oficer i historyk Oddziału II SG WP', in *Kontrwywiad II RP (1914) 1918–1945* (1948), vol. 2, ed. Z. Nawrocki (Warszawa, 2014), p. 431.

⁵⁷ NMK, AJMC, 2256, R. Wraga to J. Burnham, n.p., February 1950, fol. 14.

the significance of the Russian autocracy system to the development of Russian communism.⁵⁸ His main thesis was based on the assertion that Russian imperialism was “founded in the ‘subconscious of the Great Russian nation’”,⁵⁹ which was apparently the result of historical experience. According to him, Russians believed that “the policy axis must be about ‘gathering’, bringing together, administrative and territorial unification”.⁶⁰ The ‘gathering’ of Russian lands laid the foundations for Russian imperialism, which was characterized by the annexation of territories in the name of ‘defense’ of the state. *The most important element of the Russian state was the government, with a bureaucratic apparatus at its disposal, to which religion and all nations, including the Great Russian nation, were subordinated.* These nations served only as tools for strengthening the state, that is, for expansion, and the state never ultimately had defined borders.⁶¹ This had the effect of depriving the Russian people of their own history⁶² and philosophy, as the state deprived them of the religious factor.⁶³ “The leadership of the nation was assumed by revolutionaries who came from the nation itself. But having taken power, they followed the line that those in power in Russia had followed for centuries. Along the line of dissociating themselves from the nation, of imposing on it their own idea, which, as before, is the idea of the state and not the idea of the masses”.⁶⁴ The Bolsheviks’ internationalism was combined with Russian messianism, with the Great Russian nation playing the leading role in the revolution and Russia being its base.⁶⁵ Marxism as an ideology provided even better legitimacy for conquests than earlier ideas such as Pan-Slavism. Russian and then Soviet imperialism was characterized by the “duality of all the elements of its policy”, which also applied to the slogan of revolution, proclaimed for external audiences:

⁵⁸ J. Kucharczewski, *Od Białego caratu do Czerwonego*, vol. 1–7 (Warszawa, 1923–1935). Kucharczewski’s thesis concerning the causes of the Russian Revolution corresponds to Richard Pipes’s later findings.

⁵⁹ “Only those tsars and politicians who positively implement this imperialism, regardless of the methods they use to achieve this goal, become popular among the Russian masses. Peter the Great, Catherine II, Alexander I and Nicholas I”, R. Wraga, *Geopolityka, strategia, granice* (Tel Aviv, 1943), p. 18.

⁶⁰ Id., *Idea Rosji* (London, 1949), p. 8.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 7, 9.

⁶² Id., ‘Piłsudski a Rosja’, *Kultura*, no. 2–3 (1947), p. 46.

⁶³ Id., *Idea*, pp. 7–8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁵ “The Westernisers (*zapadniki*), who sought to draw Russia into Europe, differed not one iota from the Slavophiles in their understanding of Russia’s ‘historic’ role in ‘healing the rotten Western civilisation’. [...] Both the Esers and the Social Democrats, later ‘Bolsheviks’ and ‘Mensheviks’, in their ostensible internationalism, immediately assigned the Great Russians a leading role in the world revolution and made the Russian Empire the socialist-state base for the international subversive movement – the ‘homeland of world socialism’. Irrespective of its shape and form, messianism is an essential feature of Russian imperialism, its basis, justification, and rationalisation”, Wraga, *Geopolityka*, p. 18.

Outwardly, the liberation of the Slavs, the great charitable campaign towards the Serbs and Bulgarians, and inside Russia, the fate of the Poles and Ukrainians. [...] Outwardly, the great campaign of the Orthodox Church, liberalism, lofty slogans, and inside the “tsarism of darkness”, sectarianism, the reduction of the Orthodox Church and clergy to the role of “gossudarstvennye chinovniki”. [...] Outwardly – magnificent revolutionary slogans “freedom – equality – brotherhood of peoples”, socialism and democracy.⁶⁶

This duality is also characteristic of the Russian Federation.

According to Wraga, the first theorist of Russian imperialism was Lenin,⁶⁷ although – as he adds – the doctrine of annexations in the name of defense was formulated for the first time by the philosopher, geographer, and theorist of Pan-Slavism Nikolai Danilevsky in his 1871 work *Russia and Europe*.⁶⁸ The development of Russian geography led to the formulation of the theory of the unity of an area referred to as Eurasia: “The tendentiousness of Russian geography is revealed in full in the movement which emerged in émigré circles and was named ‘Eurasianism’ – it leads to the emergence of imperialist geopolitics”.⁶⁹ With time, it was precisely “the geopolitical strategy that clearly replaced the social-revolutionary strategy in Stalin’s mind”.⁷⁰ According to Wraga, the Eurasian theory was intended to create a pseudoscientific basis for Russian-Soviet expansionism. This observation should be regarded as highly apt, as the term Eurasia has become established in international research, determining how scholars think about Russia as a geographically and historically unified area.

An important element of Russian geopolitics is Moscow’s relationship with Berlin. Wraga rightly observed that “Russia and Germany have always constituted, whether in war or peacetime, a self-contained bloc of common interests directed against the whole world”.⁷¹ This thesis has remained relevant to this day. Since the eighteenth century, both Berlin and Moscow have been seeking tactical cooperation against any current world order. Its objective is for the two states to

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

⁶⁷ “Born of the German spirit, but based on the realism of the Russian-French campaign, Clausewitz’s theory of war and strategy, as politics and diplomacy, was captured doctrinally not by Engels, but by the first scholarly theorist of Russian imperialism, Lenin, who, in his search for political-strategic formulas for the ‘great’ total state of ‘socialism’, provided an apologia for offensive war as a preventive policy – a defence against capitalism, and extended the concept of strategy so brilliantly as to include the entire tactics of external revolutionary politics in it”, ibid., p. 21.

⁶⁸ “Sooner or later, whether we want it or not, a war with Europe (or a large part of it) will be inevitable because of the Eastern question, that is, for the freedom and independence of the Slavs, for the rule over Tsargrad, for everything that, in Europe’s view, is an example of Russia’s unlawful ambition, and in the thinking of every Russian worthy of that name is an essential requirement of its historic calling”, N. Danilevsky, *Rossiya i Evropa. Vzgliad na kulturnye i politicheskie otnosheniya Slavianskogo mira k Germano-Romanskому* (St. Petersburg, 1895), p. 474.

⁶⁹ Wraga, *Geopolityka*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Id., *Rewolucja 1917 r. i Związek Sowiecki (zarys historyczny)* (London, 1949), p. 26.

⁷¹ Id., *Wojna sowiecko-niemiecka*, p. 157.

become dominant world powers. Today, too, although Berlin does not officially admit this, ousting US influence from Europe would allow the German project of a European superstate to be implemented. The same objective – ousting the Americans from Europe and isolating them – is also pursued by Russia, rebuilding its superpower position through successive territorial conquests, for centuries a natural path of ‘development’ of the Russian state, which would not be able to function without expansion, given its pathological political system and economic-technological backwardness.

A special place in Bolshevik thinking was occupied by war. Wraga explained that defensive war in Soviet terms was about defending not the USSR, but the world proletariat, that is, it was, in fact, about expansion. This understanding of war by the Soviets stemmed from the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Carl von Clausewitz, adapted for Soviet purposes. The three authors’ works became, for Lenin and all the members of the Soviet military after him, the basis for theoretical reflections on war.⁷² Despite the fact that the Bolsheviks rose to power by following a program of Russia’s withdrawal from the First World War, the entire functioning of Soviet society was totally subordinated from the very beginning to military purposes. This was also the purpose of the Great Purge launched by Stalin in 1937 in the ranks of the military, special services, and the party apparatus. According to Wraga, it was intended not only to strengthen Stalin’s rule,⁷³ but also to facilitate a rapprochement between the USSR and the Third Reich, directing the impetus of the German attack first against Europe and not against the USSR.⁷⁴

*Wraga warned in the 1930s that Moscow’s guarantees and offers of cooperation to maintain peace were actually intended to provoke a war between the capitalist states and the Third Reich.*⁷⁵ This was clearly evidenced by the purges carried out inside the state and outside its borders, among the Trotskyists and the ‘Whites’. This was how Stalin eliminated potential political leaders who could have formed

⁷² Id., ‘Gwarancje Pana Otmara’, pp. 4–6.

⁷³ Id., W diabelskim młynie sowieckich procesów, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 7 March 1938.

⁷⁴ “The leader of world communism, Stalin, became an advocate of rapprochement with Hitler’s Germany at all costs, an advocate of exploiting Hitler’s emotions and dynamics against the rest of the capitalist world, while the Soviet military, headed by Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, and Blücher, opposed this rapprochement as strongly as possible”, id., ‘Czwarty marszałek Polski’, *Kultura*, no. 1 (1950), pp. 128–129. Cf. P. Wieczorkiewicz, *Łańcuch śmierci. Czystka w Armii Czerwonej 1937–1939* (Poznań, 2016), p. 991.

⁷⁵ R. Wraga, ‘Threatened by an internal “psychological revolution”, the Soviets are seeking to provoke a “defensive” war... in Europe. Sensational information about transformations in the Soviet prison of nations’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 9 Oct. 1936. Wraga’s assessment was remarkably accurate, for even the idea of the Eastern Pact was a Soviet inspiration picked up by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Louis Barthou; M. Wołos, ‘Szkic o polskiej polityce zagranicznej w międzywojennym dwudziestoleciu’, in *Polski wiek XX. Dwudziestolecie*, ed. K. Persak, P. Machcewicz (Warszawa, 2009), p. 250. Wraga criticised collective security projects involving the USSR; R. Wraga, ‘Podpalacze w roli strażaków pożarnych’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 16 Aug. 1938.

alternative centers of power during the war.⁷⁶ The USSR generously provided false guarantees – including to France, Czechoslovakia, and Lithuania – while at the same time spreading rumors of its possible rapprochement with the Third Reich.⁷⁷ This, in turn, did not prevent it from disseminating false information about the alleged German-Polish cooperation: “The servile and incompetent Soviet diplomats always had in their pockets an ‘original copy’ of the non-existent ‘Polish-German War Treaty’ against Russia”⁷⁸. Such actions were intended to isolate Poland and then to provoke a war between Poland and the Third Reich.⁷⁹ Soviet disinformation distorted perceptions of reality in nearly every country, though it was spread not only by members of communist parties but, over time, increasingly by representatives of other subversive movements, which the Kremlin saw as the right tools for the decomposition (anarchization) of capitalist states.⁸⁰

Taking advantage of the complacency of countries seeking cooperation with Moscow, the Soviet secret services deepened their influence within Western societies: “Instead of capitalizing on and exploiting Russian weakness, Moscow’s allies are paying an unbelievable price for Moscow’s treacherous friendship and suspicious protection. This price means primarily European democracy agreeing to a destructive and demoralizing campaign of subversion”.⁸¹

According to Wraga, the Soviet Union never changed its objectives, only its tactics: “The concept of immediate world revolution has given way to tactics geared towards consolidating the base in the USSR and weakening the rising tide of ‘fascist nationalisms’ by rationally using the Comintern as an entity strictly

⁷⁶ Id., ‘Moskiewskie klucze do paryskich tajemnic’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 21 Oct. 1937.

⁷⁷ Id., ‘Wieści o zbliżeniu Niemiec i Rosji manewrem sowieckim’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 9 Apr. 1937.

⁷⁸ Id., ‘O akcji przeciw sowieckiej’, *Polska Zbrojna*, 18 Feb. 1937.

⁷⁹ “Moscow, on the other hand, would like to subordinate Poland at all costs to Soviet interests that we care nothing about. [...] It seeks *at all costs to draw us into its anti-peace machinations in order to provoke Poland for the first German strike*. And when these naïve and brazen machinations are thwarted by a consistent Polish policy, based on Józef Piłsudski’s guidance and seeking to maintain total independence and freedom of action, the rage and fury of the Moscow propaganda apparatus know no bounds. Attempts were made to draw France, Romania, and the Baltic states into this game, and intimidate them with ‘Polish fascism in Hitler’s service’”, *ibid.*

⁸⁰ “Moscow places more confidence in the programme of negation, fitting in *better with the passivity and debility of the West, such as pacifism, anarchic liberalism, materialism, nihilistic individualism, godlessness (in the widest meaning of the term), opposition to any authority, intellectual refinement of the sophisticated elite, etc.* All this would serve to break up and plunge into anarchy the Western communities. At the same time, on their side of the iron curtain, the Soviets spare no effort to build up and rearm their totalitarian empire”, R. Wraga, ‘Building up an Empire’, *Eastern Quarterly*, no. 3/4 (1952), p. 47.

⁸¹ “The outpost of the Stalinist government in the form of the Comintern, having taken deep root on French and Czech territory, exacerbated internal political strife and frictions, and weakened the sense of national ambition and strength”, R. Wraga, ‘Praga – filia Moskwy. Czechosłowacja – arsenalem kominternu’, *Polska Zbrojna*, 11 Apr. 1938.

subordinated to Moscow”;⁸² “For a long time Moscow itself has been inspiring, through its international agents, information about the alleged return of the Soviet Union to nationalism and the alleged renunciation of revolutionary tendencies by the Soviet government”.⁸³

Wraga viewed the USSR as a state that combined features of Russian imperialism with communist ideology. The universal communist idea was a catchy vehicle used to manipulate the masses of world socialists, who did not realize that they were merely a means of pursuing Soviet internal and external imperial ends. This resulted in the moral decay of European societies as well as the expansion of communism, carried out by means of every possible method and organization: “a great number of agents of the Comintern, the Popular Front, all kinds of more or less suspicious and communizing press and information agencies, scattered all over Europe, [...] ‘Leagues for the Defense of Human Rights’, ‘Pacifists’, ‘Union of Friends of the USSR’”.⁸⁴ Undoubtedly, the spread of pacifist and anti-war sentiment helped to undermine the morale of European societies, facilitating Hitler’s initial victories and paving the way for Stalin to triumph.

Among Western special services and think tanks (1948–1968)

Having finished his work at the Ministry of Information and Documentation, with which Wraga had been associated during the war and in the first years after it ended, he was faced with the problem of making a living in the West. Although he considered several options, he could not really imagine his life without being able to continue his research on the USSR. Thanks to his past positions and the resulting connections in the French special services, as well as his reputation as an expert, which he enjoyed at the time, he quickly received an offer of employment from the Centre for Soviet Studies at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He worked there from 1948 until 1957, dealing with the personnel of both the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French special services.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, little is known about his work for this institution. It is difficult to establish even the identity of the French military intelligence officers whom he met before the outbreak of the war. From the scraps of information we can find in his correspondence, we know that, for example, in 1955, he was preparing material for Jean Laloy (advisor to Prime Minister Edgar Faure and former Russian translator for General

⁸² M. Lipski [J. Niezbrzycki], ‘Nowe walki na szczytach sowieckiego Olimpu’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 17 Oct. 1936. Cf. R. Wraga, ‘Stalinowski “parlament” urzęduje’, *Polska Zbrojna*, 27 Jan. 1938.

⁸³ Id., ‘Wieści’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 9 Apr. 1937.

⁸⁴ Ibid.; id., ‘Czyje agencury? Polska walczy z bolszewizmem o własną rację stanu. Nieproszeni “pomocnicy” o podejrzanych kontaktach’, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 30 July 1938.

⁸⁵ Paduszek, ‘Jerzy Niezbrzycki’, p. 434.

Charles de Gaulle) in connection with his departure for a posting in Moscow.⁸⁶ On the other hand, thanks to the large number of surviving draft reports from 1949–1956, it is possible to determine the scope of Wraga's substantive work:

- a) reports on the domestic situation and foreign policy of China, West Germany, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR, the USSR, and Yugoslavia;
- b) studies dealing with the history, propaganda as well as ideology and theory of communism;
- c) analyses of the activities of anti-Soviet émigré organizations: Russian, Eastern European, Caucasian.⁸⁷

Wraga was also involved in the work on the *Bulletin de l'Association d'études et d'informations politiques internationales* (BEIPI), founded in 1949 and edited by the French Sovietologist of Russian origin Boris Souvarine (this editorial project may have been inspired by the French secret services). Wraga held the French scholar in high regard, widely promoting his journal among Polish and Russian émigré circles and among American experts after he moved to the USA.⁸⁸

From 1950 onwards, Wraga was also in contact with the US special services. Initially, the contact was through Józef Czapski, a Polish painter with numerous international connections, a member of the editorial team of *Kultura*, a leading Polish monthly magazine covering political, historical, and cultural topics, whose editor-in-chief for over half a century was Jerzy Giedroyc, a friend of Niezbrzycki's from before the war.

Niezbrzycki's first American interlocutor was James Burnham,⁸⁹ to whom he was recommended in March 1949 by Czapski.⁹⁰ Another person who insisted on contact with Burnham was Giedroyc, seeing in it both political and financial prospects. Yet in order to deepen this relationship, he had to advertise *Kultura* as a center of expertise in Polish and Soviet affairs.⁹¹ Giedroyc even suggested to Wraga that, with the help of the American, he could organize lectures for him at a military

⁸⁶ HIA, NGW, 7.7, R. Wraga to N. Grant, n.p., 15 Aug. 1955, n.p.

⁸⁷ The LIK, HIA, and IJP hold manuscripts of the materials prepared by Niezbrzycki for the French.

⁸⁸ "Together with Ben Mandel [director of research at the House Un-American Activities Committee of the House of Representatives] we make up a "trio" of your disciples and partisans. Natalie and I pass on to Ben everything what is interesting and important in your publications, which means basically anything", Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boris Souvarine Papers, 1380, R. Wraga to B. Souvarine, Washington DC, 1 Aug. 1961, n.p.

⁸⁹ James Burnham (1905–1987), a political scientist, former Trotskyist, in 1940 he left the Workers Party and joined the conservative movement. During the Second World War he worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (hereinafter: CIA). After the war, he joined a division of the Office of Policy Coordination dealing with psychological warfare, was involved in the establishment and work of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Free Europe University of Exile, initiated by Giedroyc and Czapski.

⁹⁰ LIK, PoJCz 18.053-101, J. Czapski to J. Niezbrzycki, 25 Feb. 1949, n.p.

⁹¹ In a letter to Czapski he even suggested that the situation required a bluff, because in reality *Kultura* did not have a broad expert base, relying mainly on Wraga's Soviet expertise; LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, Maisons Laffitte, 4 Feb. 1950, n.p.



2. Boris Souvarine (Lipszyc), Russian-born French Soviet expert (public domain)



3. James Burnham, OSS and CIA member, political activist, and publicist (public domain)

academy.⁹² Wraga was not enthusiastic about the idea, which lacked a solid basis, especially as going to the US would mean losing his job with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, he did start some talks with the Americans, and through Burnham he met Colonel Hoershel V. Williams, whom he promised to send his comments on the possibility of “organizing an information service on Russia”.⁹³ Urged repeatedly by Giedroyc, Wraga sent a letter to Burnham to provide substantive support to Józef Czapski, who was then in the USA and was received in the Pentagon.⁹⁴ In his letter, Wraga pointed to several crucial problems which, in his opinion, the American services dealing with the Soviets should take into account:

- the Soviet secret services make extensive use of the inspiration/‘fabrication’ of documents, so when acquiring information, one must always consider whether it was indeed possible to acquire it under those specific conditions and should not let oneself be influenced by sensational material;

⁹² “If you decided to do so, I think Burnham could arrange for you to be invited to give lectures on Russia at this college for senior air force officers. This would cover your travel expenses. Once there, you could (if your book has been published by then) easily arrange a purely commercial lecture tour through one of the public relations agents”, LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, Niezbrzycki confidential, J Giedroyc to J. Niezbrzycki Maisons Laffitte, 30 Apr. 1949, copy, n.p.

⁹³ NMK, AJMC, 2256, R. Wraga to J. Burnham, Feb. 1950, fol. 8.

⁹⁴ “I enclose a note by Wraga in the form of a letter to Burnham. I barely managed to force him to write it [...] The note seems good and interesting to me. Besides, you may find it useful in your talks”, LIK, PoJG 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, Maisons Laffitte, 20 Feb. 1950, n.p.

- The USSR treats the PRC as an equal communist state, which is why “China will not perform the tasks of the Soviet Union as a state, but will perform the tasks set by Stalin as a world revolution dictator”, although the two states will have separate strategies. He thus criticized the claim, formulated by the Secretary of State Dean Acheson, that the USSR was continuing tsarist Russia’s policy with regard to China;
- “The Bolsheviks are continuing the old tsarist policy with regard to Central and Eastern Europe, with regard to the Balkans, with regard to the Middle East, but when it comes to Asia proper, the Soviet policy and strategy are completely different”;
- The PRC is organized as an “offensive military state”, which will act as a “collector of Asian lands”;
- What poses a threat to the stability of the Stalinist system is a revision of the Marxist doctrine, but it is a mistake on the part of the American, British or, more broadly, European policies to rely on opposition movements within communist parties; Josif Bros Tito did not depart from Stalinism in doctrinal terms. When it comes to revising Marxism, those who went the furthest were the Polish communists led by Gomułka;
- Having two equal bases of world revolution (the USSR and the PRC), Stalin would seek to maintain, for as long as possible, an atmosphere in Europe and even the Middle East that would enable the West to pursue an appeasement policy, while pushing China to expand throughout Asia. “In either case, the strategic aim of such a revolutionary policy of Stalin’s is the destruction of the general center of the ‘capitalist encirclement’, that is, the United States. Yet in the first case this destruction would take place through a cold war and progressive disintegration in the rear, and in the second – through a relentless political, military, and subversive offensive”.⁹⁵

Wręga saw it fit to draw attention to the need to make the US’s propaganda towards Soviet Russia and satellite countries meet the above conditions:

1. The propaganda targets must be reassured that the West regards the USSR and the Soviet Bloc as a transitional state.
2. The danger to Russians posed by the emergence of the PRC and Russia’s gravitation towards Asia should be highlighted.
3. The Russians’ responsibility for Bolshevism needs to be more strongly emphasized; the claim that Stalinism was an artificial superstructure in relation to the Russian people not responsible for Stalinist policies is pernicious (it is necessary to arouse in the Russian people a desire to revolt and a sense of threat that if this revolt does not take place, the Russian people will suffer the consequences of being responsible for Bolshevism).

⁹⁵ NMK, AJMC, 2256, R. Wręga to J. Burnham, Feb. 1950, fol. 8–14.

4. There needs to be stronger control of Russian-language broadcasts about the internal political life of the West, broadcasts that are objective but, from the point of view of the Soviet listeners, may be a confirmation of Soviet theses: "The West is conflicted gangrenous, incapable of defending itself, and as such cannot inspire confidence in itself as a source of support". The multiplicity of Western voices heard on Russian-language broadcasts reinforces Soviet listeners' belief that the West is weak and will not be able to win the war.
5. Broadcasts for Russia and the countries behind the Iron Curtain should not draw on Russian or other émigré groups, but on well-selected personalities who present the problem of communism from a broad, universal perspective and not from the point of view of national interests; otherwise the West will not be able to oppose the Soviet Bloc with a universal program, having at its disposal a patchwork of diverse political programs.
6. Propaganda for the masses should be different from that for the elite (the most important thing is to make sure that the message reaches party members, including high-level dignitaries and members of the security apparatus).⁹⁶

This interesting program – interesting also from the point of view of shaping contemporary Western policy and propaganda towards the Russian Federation and the PRC – was received with interest by Burnham, who was at that time one of the leading figures in the Office of Political Coordination,⁹⁷ set up within the CIA in 1948 and responsible for conducting covert operations.⁹⁸ This was the first in a series of materials that Wraga delivered to the Americans in the 1950s. As a result, Burnham decided to meet Niezbrzycki and Giedroyc in Paris. However, their conversation was primarily about the Congress for Cultural Freedom, to be held in June 1950 in Berlin as a response to Soviet actions. As an advocate of broadening the group of participants to include nations from behind the 'Iron Curtain' (without the nations of the Soviet republics, which would have run against the central tenet of American policy), Burnham wanted to consult the Poles about the issue of candidates for delegates representing Central European nations and Russian émigrés, so that the Russian side would be represented by more liberal activists like Boris Nicolaevsky.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the conversation did touch upon – on the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ A. Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948–1954* (Warszawa–Gdańsk, 2016), p. 251.

⁹⁸ LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Czapski to J. Giedroyc, n.p., 28 Feb. 1950, n.p.

⁹⁹ "I would also like to ask you if you can suggest five or six names of outstanding East European exiles (including a couple of Russians) who ought to be invited", LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Burnham to J. Czapski, 10 Apr. 1950, copy, n.p.; LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, Maisons Laffitte, 17 Apr. 1950, n.p.

Poles' initiative – the broader situation in the communist bloc.¹⁰⁰ It resulted in Wraga and Giedroyc drawing up guidelines for talks conducted at the Pentagon and the State Department by Czapski¹⁰¹ as well as a proposal for a sabotage program to be implemented vis-à-vis the USSR.¹⁰² Czapski was instructed to continue the talks with Burnham and Williams based on the material sent to him. Wraga and Giedroyc asked him to stress their support for the Cold War with Soviet Russia in the most aggressive form possible, encompassing propaganda, intelligence, sabotage, and “organizational political work” with regard to the USSR, which, in their view, was the only way to avoid a war. In addition, they explained that it was important to emphasize that crushing Russia was not their objective, but a means to defeat communism: “You have to use arguments different from those of Ukrainian nationalists or others. We are not concerned at the moment with creating an independent Ukraine or independent Turkmenia. We are seeking a break-up of the Russian empire, and what will come out of this later, whether there will be a federation or a union of free states or a mosaic of completely independent nation states, is a matter for the future, a matter that cannot be decided at the moment”.¹⁰³

Attached to the letter was a long note written mainly by Wraga entitled ‘The matter of sabotage and propaganda against the USSR’, which featured details of the Polish position:

1. Soviet policy with regard to the ‘capitalist encirclement’ will never renounce aggression and sabotage; it can only soften it tactically in certain areas, although in the long term it will constantly intensify.
2. The ‘Cold War’ against the USSR should be offensive in nature: “Action against the Soviets must be shifted to the territory of the entire Soviet Union itself, not to its peripheries. Only such action can stem the sabotage, propaganda, and other types of Soviet expansion against the ‘encirclement’”.
3. “Bolshevism is a symbiosis of the Russian Empire and the Stalinist edition of Marxism”, and represents a stage in the development of Russian statehood; however, it is a tactical error to identify it with the Russian nation,

¹⁰⁰ “On Saturday, the 6th of this month, Jerzy and I had a two-hour conversation with Burnham. This letter is, thus, our joint report on this conversation, structured in such a way that two key topics, discussed during the conversation and to be elaborated upon, are presented in the form of two appendices: 1) the matter of the sabotage and propaganda programme against Soviet Russia, and 2) the matter of *Kultura*. These appendices, as you will see later on in the letter, are discussed in such detail, because they bring with them a special task for you, which you should not only acknowledge but endeavour to perform”, LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, Maisons Laffitte, 10 May 1950, n.p.

¹⁰¹ LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Czapski to J. Niezbrzycki, 10 March 1950, copy, n.p.

¹⁰² LIK, Editorial Correspondence, Congress for Cultural Freedom (hereinafter: CCF), 6, R. Wraga, J. Giedroyc, Appendix no. 1. The matter of sabotage and propaganda against the USSR [Maisons Laffitte], [10 May 1950], copy, n.p.

¹⁰³ LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc and J. Niezbrzycki to J. Czapski, Maisons Laffitte, 10 May 1950, n.p.

and it is also a mistake to separate the struggle against Bolshevism from the struggle against statehood and imperialism, what we call 'Russia'. It is impossible to defeat Bolshevism without eliminating the Soviet state, which must be accomplished with a concurrent proposal of a political concept for a future Russia.

4. "The Russian nation is too demoralized and imbued with [the idea of] a great, indivisible state to be allowed to inspire a program for the eradication of Bolshevism; 'all programs originating from Russian sources will always [...] spare the cause of the state and thus will never lead to the destruction of Bolshevism'" (the fight against Soviet statehood waged under the slogan of rebuilding Russian statehood). On the other hand, the program cannot be entrusted to the nationalisms of other subjugated nations, which would begin to pursue their own imperialist objectives; responsibility for the program must be assumed entirely by the US.
5. The 'Cold War' against the USSR should encompass all forms of sabotage, including propaganda, agitation, political and moral sabotage, spread of demagogic, provocation against the Soviet apparatus, disinformation, and inspiration. The only thing that should be excluded – at least for the time being – is technical sabotage, as it could cause the Soviet peoples to mobilize on the side of the Bolsheviks.
6. The costs of the 'Cold War' will always be lower than the expenditure associated with permanent military mobilization and those political, economic, and cultural projects launched by the US with a view to a possible armed conflict. "Only the most expensive intelligence and sabotage produce the right results. An austerity policy in this area means bankruptcy and resignation".
7. "The 'Cold War' must be waged consistently on all possible fronts, with the most brutal forms and methods. [...] only brutal methods, both in politics and in sabotage can prevent the Soviet Union from moving to a policy of direct aggression".

Elaborating on what these "brutal methods of sabotage" would consist of, Wraga listed three main methods:

(a) There must be a whole system, ways, and organization for introducing disinformation, inspiration, and confusion in the Soviet intelligence and sabotage services outside the Soviet Union's borders and in the security service within the borders of the Soviet Union itself. Moscow must feel threatened in this apparatus. The assumption should be that as long as Moscow feels uncertain about its security, sabotage, and intelligence apparatus, it will not go to war and will begin to avoid war, even if it feels sufficiently prepared in every other respect. [...]

(b) There must be launched a policy of harsh restrictions with regard to communists, above all mass-scale and forced expulsion of communists of all countries and nations to the Soviet Bloc. Yet this campaign will bring the right results only if it is combined with the operation discussed in point a) and if it is conducted on the largest possible scale. [...]

(c) It [Western propaganda] must be radically reorganized with the help state-of-the-art technical means, as well as the use of aircraft and other technical means to drop literature deep into the USSR,¹⁰⁴ the expansion of the courier network, the creation and organization of staged distribution routes within the Soviet bloc itself. [...] The propaganda itself must be diversified in terms of both geographical areas, and social strata and population groups.¹⁰⁵

It is hard to decide to what extent the above documents influenced the thinking of the OPC,¹⁰⁶ but they certainly aroused the interest of their recipients – Wraga was commissioned to formulate detailed plans for sabotage, propaganda, and intelligence operations by 15 August 1950.¹⁰⁷ With the intensification of contacts with Burnham, the issue of Wraga's move to the US and the publication of his study on 'Trust' came up again. In both cases, the plans were not implemented at the time.

Although it has proved impossible to find the plans prepared for the CIA, other material Niezbrzycki prepared for the US special services at the time has survived and shows that he was treated as a serious expert on the USSR, Russian émigré community, and methods of conducting intelligence work with regard to the Soviets. One of the first issues of interest to the Americans was the case of the model Soviet provocation code-named 'Trust', which became the prototype for at least a dozen or so smaller and larger provocations targeting the West. Commissioned by the CIA in 1950, Niezbrzycki prepared a lecture for military school students in the UK

¹⁰⁴ Significantly, in 1951 the Committee for a Free Europe started the so-called 'balloon campaign', that is, the smuggling of propaganda literature into countries from behind the Iron Curtain. It is difficult to assume that this decision was inspired by the material in question, but it did fulfil of the recommendation mentioned there.

¹⁰⁵ LIK, Editorial Correspondence, CCF, 6, R. Wraga, J. Giedroyc, Appendix no. 1. The matter of sabotage and propaganda against the USSR [Maisons Laffitte], [10 May 1950], copy, n.p.

¹⁰⁶ Wraga was not the only émigré whose papers were read in the OPC, but he was certainly one of the most experienced ones in terms of the USSR intelligence. As Anna Mazurkiewicz wrote, "Most of the projects carried out in cooperation with political refugees were put within the organisational framework of the Free Europe Committee, which became the most effective tool of political warfare. [...] It is clear from the analysed material from 1948–1954 that representatives of Central European elites in exile constituted a knowledge and talent pool for the Americans. Starting with the information they had and willingly shared, hoping for help in regaining their independence, the refugees were helpful in producing translations, analyses, expert reports (economic, legal, political, etc.). Thus, some of them assisted the Americans with intelligence gathering, while others produced academic studies that filled an important gap in the American literature on Central and Eastern Europe. The refugees were also a source of inspiration for the Cold War planners seeking new ways to combat communist influence in the world – vide FEUE", Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni*, pp. 472–474.

¹⁰⁷ "[Wraga] is to develop a sabotage action plan, an intelligence plan, and a propaganda plan by 15 August. Some mysterious James will come for it. All in the style of Conan Doyle. Wraga is pessimistic and slightly disappointed, but he has undertaken to do it", LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, [Maisons Laffitte], 24 July 1950, copy, n.p.

and France entitled *Provocation*.¹⁰⁸ He also devoted separate studies to document fabrication and inspiration.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the CIA commissioned a translation of his article on the 'Trust' case published in *Vozrozhdenie*, and the typescript of his paper on provocation.¹¹⁰ Niezbrzycki's articles published in *Kultura*¹¹¹ and other periodicals¹¹² were also considered interesting.

On 25 September 1952, the State Department received his analysis entitled *The Soviet Targets and Policy*, which, judging by its catalogue number, probably went to the Psychological Strategy Board (a unit of the OPC), where it was described as useful for evaluating the provisions of the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which began on 5 October.¹¹³ According to a handwritten comment, the piece was read after the expulsion of Ambassador George Kennan from Moscow in October 1952.

Wraga defined Soviet objectives as seeking world domination and imposing a unified Soviet system on the world. According to him, in its pursuit of this strategic objective, the Soviet offensive had a hierarchy of targets, with the US coming first, Europe and Britain second, and Asia, Africa, and Latin America third. The tools for the pursuit of aggression were "pacifism, anarchic liberalism, materialism, nihilistic individualism, godlessness, opposition to any authority, intellectual refinement of the sophistic elite, etc. All this would serve to break up and plunge into anarchy the Western powers. At the same time, on their side of the Iron Curtain, the Soviets spare no effort to build up and rearm their totalitarian empire".¹¹⁴ Aggression was carried out with the following division of roles being taken into account: The USSR was the political, economic, and military base of the Soviet Bloc, while its satellites, either on their own or grouped together, were its auxiliaries; other tools were national movements in colonial and semi-independent states as well as fifth columns and agents operating in the hinterland of capitalist states, with their core not being communists but supporters of neutral

¹⁰⁸ R. Wraga, *Provocation* [One of three papers on Soviet Intelligence presented to French and British military schools during 1950–1951 under CIA sponsorship], text made available to the author by Prof. John Dziak.

¹⁰⁹ R. Wraga, *Fabricators of Soviet Information*, 16 Aug. 1957, confidential, n.p. Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center Boston University Libraries (hereinafter: HGARC), Rocca Raymond, box 13, fol. 17, "Captain Niezbrzycki on the Term 'Inspiration'", Secret, pp. 1–23, n.p.

¹¹⁰ R. Wraga, 'The "TRUST". The History of a Soviet Provocation Operation' (translation of an article which appeared in *Vozrozhdenie*, vol. 7, Jan.–Feb. [1950], pp. 1–24).

¹¹¹ Id., 'Rokossovskiy, The Fourth Polish Marshal', restricted, 27 June 1951, n.p. (translation of an article from the January 1950 issue of *Kultura*).

¹¹² HGARC, Rocca Raymond, box 13, fol. 17, R. Wraga, *Policy and Strategy*, n.p. (translation of the articles 'Polityka i strategia', 'Informacja czy dezinformacja', and 'Wojenna doktryna sowiecka', originally published in *Dziennik Polski* in July and August 1941, as well as February 1942).

¹¹³ CIA, Freedom of Information Act (hereinafter: FOIA), R. Wraga, *The Soviet targets and Policy*, 25 Sept. 1952, confidential, n.p., <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80-01065A000300070022-4.pdf> (accessed: 6 Sept. 2025).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

policies, pacifists, and opportunists slowing down the political, military, and economic organization of the West.¹¹⁵

The time when the documents in question originated was very important, as the framework of the American psychological warfare program was still being formed, influenced by various émigré organizations, including Russian ones, as well as by the communist secret services trying to direct the American efforts in such a way that they would pose as little threat to the USSR as possible, and even to turn them to their own advantage.

In early 1951, Wraga's collaboration with *Kultura* was coming to an end; with it, contact with Burnham broke off, only to be renewed after Wraga's arrival in the US. In 1950, however, Niezbrzycki met Natalie Grant,¹¹⁶ a Russian-born American civil servant employed by the State Department and an expert on Soviet affairs. They quickly became friends, united by a shared passion and a similar view on the methods used by the Soviet services. Thanks to their voluminous correspondence encompassing over 2,000 letters, we know that he supported her with his expertise from 1950 onwards. She, in turn, introduced him to Landreht M. Harrison, First Secretary of the US Embassy in Paris, thanks to whom he established contact with Americans independently of *Kultura*. In 1951, Wraga co-published a book on Russian émigrés with George Kennan (an acquaintance of Grant's from her days at the American Embassy in Riga, when he was her boss) and George Fischer.¹¹⁷ This would certainly not have been possible without knowing Grant.

Many of Niezbrzycki's analyses (especially those prepared for the French special services) concerned specific émigré organizations or even individual activists, and were part of counterintelligence. Among such studies was an analysis devoted to the NTS, a leading Russian émigré organization that collaborated with Western services. In Niezbrzycki's view, its privileged position among Western services made it potentially an ideal vehicle for the transmission of Soviet disinformation.¹¹⁸ Niezbrzycki was equally negative about the activities of Vasily Orekhov,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 3–4.

¹¹⁶ "Yesterday Mielgunov (who lives in Laffitte at Ms. Grant's) invited Wraga. It was almost an interrogation by Grant (Mielgunov left on some pretext) on *Kultura*; personnel, finances, circulation, attitude to the government, to the parties etc. Finally, a suggestion as to whether Wraga would go with me to Harrison, who deals with European affairs here. Wraga was clever enough to weasel out politely", LIK, PoJCz 19.05, J. Giedroyc to J. Czapski, [Maisons Laffitte], 5 June 1950, copy, n.p.

¹¹⁷ R. Wraga, 'Russian Emigration After Thirty Years Exile', *Eastern Quarterly*, no. 1 (1951), pp. 17–32; published again in *Russian Emigré Politics*, ed. G. Fisher (New York, 1951), pp. 33–50.

¹¹⁸ "The fact that NTS is simultaneously connected with three centres of anti-Bolshevik activity, American, British, and German, makes NTS particularly valuable to the Soviet services, since, should Soviet agents succeed in taking over NTS, this would enable the Bolsheviks to direct their inspiration along three channels", R. Wraga, *Efforts to Analyse Soviet Provocation and Inspiration in Recent Years in Western Europe*, 30 June 1954, confidential, p. 10. Benjamin Tromly, in turn, has pointed out that Wraga believed that the NTS intentionally disinfomed its CIA

whose Belgian center fed false information to several European intelligence services. This became the object of a detailed investigation by the CIA, which confirmed Wraga's suspicions.¹¹⁹

Drawing on his experience from his studies of 'Trust' and his knowledge of other inspirational operations he observed in the 1930s, Wraga used an analytical method that allowed him to draw highly probable conclusions on the basis of a critical assessment of publicly available information, official documents, and inspiration in the form of, for example, leaks. This was complemented by direct observations and conversations he had while being firmly embedded in not only Polish, but also Russian and, to some extent, Ukrainian émigré communities.

In the United States

During the period of change in the USSR and the Soviet Bloc following the death of Joseph Stalin, Wraga was increasingly isolated in his assessments of Soviet policy. Western governments, as well as anti-Soviet émigré circles, wanted to believe that evolutionary change and peaceful coexistence with the USSR was possible, a stance he strongly criticized.¹²⁰ Wraga unequivocally rejected such a possibility,

sponsors: B. Tromly, *Cold War Exile and the CIA* (Oxford, 2019), p. 171. Analysing the activities of the NTS, the American scholar also saw many elements suggesting that the organisation was useful to the USSR, which was playing the US game, pretending to treat the organisation as threatening, but, in fact, realising that it was dealing with a bluff. "In short, the CIA's strategy vis-à-vis the NTS relied on deception, and it is possible that the Soviet side was also complicit in this game. If so, then the NTS had become the focal point for a curious struggle, one in which intelligence services of both superpowers sought to gain advantage through manipulating the fiction of a politically effective Russian emigre organization", *ibid.*, p. 191.

¹¹⁹ HIA, Richard Wraga Papers, box 3, fol. 1, [R. Wraga], *Aktivnost' fabrikantov informacyj po voprosam swiazannym s atomnym vooruzheniyem SSSR*, 18 Oct. 1951, n.p. Cf. CIA, FOIA, *Paper Mills and Fabrication, secret control/U.S. officials only*, February 1952, p. 33, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/PAPER%20MILLS%20AND%20FABRICATION_0001.pdf (accessed: 30 June 2025).

¹²⁰ "Communism has moved to the fiercest attack across the whole front, and, in relation to the émigrés, it has chosen the most dangerous method: of 'coexistence', some sort of arrangement of relations, tolerance or something similar. This is extremely dangerous because it is already provoking a split, as it were: part of the émigré community wants to shift from a revolutionary, independence-focused position to an opposition stance. Please, read carefully the whole [survey] about the changes in *Kultura*, read Mierosz[ewski]'s latest article in *Kultura*, *Światło*, Zaremba's statements, Poniatowski's articles – what is it? It is a transition from the independence camp to the 'opposition'. And it's all been done before! Milukov and Maklakov moved to the opposition, as did some of the Mensheviks (Dan), some of the Russian monarchists ('Mladorossy') – and, as a result, the 'opposition' position completely destroyed the Russian émigré community, which in 1922–1930 had enormous opportunities of the kind we never dreamed of", Zakład Narodowy im. Ossoliński, Archiwum Jana Nowaka-Jeziorańskiego, 82-100/99 T. 55, R. Wraga to J. Nowak-Jeziorański, Paris, 26 Jan. 1956, p. 194.



4. Richard V. Allen, senior staff member of the Hoover Institution, associate of Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan (free domain)

moves by exploiting this desire of the Western elites in order to mislead them and weaken their potential.

His views meant that the possibility of continuing his collaboration with the French was slowly diminishing. He did not intend to adapt to the general political climate in his analyses and sought alternative sources of livelihood that would, at the same time, give him independence in formulating his thoughts. To this end, he visited Father Józef Maria Bocheński, who chaired a department at the University of Freiburg, made inquiries about American universities, asking questions about their reality to Prof. Waclaw Lednicki, head of Slavic studies at Berkeley, and visited Włodzimierz Bączkowski, who worked as an analyst at the Library of Congress. What ultimately prompted him to try his luck in the US was the fact that for nearly eight years, he had corresponded regularly and intensely with Natalie Grant, who was working at the Department of State. He eventually moved permanently to the US in 1958, where he married his – mainly correspondent – girlfriend Natalie.

He arrived in America with the intention of summarizing his output and writing a major work devoted primarily to Soviet strategic deception. Initially, despite the contacts he and his wife had, this proved by no means easy. He settled in

believing that the Soviet system could not collapse through evolution. “After 40 years of studying communism (and what studies these have been!), I claim that it is madness to believe in the evolution of communism in a liberal direction. Besides, this belief has long since become a profitable object of inspiration for the communists themselves. And I don’t care about *peredyshka*, because I don’t measure the existence of communism in years, but in a long historical period”.¹²¹ He countered this thesis by stressing that Moscow was consciously building such a false impression (providing false arguments to those who wanted to believe in it) among external audiences. He also insisted that a state that had a world revolution written into its doctrine could not be interested in peace as such, but in periods of weakness was keen to mask its aggressive

¹²¹ LIK, PoJG 08.04, vol. 1, Niezbrzycki, confidential, J Niezbrzycki to J. to J. Laskowski, n.p., 18 Apr. 1943, n.p.

Washington, at the home of Józef Lipski, former Polish ambassador in Berlin and, at the time, representative of the Polish Government in exile in the US. His first paid job was writing market plans for business.¹²² He continued to work as a journalist (he was a correspondent for *Syrena*, wrote for *Nowy Świat* and *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*, both published in New York), gave occasional lectures, delivered various types of commemorative speeches, appeared at events organized by the Polish émigré community,¹²³ and was a member of the Board of the Józef Piłsudski Institute of America;¹²⁴ in addition, collaborated with the Jesuit-run Institute of Ethnic Studies, Georgetown University, headed by Prof. Tibor Kerekes, one of the most important Catholic centres influencing public opinion in the US.¹²⁵ Wraga wrote more than a dozen reviews published in key journals devoted to Russian affairs – *Russian Review* and *Slavic Review* – and the influential *National Review*. He was a frequent speaker at the annual Soviet studies conferences at the Institute for USSR Research in Munich,¹²⁶ worked with the Services of Information Foundation in Baltimore, and, from its founding in 1962, with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, one of the most important think tanks supporting the US administration at the central level (he participated in an expert discussion on nuclear war and Soviet strategy).¹²⁷ He had particularly good relations with

¹²² HIA, Wiktor Sukiennicki Papers, box 10, fol. 5, R. Wraga to W. Sukiennicki, Washington, 8 March 1960, n.p.

¹²³ JPIA, RWA, 2, Invitation from the Józef Piłsudski Institute of America to a lecture by Colonel Ryszard Wraga entitled „*Współdziałanie pokojowe Bloku Sowieckiego, a ich agencury zagraniczne – w świetle najnowszych badań*”, on 12 Apr. 1961, at the Kościuszko Foundation Hall, fol. 68.

¹²⁴ Mazur, ‘Kpt. Jerzy Niedźbrowski’, p. 424.

¹²⁵ “This year’s [conference], held on 21 and 22 Apr. in the university halls, featured, among others, a lecture by Ryszard Wraga ‘On the colonialism of the USSR’, by Prof. Jan Wszelaki ‘On the economic and political unification of the countries of the communist world’, and by Dr. Jan Karski ‘On the cultural unification of the lands subjugated by communism’”, JPIA, Ambasada RP przy Wytykanie, Serwis Informacyjny Ambasady RP przy Wytykanie, no. 16, Rome, 5 June 1961, n.p.

¹²⁶ He published a number of important studies under the aegis of the Institute: ‘The Revision of Ideological and Theoretical Positions After Stalin’s Death’, in *The Present Situation and Future Prospects in Political, Economic and Nationality Questions in the USSR* (Munich–Tutzing, 1954), vol. 1, pp. 11–24; [contribution to a discussion], VIII Конференция Института по изучению СССР (Мюнхен, 23–24 iul 1956 г.) XX Съезд КПСС и советская действительность. Доклады и дискуссии (Мюнхен, 1956), pp. 74–76; ‘Ideological Foundations of Bolshevism and Later Modifications’, in *Forty Years of the Soviet Regime. A Symposium of the Institute for Study of the USSR* (Munich, 1957), pp. 3–21; ‘Bolsevizmin ideolojik esasları ve goze carpan degisiklikler’, *Dergi*, no. 11 (1957), pp. 11–25; ‘Methods and Means of Soviet Foreign Policy’, in *Problems of Soviet Foreign Policy. A Symposium of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* (Munich, [24–25 July] 1959), pp. 24–47; ‘Sovyet dis siyasetinin esas oroblemleri, metod ve vasitalari’, *Dergi*, no. 18 (1959), pp. 48–64; ‘Methods and Means of Soviet Foreign Policy’, *Bulletin* (August 1959), pp. 3–19; ‘Communist Strategy in Asia and Africa’, *Studies on the Soviet Union*, no. 3 (1959), pp. 22–33.

¹²⁷ HIA, NGW, box 3, fol. 2, Robert D. Crane to R. Wraga, Washington DC, 3 Oct. 1963, type-script, n.p.

Richard V. Allen of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University (future security advisor to President Ronald Reagan), providing him with a range of analyses and insights into Soviet strategy. In addition, he continued to produce expert reports for the CIA, reviewed papers on intelligence and Eastern issues,¹²⁸ and wrote memoranda and lectures on Soviet intelligence methods for the services of the Western intelligence community, although he never formalized his cooperation with the CIA. Seeing methodological errors committed by numerous authors in analytical and scholarly circles, he attempted to influence the view on Soviet affairs not only in the special services, but also in the academic community. In a letter to Donald W. Treadgold, editor-in-chief of *Slavic Review*, he wrote:

I am really sorry that my first contribution to the SLAVIC REVIEW should have caused you so much annoyance. Frankly speaking, I am not too unhappy personally that it has produced controversy.

Zagoria's book and the controversy around it prove the seriousness of the problem concerning the pressure and influence exerted by the current political line upon scholarly study of communism. The result of this influence is that the line between journalism and science is obliterated and totalitarian methods are introduced. It is most unfortunate that young students cannot see the problem. They even cite political figures to prove their point. This can only lead to a complete corruption of scholarly endeavor.

What is your opinion regarding the feasibility of launching in SLAVIC REVIEW a discussion on methodology in the study of communism? It seems to me that erroneous opinions and unfounded judgments on the Soviet Union and communism could thus be exposed. I am always shocked when I think that among the many thousands of books written on communism since 1917, a few dozen only have proved able to withstand the judgment of time and may still be considered as valuable to scholarly research. It is frightening to observe that among the many Sovietologists of the West, a few only have failed to succumb to eclecticism and utilitarianism.

I am enclosing my 'official' reply to the two letters which you so kindly sent me. Should you be interested, after the unfortunate experience with the review of Zagoria's book, I shall be most happy to write again for the SLAVIC REVIEW. My Fields include the history and strategy of communist expansion, communist subversion, Sino-Soviet relations, and... methodology.¹²⁹

Indeed, after what he wrote about Donald Zagoria's findings,¹³⁰ one of the most important US experts on the Indo-Pacific region, Wraga had reason to fear

¹²⁸ Among other things, he reviewed academic papers by US intelligence officers; LIK, PoJG, 08.04, Niebrzycki confidential, vol. 1, J. [Niebrzycki] to [J. Laskowski], n.p., 6 Apr. 1962, n.p.

¹²⁹ HIA, NGW, box 3, fol. 2, R. Wraga to D.W. Treadgold, Washington DC, 15 Feb. 1963, copy, n.p.

¹³⁰ Donald S. Zagoria (1928–2025), director of the Forum on Asia-Pacific Security, fellow of the RAND Corporation, lecturer at Hunter College, consultant to the National Security Council and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the State Department during Jimmy Carter's presidency.

that the editors would not want to continue working with him.¹³¹ However, this did not happen. The matter continued with a response from the book's author and a contribution to the discussion by Dr Frank H. Tucker. In his letter, Zagoria expressed regret over the publication of Wraga's review in an attempt to undermine his competence to speak on the issues he raised in the book. As a result, Wraga addressed only Tucker's accusations, accusing Zagoria even more strongly of subordinating his research to the political needs of the day: "The subordination of scholarly studies to the objectives of governmental policies is fraught with serious danger for both science and government".¹³² By 1967, a number of other Wraga's reviews with interesting methodological observations appeared in *Slavic Review*.

Wraga did not sign his first major contract until December 1959, probably as head of the Soviet department of the Research Institute on the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Washington. During that period, he worked closely with Dr Peter Tang, devoting much of his time to analyzing the Sino-Soviet relations. The result of his research was the last major Sovietological work he published before his death, *Integral Communism: A Program for Action; Analysis of the Eighty-One Party Statement*.¹³³ In it Wraga argued that Moscow had become coordinator of communist parties around the world, despite the contradictions existing within the communist bloc, which he believed were non-antagonistic (although he did not rule out the emergence in the future of antagonisms, albeit of a political rather than doctrinal nature),¹³⁴ which put the West in an even more difficult position than when

¹³¹ "The author fails to see the difference in the value of his sources. He cites any material he can find to confirm his basic thesis on the 'conflict'. Excerpts from Mao and Khrushchev's speeches are placed on the same level as newspaper reports of doubtful accuracy, and citations from Pravda or Jen-min Jih-pao are considered obvious forgeries. Some facts are commented on arbitrarily; the analysis of others seems deliberately avoided. For some reason, the reader is expected to accept the author's theory that Mao, when speaking of revisionism, has Khrushchev in mind, and Khrushchev, when defending 'peaceful coexistence', is attacking Mao. Although the advantage of communism in promoting certain viewpoints in the West is evident to every worker studying Sino-Soviet affairs, the author makes no attempt to investigate the possibility that some of his material was intentionally planted by Communist agencies. Mr Zagoria unfortunately neglected a historical perspective by limiting the book to 1956-61. A serious analysis of Communist phenomena can only be undertaken if the background of their development is taken into account. There is no question but that strains exist within international communism and within each member unit. Sometimes these undercover strains burst into open conflict. The history of international communism is indeed one of conflict. The construction of the Soviet state and the 'world socialist system' were both accompanied by strains and shocks. To assert that no strains exist between Moscow and Peking would be as dangerous as to insist that the conflict is acute", R. Wraga (rev.), 'Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961*, New York, 1962', *Slavic Review*, 21, no. 4 (1962), pp. 756-757.

¹³² 'Letters to the Editor (Frank H. Tucker, D.S. Zagoria, R. Wraga)', *Slavic Review*, 22, no. 2 (1963), pp. 393-395.

¹³³ *Integral Communism: A Program for Action; Analysis of the Eighty-One Party Statement* (Washington, 1961).

¹³⁴ Wraga, 'The Ideological Foundations', p. 18.

Moscow was focused on building socialism in one country. He was undoubtedly opposed to separating the Soviet threat from the threat posed by the communist ideology spreading to more and more countries across the world.¹³⁵

During his Washington period, he also worked with Benjamin Mandel,¹³⁶ director of research at the House Un-American Activities Committee set up in 1938 at the House of Representatives to deal with internal security matters. It was associated mainly with investigations against communists. Wraga may have also known another member of the committee, or at least he knew his work on 'Trust'.¹³⁷ The man in question was Herbert Romerstein, who, it is worth mentioning, served in the Reagan administration as director of the Office to Counter Soviet Disinformation at the US Information Agency. Wraga was an avowed anti-communist, and was known for this not only in Polish but also in American circles. The presidential election, John Kennedy, supported by another Polish émigré, Zbigniew Brzeziński, whose analytical competence Wraga rated extremely low, filled him with pessimism:

Rostow, who is Brzeziński's protector, has constructed a methodological principle for the study of the USSR et co.: only empiricism, only observations and studies on site, only practical contact, only touching on "living facts". This immediately rules out both Souvarine and you, both Possony and me, who will not go to the USSR or Poland. [...] The military will be held by the throat and all influence of the Pentagon will be eliminated. The Pentagon is being treated like McCarthy, and we are now talking incessantly about McCarthyism. It appears that the most important task of the new administration is to eradicate the remnants of McCarthyism. And what's in its place? Soviet agents, of course, who, in the form of various intellectuals, are already getting ready to act.¹³⁸

In 1962, Wraga came up with a proposal for a magazine devoted to the problems of espionage, provocation, disinformation, and inspiration. It does not seem that his proposal was met with a positive response from the CIA.¹³⁹ He was

¹³⁵ "The Statement, a program governing world communism, will serve as an ideological and theoretical foundation in the planning of individual communist parties. Based on its general strategic provisions, the programs of individual communist parties will express the specific tasks assigned to them in the world movement. These will undoubtedly be further defined by the Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU, Schedule to meet in October 1961, which will be another major landmark in the series of conclaves of international communism. The CCP will also continue to contribute tactical and strategic guidance and support", *ibid.*

¹³⁶ Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Toruniu (Nicolaus Copernicus University Library), Janusz Kowalewski Archive, AE/JK/XVIII, R. Wraga to J. Kowalewski, Washington DC, 4 Jan. 1963, n.p.

¹³⁷ HIA, Herbert Romerstein Coll., box 476, fol. 1, R. Wraga, "The Trust", typescript, 1955.

¹³⁸ *Id.* Wiktor Sukiennicki Papers, box 10, fol. 5, R. Wraga to W. Sukiennicki, n.p., 18 Dec. 1960, n.p.

¹³⁹ HGARC, Rocca Raymond, box 13, fol. 17, R. Wraga, *Memorandum Concerning the Creation of a Periodical devoted to Problems of Espionage, Provocation, Misinformation, and "Inspiration"*, Washington, October 1962.

undoubtedly a pioneer in research on Soviet strategic deception, ahead of other researchers with his conclusions and concepts. It is worth mentioning, for example, his analysis devoted to Soviet propaganda in which he reached conclusions that were very innovative for 1960: a) Soviet propaganda in a given period was always focused on one main theme; b) due to the nature of this propaganda, the USSR must be considered to have declared war on the capitalist world:

Peaceful coexistence in politics and economy is thus accompanied by war in the ideological field. Since the fundamental Stalinist (actually anti-Marxist) thesis on the influence exercised by superstructure (ideology) over the base (economy and policy) has been fully reinstated, such a presentation of the propaganda problem cannot be viewed otherwise than as a proclamation of war, even though the latter may bear a highly specific character.¹⁴⁰

It was not until Wraga signed a four-year contract with the Hoover Institution in 1964 that he managed to ensure greater stability for himself. The contract allowed him to concentrate on his research, although he regretted somewhat that he was acting as an assistant to a number of academics, notably the economist Stephan Possóny,¹⁴¹ the man behind the US Strategic Defence Initiative, or the notorious 'Star Wars' program announced by Ronald Reagan.¹⁴² During this time, he also maintained close contact with Ray Rocca and other CIA counterintelligence employees.¹⁴³ Wraga's research focused on disinformation, inspiration, propaganda as well as other methods used by the Soviet secret services. As part of his work, he edited and prefaced the *Memoirs* of Colonel Alexander Martynov, who served in the Corps of Gendarmes.¹⁴⁴ Despite a serious illness, till the very end, Wraga continued to plan new research projects dedicated to better understanding the USSR. Nine months before his death, he submitted a research project to the Hoover Institution with a view to providing *a multi-faceted analysis of Soviet disinformation that he believed threatened NATO's defense capabilities*:

A serious threat to the Western defense machine in all its forms, Communist misinformation should be the subject of study and analysis. This has not been attempted so far.

The present project would serve to catalogue and analyze the strategy, tactics and techniques employed by communist misinformation services (*particularly the Soviet and the Chinese* [emphasis mine – L.D.]). The project will outline the organization of communist misinformation [disinformation] centers and their channels. It will further examine the

¹⁴⁰ JPIA, RWA, 34, R. Wraga, *Specific Traits of Present Day Soviet Propaganda*, typescript, [19]60, n.p.

¹⁴¹ HIA, NGW, box 3, fol. 12, R. Wraga to P. Tango, n.p., 29 June 1963, copy, n.p.

¹⁴² Announced in 1983, the 'Star Wars' programme was a propaganda term for a missile defence system designed to protect the US from ballistic nuclear missile attack.

¹⁴³ John Dziak's account in the author's private archive.

¹⁴⁴ A.P. Martynov, *Moia Sluzhba v Otdel'nom Korpuse Zhandarmov: Vospominaniia*, ed. R. Wraga (Stanford, 1972).

effect of these influences upon the views supported by Western services regarding the political, economic, and military potential of communism, its strategy and policies.

The project will therefore define:

1. The main misinformation objectives and the direction of their attack;
2. The principal misinformation centers and the channels used;
3. The tools employed by misinformation services (press, radio, literature, scholarly centers, political and social groups and organizations, etc.), and their potential;
4. The role of official communist misinformation in forming official and public opinion within “capitalist” countries;
5. The distortion of developments by misinformation and the influence of these distortions upon Western policies toward communism.

Research will include a study on the broadest scale of all official and non-official material available in the West and relating to communist countries (literary, newspapers, radio, TV, etc.; scholarly publications, organization bulletins, and the like). Particular attention will be paid to Russian, Chinese, English, Spanish, French, and German language material.¹⁴⁵

Such a precisely defined scope of research and research objectives can scarcely be found at that time, as well as today, in the programs and grants for researchers and NGOs focused on identifying Russian disinformation. Unfortunately, all too often in research into contemporary Russia, the wheel gets to be reinvented again and again, with researchers doing all the analytical work from scratch, as if certain mechanisms had not been identified before. Without questioning the achievements of modern analytics, it is nevertheless worth being aware of the legacy and achievements in this field from the Cold War period. For Wręga, historical knowledge (excellent knowledge of sources and literature on the subject) was the basis for discerning some universal models of Russian/Soviet influence. Without proper preparation it is impossible to succeed in analyzing modern Russia. Unfortunately, historical knowledge is too often ignored, which frequently reinforces disinformation.

Wręga consistently tried to infect the CIA leadership with his views on the methods of Soviet influence, the USSR's strategy, and the relationship between the various members of the Communist Bloc. He was undoubtedly helped by his wife Natalie in getting through to the most important people (regardless of the Americans' appreciation of the high level of his expertise in Soviet affairs). It is worth noting that, apart from George Kennan, who may have received some Wręga material through Natalie – though there is no evidence of this for the time being – her friends included Raymond Rocca, a close associate of James Angleton, appointed in 1954 by Allen W. Dulles, head of the CIA in 1953–1961, chief of the CIA's newly created Counter-Intelligence Staff. Angleton selected Rocca to head the Research and Analysis Department. Wręga's material was read by at least the

¹⁴⁵ JPIA, Włodzimierz Bączkowski Archive, 350, R. Wręga, *Communist Misinformation Services, Their Techniques, Methods, and Role in Distorting Western Vision of Strategic Communist Potential*, Hoover Institution, 19 March 1967, n.p.

CIA's deputy head of counterintelligence, Rocca,¹⁴⁶ and it is highly likely that it was also read by Angleton. In any case, Angleton's view on the issue of Soviet deception was similar to the position of Wraga and Grant, who were pioneers in this regard and were not part of the US analytical mainstream. This makes the flow of certain concepts between them and the head of the CIA's counterintelligence plausible.

We know from accounts of former US special service officers that there was a group of officers who worked with Grant and Wraga. Among the issues discussed in this group particularly worthy of note the hitherto unknown operation of the 'East' Desk of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, which consisted in providing Stalin with material incriminating Nikolai Yezhov, who headed the NKVD in 1936–1938,¹⁴⁷ was the main executor of the Great Purge, and who was officially convicted of, among other things, collaborating with Polish and German intelligence. Although this information has not been corroborated so far by the documents known to historians, it is consistent with Wraga's way of thinking (referring to the case of the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, Vsevolod Balitsky, he wrote, "I remember how at that time there were rumors, spread by the Red press, that Balitsky was a Polish agent. This was not true, but I cannot deny that, entangled in his own labyrinth of intrigues and double games, sometimes thinking he was acting for the benefit of his party, he was doing exactly what we expected him to be doing"),¹⁴⁸ but also, more broadly, with the methods of Polish intelligence service, which used deception as well, a fact that is rarely mentioned.

Wraga was also in direct contact with the CIA Director Allen W. Dulles himself, whom he held in high esteem, albeit not without criticism, unlike in the case of his successor John Alex McCone, about whom he wrote in a letter to General Władysław Anders: "Even our weakest Second Department chiefs were better prepared in this respect [tactics and operational technique]". It was to Dulles, even though he was no longer director of the CIA, and not to McCone, that Wraga passed on the information about the existence of a staff coordinating the operations of the Soviet Union, Mongolia, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and Vietnam.

In answering the question about Wraga's influence on the perception of the USSR by US special services and the US administration, we would also need to examine Grant's influence. One obstacle in this respect is the lack of access to some of her documents, which remain classified due, presumably, to her work for the State Department and her close contact with the CIA's counterintelligence.

¹⁴⁶ The Rocca Archive contains numerous materials by N. Grant and R. Wraga; HGARC, Rocca Raymond, box 13–14.

¹⁴⁷ Account of a former US special service officer in the author's private archive.

¹⁴⁸ Extract from the memoirs of Ryszard Wraga published in H. Kuromiya, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (Ryszard Wraga) and the Polish Intelligence in the Soviet Union in the 1930s', *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*, 22, no. 4 (2021), p. 199.



5. Natalia Grant-Wraga, State Department official, expert on Soviet affairs (Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Natalie Grant Wraga Papers)

above all, the style of thinking about the methods of Soviet influence which she and Ryszard had were being passed on to young students of US counterintelligence.

Richard and Natalie's work can be found in the output of such important figures involved in counterintelligence and the fight against communist sabotage as Raymond Rocca, deputy head of the CIA's counterintelligence; Herbert Romerstein; writer Julius Epstein – like Wraga, assistant to Stephan Possny – Paul B. Henze, CIA agent and American broadcaster of Radio Free Europe; Bertram D. Wolfe, a friend of Wraga's and author of biographies of Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky; Jay Lovestone, anti-communist activist, CIA collaborator, and foreign policy adviser to the AFL-CIO leadership.

Some of their material was also discussed within the Consortium For The Study of Intelligence, set up in 1979 by the think tank National Strategy Information Center, with which Rocca and Dziak were associated.¹⁴⁹ The use of Wraga's output after his death is also evidenced by a declassified CIA study of Wraga's key published papers on the 'Trust' case.¹⁵⁰ Thanks to Rocca and Dziak as well as a number

Natalie and Ryszard formed a harmonious tandem. We know from various accounts as well as surviving correspondence that some of the articles signed solely by Natalie were, in fact, the fruit of the couple's joint work.¹⁴⁹ After Ryszard's death, Natalie continued to explore the subject of Soviet deception in her own research, drawing on his analytical legacy. She lived to the age of 101, retaining her mental clarity until the end, despite her deteriorating eyesight, which significantly hampered her scholarly activity. In the late 1960s, through Rocca, she met John Dziak, co-founder and co-director of the strategic intelligence master's program at the Defence Intelligence School, where she taught until 1970s. Thus, the knowledge and findings and,

¹⁴⁹ An example is 'A Thermidor Amalgam', signed by Natalie but submitted on their behalf to the *Russian Review* by Wraga; HIA, NGW, box 3, fol. 2, R. Wraga to D. von Mohrenschildt, Washington DC, 13 Jan. 1963, copy, n.p.

¹⁵⁰ *Bibliography on Soviet Intelligence and Security Services*, ed. R.G. Rocca, J.J. Dziak et al. (Boulder, 1985).

¹⁵¹ *The Trust*, ed. P.K. Simpkins, K. Leigh Dyer (Alexandria, VA, 1989) (originally prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency).

of other US special service personnel who knew Natalie and Richard, it is possible to speak of a certain generational continuity in the way Soviet influence operations and counterintelligence methods were interpreted. As Dziak emphasized, Natalie was happy to welcome Defense Intelligence Agency trainees and former special service officers who were still active in the security sector to her home in Lovettsville. In 1988, Dziak published a celebrated monograph entitled *Chekisty: A History of the KGB*, which had been carefully read by Natalie before the publication.¹⁵² Natalie gave part of her archive to Dziak, who, together with his wife Carol, Herbert Romerstein (his good friend), and his wife Pat, sorted through the materials. Some of Wraga's documentation was lost due to its poor condition, but what was saved eventually ended up in the Hoover Institution (Natalie had already transferred some of Wraga's materials to the Hoover Institution in 1968).

According to Dziak, both he and Rocca faced attempts to discredit their research on Soviet deception, and their acquaintance with the Wragas was regarded as incriminating – until the Russian aggression against Ukraine. After the Russian aggression against Crimea and the Donbas, as if in response to the intensified activity of Russian secret services using active measures, the demand for studies on Russian methods of influence returned. It was most likely no coincidence that 2015 saw the reissue of Rocca's 1990 study *The Trust*, in which he made numerous references to the findings of the Polish expert.¹⁵³ Wraga's studies are classics that are also still cited in the works of military school students.¹⁵⁴

In 2020, Leopolis Press published Natalie's monograph *Disinformation. Soviet Political Warfare 1917–1992*, which, according to the foreword written by Professor John Dziak, summarises the joint output of Grant and Wraga (the first version of the book was written while Wraga was still alive).¹⁵⁵ This is undoubtedly corroborated by the legacy of the American Sovietologist, which shows how closely she worked with her husband on these matters and how extensively she used the materials he left behind. This was facilitated by the fact that, after moving to the US, probably for his wife's sake, Wraga wrote all his notes and studies mainly in Russian. Both after his death and after Natalie's passing, extensive tributes were published in major American newspapers, which also confirms their position among experts dealing with the USSR.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² John Dziak's account in the author's private archive.

¹⁵³ R.G. Rocca, *The Trust* (Washington, DC, 1990; reissued in April 2015).

¹⁵⁴ S.A. Harris, 'The Trust: The Classic Example of Soviet Manipulation', Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, CA, 1985); D.J. Atherton, 'From Trust to Treachery: Unravelling Soviet Intelligence Tactics in the 1920s and 1930s', Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, CA, 2023).

¹⁵⁵ N. Grant, *Disinformation. Soviet Political Warfare 1917–1992* (Washington, 2020), p. XX. In this context, it is also worth quoting Bączkowski's words: "He left a manuscript of a book, a mass of notes, and texts of lectures. His wife is planning to publish the book, but after a while: the book still needs a lot of editing", LIK, Editorial Correspondence, W. Bączkowski to J. Giedroyc, n.p., 5 Feb. 1968, p. 210.

¹⁵⁶ Among the dozens of tributes and obituaries published in the European and American press, particularly worthy of note is an article from *The New York Times*: 'Richard Wraga, Espionage

It is impossible to discuss within the scope of a single article all of Wraga's important contacts with influential figures from the American scholarly, analytical, administrative, and political circles. It is worth mentioning, however, that among the people Wraga met and had more than incidental contact with were Colonel Ulius Louis Amoss (staff member of the OSS, then of the private intelligence organization International Service of Information Foundation, Inc.), Admiral Arleigh Burke (director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University), Robert Dickson Crane (also associated with CSIS, from 1969 Deputy Director (for Planning) of the National Security Council), Lieutenant Colonel Dana Durand (in 1949 head of the CIA base in Berlin, then working in the Office of Special Operations in Washington from 1950), Gainse Post (professor of history at Princeton from 1964 to 1970), Pier Haas (entrepreneur who recommended Wraga to George Leisure, partner of William J. Donovan, the head of the OSS and founder of the CIA, who ran the prestigious law firm Donovan, Leisure, Newton since 1929), Loy W. Henderson (former US ambassador to Iran), and Warren Stassel (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State).

Conclusion

Wraga was preparing to summarize his output, dispersed over several books and over 1500 articles and pamphlets,¹⁵⁷ when he died on 30 January 1968. Włodzimierz Bączkowski considered his analytical legacy to be so important that he wanted to write a book about him, *Richard Wraga on Russia and Communism, 1931–1967*. "The book would illustrate his research, methods, and thoughts on the events and problems of Russia and world communism during the period in question. It [...] would serve as a valuable source for the American foreign service officers, intelligence officers, journalists, and researchers dealing with Russia and communism. It would also warn the reader against naive views and conclusions that do not take into account the specific nature of Soviet affairs".¹⁵⁸ In the end, Bączkowski

Expert. Chief of Poland's Russian Desk Before War Dies', *The New York Times*, 1 Feb. 1968; 'Natalie Grant Wraga Dies at 101. Expert on Soviet Disinformation', *The Washington Post*, 14 Nov. 2002; 'Natalie Grant Wraga, an expert on Russia, died on Nov. 12th, aged 101', *The Economist*, 21 Nov. 2002. 'Natalie Wraga, 101; U.S. Expert on Soviet Disinformation', *Los Angeles Times*, 18 Nov., 2002. One year before Natalie's death *The Washington Post* (28 Feb. 2001) published an article about her, 'A Worldly And Wise Woman's 100 Years. Natalie Wraga's Life: The Stuff of History'. Herbert Romerstein dedicated to her ('This essay is dedicated to Natalie Wraga, 100 years old, who taught us to understand Soviet disinformation') his essay 'Disinformation as a KGB Weapon in the Cold War' (*Journal of Intelligence History*, no. 1 (2001), pp. 54–67).

¹⁵⁷ W. Bączkowski, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (R. Wraga) 1902–1968', *Niepodległość* (Londyn–Nowy Jork, 1990), vol. 23, p. 108.

¹⁵⁸ JPIA, Włodzimierz Bączkowski Archive, W. Bączkowski to [J. Burnham], draft letter, n.p., n.d. fol. 36.

managed to publish only an extensive biographical sketch.¹⁵⁹

Until the 1960s, Wraga was one of the best-known and most influential Polish Sovietologists, although his views were not in line with the analytical and scientific mainstream.¹⁶⁰ In order to ridicule his often highly accurate observations, Wraga's opponents coined the term 'Wragizm', which was intended to be a synonym for the demonization of the Kremlin's actions.¹⁶¹ A different opinion on the Polish expert was that of the special services of the Polish People's Republic and the USSR, which approached him with respect, regarding him as a dangerous individual. Wraga was included in the 'List of Poles active in organizations and institutions engaged in propaganda, ideological sabotage, and psychological warfare', compiled at Warsaw's Ministry of the Internal Affairs. When drawing up a list of Polish Sovietologists, the Security Service singled him out with the following comment: 'Wraga-Niezbrzycki Richard is one of the more prominent scientists at the [Hoover] Institution. He deals with the Soviet Union'.¹⁶² Communist agents even attributed to him a key role in organizing anti-communist propaganda and sabotage, without, however, having precise knowledge of his role or contacts, either within the Polish émigré community or regarding his cooperation with the French and Americans.¹⁶³ John Dziak has also stressed that



6. Włodzimierz Bączkowski, Promethean activist and expert on Soviet affairs (Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, New York, Włodzimierz Bączkowski Archive)

¹⁵⁹ W. Bączkowski, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (R. Wraga)'.

¹⁶⁰ James Burnham explained the rejection of the article submitted by Wraga to *National Review* by citing a lack of space and the fact that the periodical worked only with regular collaborators. As a result, Wraga was able to write only reviews for scholarly journals; they were, however, qualitatively far superior to the articles published in them; LIK, PoJG, 08.04, Niezbrzycki, confidential, vol. 1, J. [Niezbrzycki] to [J. Laskowski], n.p., 4 Apr. 1962, p. 23, n.p.; LIK, PoJG, 08.04, Niezbrzycki, confidential, vol. 2, J. Burnham to R. Wraga, Kent, 4 Apr. 1962, n.p.

¹⁶¹ LIK, Rejected Materials, 1989/0044, W. Bączkowski, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (R. Wraga)', p. 42.

¹⁶² Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance; hereinafter IPN), 01334.649, List of Poles active in organisations and institutions engaged in propaganda, ideological sabotage and psychological warfare, Library of the Bureau 'C' of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, [compiled between 1964 and 1968], n.p.

¹⁶³ "Capt. Niezbrzycki, hating Russia with all his soul, because he lost his entire family in Ukraine during the revolution. Very capable, ruthless, fine expert on Soviet relations. Using the

the defectors from the USSR whom he had the opportunity to meet were aware of the work of Natalie and Ryszard Wraga, who were treated with respect.¹⁶⁴ That the Soviet special services tried to monitor Wraga's activities is evidenced by the fact that in 1947 his pre-war studies, articles, and broadcasts were collected in a single file kept in the Russian State Military Archive, still classified as "to be issued only with the permission of the management".¹⁶⁵

There was probably no other more active Polish expert who, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, had such extensive contacts in the American expert community, including direct contact with undoubtedly the most important people in the CIA's intelligence and counterintelligence. Wraga's knowledge and his perception of the specificity of Soviet operations influenced the US counterintelligence's understanding of these matters, at least under Angleton's and Rocca's leadership. However, Wraga was under no illusion that even such high-ranking individuals in the analytical services and institutions had limited power to influence the way the USSR was perceived by politicians. To what did he attribute this state of affairs? The problem was multifaceted and rooted in history, which in the eighteenth century pushed Central and Eastern Europe into oblivion at the expense of the rise of imperialisms – Russian and German. The false picture of history and international relations was compounded even more after the Bolsheviks' rise to power. Niezbrzycki stressed that in the West, inappropriate people – former communists, collaborators, poputchiks, dissidents, nevozvrashchentsy ('non-returners'), propagators of the 'new faith', Trotskyists, ordinary agents of the Soviet political police – "all exert an undue influence on the formation of Western opinions on Bolshevism".¹⁶⁶

The problem of the perception of Central and Eastern Europe in the US and the possible influence that Central and Eastern European experts had in this field was well described by Włodzimierz Bączkowski:

In general, the public is poorly informed, but when it comes to the elite, things are better. In any case, the Americans skillfully use the expertise and experience of the people from that region. I myself was a consultant at the Library of Congress, my friend Ryszard

pseudonym 'Wraga', under which in 1939 he gave anti-Soviet radio lectures, prompting a diplomatic intervention from Soviet Russia, he currently resides in Italy. It would be extremely strange, if those mentioned above were not only not involved in this campaign, though not as its leaders, but very likely its spiritual authors", IPN, 01419.79 Jacket, Tadeusz Likiernik, 'W sprawie kierownictwa dywersji z ramienia Rządu Londyńskiego', [1945/1946], scan 96. Agents were also aware of Wraga's links to the B.E.I.P.I., even attributing to him the initiative in setting up the *Bulletin* (see the exchange of correspondence on this matter within the Ministry of Public Security, IPN 01418/81/D, fol. 1–13).

¹⁶⁴ John Dziak's account in the author's private archive.

¹⁶⁵ Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyi Voyennyi Archiv (RGVA), 308-3-253a. Material made available to the author courtesy of Dr Paweł Libera.

¹⁶⁶ R. Wraga, 'America and the Soviet Union', *Eastern Quarterly*, 4, no. 4 (1951), pp. 2–10; HIA, NGW, 7.7, R. Wraga to N. Grant, [Londyn], [3 Aug.] 1955, n.p.

Wraga-Niebrzycki serve the local elite with his knowledge. He was exceptionally well-versed in the matter, analyzing and writing extensively about it. It was only after emigrating that he developed his writing and political science skills. Thanks to the work and dedication of people like him, the situation is better.¹⁶⁷

Wraga saw the West's main weakness in its lack of a positive agenda. Ronald Reagan did have such an (offensive) agenda – which is why the USSR ultimately lost. It is worth bearing in mind that some of Wraga's American acquaintances found themselves in senior positions in the presidential administration at the time. In addition to them, the president's stance towards the USSR was strongly influenced by Richard Pipes, an eminent American scholar of Polish-Jewish origin, who studied Russia, and, although he denied that his research was influenced by Prof. Jan Kucharczowski, had a view remarkably close to the concept developed by the 'father' of Polish Sovietology. Although Wraga and Pipes may not have met in person, they were familiar with each other's publications. Wraga's 1950s recommendations, in which he argued that the West, in order to defend itself against the expansion of the USSR and communism, had to resort to methods of more offensive influence, were reflected to some extent in Reagan's policy.

The most distinctive trait of Russian, and then Soviet, statehood was provocation, permeating the entire state and society, which, to this day, makes many events and processes that took place in the USSR and are taking place in contemporary Russia incomprehensible to Western observers. For example, the counterintelligence operation 'Trust', prepared by the VChK-OGPU, was based on reassuring Western intelligence services (including Polish intelligence service) that they were in contact with the powerful Monarchist Organization of Central Russia for as long as it was necessary owing to the current disinformation strategy, which during the New Economic Policy (NEP) era presented the USSR as a weak and harmless state, which allowed the Bolsheviks to consolidate their power. Similarly, after the Second World War – although in this case we can only rely on circumstantial evidence – the USSR pretended to believe that the NTS, which was cooperating with the CIA, was a serious organization, while in fact it was all an elaborate hoax (the Americans thought that the Soviets believed in their largely fictitious organization, while, in fact, the Soviets were aware of the Russian organization's real capabilities, but did not, however, correct the Americans' mistake because of the useful role played by the NTS for the USSR). Finally, it is worth citing an example from the twenty-first century. In 2018, there was an unprecedented warming of relations between Washington and Minsk, followed by elections in Belarus, which were marked by previously unheard-of protests and electoral fraud leading to the extension of Lukashenko's rule for another term. The atmosphere

¹⁶⁷ 'Benefis polityki federacyjnej – Rozmowa z Włodzimierzem Bączkowskim', an interview by Janusz Cisek, https://www.omp.org.pl/stareomp/index71ea.php?module=subjects&func=print_page&pageid=21&scope=page (accessed: 30 June 2025).

created around the elections was to suggest that it was the West, especially Poland, that interfered in the Belarusian elections in order to shift the blame for the deterioration of Warsaw-Minsk relations to Poland. Yet it is highly likely that Lukashenko's flirtation with the West was conducted with Moscow's permission in order to distract the West from the preparations for a war in Ukraine, giving the false impression that some success could be achieved in the East through diplomatic efforts. Similarly, today the reset the Americans are trying to achieve with Minsk may be a function of Russian policy, which needs this illusion in order not to provoke the US into resuming arms supplies to Ukraine and, at the same time, to lull the Americans into a false sense of security before, presumably, another strike, which will come at a geopolitically opportune moment and surprise the West again.

So how can we deal with a reality that looks like a hall of distorting mirrors, not reflecting Moscow's true objectives and intentions? Wraga's writings provide a series of largely still relevant methodological recommendations that can also be applied to the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, which are run by the same communist elites as half a century ago, in the case of Russia, even more dangerous than before, since they come – like Putin – primarily from the Soviet security apparatus.

According to the Polish expert, the following should be done in the field of analysis and counterintelligence:

1. become familiar with sources on Russian history and literature on the subject (even seemingly distant operations like 'Trust' must still serve as a point of reference);
2. understand the specific nature of operations, different from those of the Western special services, in which gathering information constitutes only a small part of the work of special services using the so-called active measures (among the techniques used, Wraga mentioned "distorting and exaggerating actual facts, encouraging wishful thinking and fantastical opinions, redirecting conclusions, and omitting important events"¹⁶⁸);
3. know the geographical and historical context (Russia's relations with neighboring countries and peoples);
4. analyze each Russian document/statement or article in the context of the current international situation, in terms of when and how a given piece was published (falsify documents by examining whether they may indeed have been leaked uncontrollably under the circumstances);
5. not to allow Russian émigrés to participate in the shaping of policy towards Moscow, because even if they are opposed to the regime, the imperial baggage they carry will always lead them to try to protect the empire, which renders any policy towards the USSR ineffective;

¹⁶⁸ JPIA, Włodzimierz Bączkowski Archive, 350, R. Wraga, *Communist Misinformation Services*.

6. treat with great caution the *nevozvrashchentsy*, dissidents, deserters, and fugitives of all kinds who come forward with offers of political and intelligence cooperation;
7. be aware of the permanence of Russian expansion in all its varieties (tsarist, Soviet or the current one represented by the formally democratic Russian Federation). The lack of defined boundaries of that expansion means that any deal with Moscow is temporary, valid until Moscow gets the opportunity to expand its borders and spheres of influence;
8. be careful not to limit analysts and experts to justifying the actions of politicians – this leads to degeneration and dulling of the minds of those responsible for analytical work (analyses should be the basis for decision-making, and to this end, it is also necessary to involve research centers in the cognitive process);
9. pay attention to the vocabulary used by the opponent; it is very dangerous to unconsciously adopt terms used for specific purposes by the opponent (an example Wraga repeatedly cited was Eurasia, a political concept that entered the scholarly discourse in the West; today a good example is the term 'hybrid warfare', coined in the West but popularized by the Russians in order to create a new type of intermediate state between internal crisis and war, in order, for example, to circumvent treaty provisions obliging allies to provide assistance to each other).

Sound analysis and good counterintelligence, are, in Wraga's view, the starting point for ensuring state security. However, victory can only be achieved if Russia's extremely aggressive actions are counteracted by its opponents' offensive actions, especially in the information domain. In this context, he believed that:

1. The West's starting point should be to create a better alternative world order in which human beings are treated as subjects (which is why any attempts to establish strategic cooperation between the Euro-Atlantic bloc and Russia or China are counterproductive, as they show that Moscow and Beijing, which are extremely anti-humanitarian, are the bloc's points of reference, which makes the West unreliable in the eyes of potential allies).
2. Hostile disinformation can only be combatted by the West's own offensive information influence (the West should look for the enemy's weak points, such as social conflicts, conflicts within the ruling elite, religious and ethnic conflicts – Russia is not a monolith).
3. Moscow's sabotage campaign can be weakened only by generating analogous problems on Russian territory, so that Moscow cannot keep up with problems within its own state, or in its relations with its allies (this must encompass all forms of sabotage, including "propaganda, agitation, political and moral sabotage, spread of demagogic, provocation against the Soviet apparatus, disinformation, and inspiration").
4. Every form of Russian statehood is a continuation of the previous one, but it would be a tactical mistake to condemn the entire Russian society for that

(it should be actively influenced, but emigrants from areas under Russian influence should not be allowed to co-create this strategy, owing to the risk of provocation and demoralization by the idea of an imperial Russia that continues to develop in an increasingly dark and threatening direction).

5. The costs of a 'Cold War' will always be lower than the expenses associated with permanent military mobilization, and this is what contemporary Russia seeks, as it hopes for a global economic crisis and the collapse of Western economies, which would exacerbate internal problems of Western countries ("Only the most expensive intelligence and sabotage produce the right results [...] only brutal methods, both in politics and in sabotage can prevent the Soviet Union [and today's Russian Federation – Ł.D.] from moving to a policy of direct aggression").

The current US administration, although offering some positive agenda of a revival/return to the roots of Euro-Atlantic civilization, its traditional values like freedom, justice, and rationalism, does not seem to fully recognize the threat to this agenda from not only international left-wing organizations (traditionally influenced by Russia), or the extensive network of Chinese influence, but also Russian disinformation as well as actors supporting it, such as Belarus, acting as a proxy for Moscow in its sabotage operations against the West. Over several decades of its existence, the Russian Federation has created a false image of its society as a bastion of rationality, tradition, religion, and conservatism. Leaving aside the fact that Russia could probably compete only with China for supremacy in enslaving its own citizens, it should be noted – after Wraga – that both countries pursue the same goal with regard to the US: they want to isolate it internationally. This happens despite the fact that they follow different strategies and differ in their political objectives; ideologically, however, they have a great deal in common.

This includes, above all, their shared hostility to democratic systems as a better, and thus dangerous, alternative to the Russian and Chinese regimes. Democracy in the classic sense (without additional qualifiers such as socialist or liberal) is the antithesis of the vision of totalitarian societies, that is, those in which complete control has been introduced, without freedom of thought and spiritual life. To use a term coined by the famous Russian writer Dmitry Merezhkovsky in relation to Soviet Russia, the current Russian Federation perhaps deserves the title of the Empire of Antichrist even more, given its even more radical contempt for human beings, and the fact that at the same time it completely masks its evil intentions and presents reality in a distorted manner, which it demonstrates on a daily basis by waging a war not only against the Ukrainian people, but against the entire Western civilization, interfering in the internal affairs of countries like the US, Spain, Germany, and Poland.

In playing a tactical game with Russia, Washington must bear in mind the damage to its image that could translate into a real loosening of alliance ties,

something Moscow is constantly working on. At the critical moment, Europe will stand alongside the US, as it is, in a sense, the root of American civilization. It is worth adding that these roots have already been severely undermined by Russia, as has been recognized by the new American administration, which is rightly attempting to draw a clear line between freedom and democracy on the one hand, and ideology and censorship on the other. This is a good starting point for the consolidation of Europe and, consequently, the failure of Russian imperial aspirations, which can only be satisfied in the face of a moral and spiritual decay of the West. It is, therefore, only fair to repeat the view expressed by the first NATO Secretary General, Lord Ismay, a view shared by many Polish émigré analysts, including Wraga: "keep the Americans in, Russians out, and the Germans down".

Abstract

Jerzy Antoni Niezbrzycki (1902–1968) was the longest-serving head of the 'East' Desk of the Second Department of the General Staff (1931–1939). Using the pseudonym Ryszard Wraga in most cases, he authored more than 1,500 articles, several hundred classified analyses, hundreds of lectures, and radio programs in which he sought to provide reliable information on the specificity of the Soviet system and the communist threat. The aim of this article is to shed light on his work as an analyst, with a particular focus on his activities among US academics and analysts, including representatives of the US special services and administration. From 1950 onwards, Niezbrzycki was in regular, though informal, contact with the US special services. Among his contacts were James Burnham, Allen Dulles (head of the CIA), Raymond Rocca (James Angleton's deputy), and Stefan Possony, the future originator of the Star Wars program. The stature of Niezbrzycki's contacts suggests that his expertise and commitment had a significant impact on the knowledge of some of the American (and not only American) elites involved in the analysis and reconnaissance of the USSR. It is worth stressing that he was a pioneer in the field of Soviet disinformation research. His achievements in the study of the strategy of the communist bloc and methods of aggression during peacetime, achievements partly shared with the American expert on Soviet affairs and his wife, Natalie Grant-Wraga, are impressive and surprising in the novelty of their conclusions. Many of his observations, made more than half a century ago, remain relevant and useful for analyzing the modern-day Russian Federation. That is why it is worth bringing this figure back from obscurity, focusing on his recommendations for understanding Russian strategy and methods of countering Moscow's aggressive policy, which share features common to Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and the modern Russian Federation.

Translated by Anna Kijak

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