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The Liberal Capitalism and the System of „Real Socialism” in the Context of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński’s Personalist Concept of Socio-Political Life

Abstract

The presented article depicts the didactic and pastoral legacy of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in the context of liberal capitalism, as well as the ideology of „real socialism”, imposed on Poland in the post-war period, and their impact on the contemporary understanding of the Christian concept of socio-political life. The exploration of the above research will be based on the analysis of source texts and, consequently, the reconstruction of Cardinal Wyszyński’s social teaching and its reinterpretation using the inductive-deductive method. A more detailed analysis of the above doctrines and their critical reinterpretation allow not only to expose their shortcomings and defects. It also enables better awareness of the endangerments of ideologically motivated promotion of extreme, often distorted concepts of the human person in the modern world’s particular realities.

Keywords: capitalism, socialism, communism, individualism, personalism, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, anthropological error, „common good”.

Streszczenie

Liberalny kapitalizm i ideologia „realnego socjalizmu” w kontekście personalistycznej koncepcji życia społecznego Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie spuścizny dydaktyczno-pastoralnej Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w kontekście liberalnego kapitalizmu, jak też ideologii „realnego socjalizmu” mocno zakorzonego w systemie marksistowsko-leninowskim, narzuco-

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nym Polsce w okresie powojennym oraz ich wpływu na współczesne rozumienie chrześcijańskiej wizji życia społeczno-politycznego. Eksploracja powyższych badań będzie polegała na analizie tekstów źródłowych, a w konsekwencji rekonstrukcji nauczania społecznego Kardynała Wyszyńskiego i jego reinterpretacji metodą indukcyjno-dedukcyjną. Dokładniejsza analiza powyższych doktryn i ich krytyczna reinterpretacja pozwala nie tylko wykazać ich mankamenty i niedociągnięcia. Umożliwia to również lepsze uświadomienie, jakie niebezpieczeństwa pociąga za sobą ideologicznie motywowana promocja skrajnych, często zafalszowanych koncepcji osoby ludzkiej w konkretnych realiach współczesnego świata.

Słowa klucze: kapitalizm, socjalizm, komunizm, indywidualizm, personalizm, Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński, błąd antropologiczny, „dobro wspólne”.

Introduction

Catholic social teaching has never intended to create a „third way” between liberal capitalism and all sorts of socialist collectivism. Throughout her long history, however, the Church has coexisted with various models of political systems. Also today, she is trying to do so based on the fundamental principles of Christian ethics. Only in this way can the Catholic Church fulfill her prophetic mission and quest to transform contemporary and future social and political life models based on the gospel’s standards. In this way, the Church executes her prophetic function in the modern world, in which she considers it a duty to analytically look at the actual and proposed models of public life.

In this context, a critical analysis of socio-political systems is essential. By the way, it is understandable that their political „effectiveness” must take into account historical and geo-political circumstances. Moreover, the effectiveness of the ideology and strategies of systemic transformation depends on social support, socio-political as well as economic factors, and cultural conditions. Thus, new social life models – if they are to be realistic and politically effective can only arise within certain specific political and historical situations. Moreover, it is possible thanks to the commitment and effort of those people who responsibly undertake to solve specific human problems, taking into account their social, economic, political, and cultural aspects, which are closely related to each other.

Cardinal Wyszyński spoke in a similar vein. Although he saw the need to change public life structures, he did not consider it to be the primary and immediate task of the Church. Nor did he feel that he was called to change the state system. His criticism of the systemic issues in post-war Poland mainly concerned the anthropological and moral dimensions. The Primate was aware that if there was an appropriate moral order, then – necessarily – critical elements of the state’s political system would change. He has repeatedly spoken of a „so-

cial disposition” that would favor just social transformation. In his opinion, the social disposition should be based on the foundation of the Christian religion, which aims to transform the human heart. In this way, changed people become the right subject and base for the proper shaping of the common good².

Pointing out the errors that exist in a given social life system is primarily aimed at emphasizing even more fundamental principles on which social life should be based. There will probably be some deficiencies and errors in specific social systems related to the truth that these systems and structures are created by a man marked by tears and therefore capable of sin. In this light, the Church’s prophetic and critical function will always be needed.

In Wyszyński’s teaching, one can also notice the criticism of liberal capitalism, mostly understood in terms of the so-called „Comprador capitalism”³. Today, many critics of liberal concepts emphasize that the capitalist economic system is fundamentally incompatible with modern economic programs and the so-called „planetary” ecosystem. In their opinion, the world economy is based on limited material resources. In their view, the capitalist economic model is based on the paradigm of „infinite” economic growth. Therefore, if nature’s laws cannot be changed, the approach to fundamental issues related to the world economy’s functioning system must be thoroughly revised⁴. In practice, this means the debunking of the most essential „myths” rooted in the current economic and political systems based on the principles of liberal capitalism⁵.

² Cf. S. S. Wyszyński, *Czas to miłość. Podczas uroczystości Wniebowzięcia Matki Bożej* (Jasna Góra, 15. 08. 1979), [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, ODISS, Warszawa, p. 889-891.

³ Marxists used the above term to describe a group of natives in colonial countries who, in return for collaborating with metropolises, were rewarded with economic privileges and created a narrow, privileged layer. This enclave was precisely called „comprador capitalism.” It differs from ordinary capitalism. In typical capitalism, access to the market and the possibilities of functioning on the market are determined by personal characteristics such as entrepreneurship, diligence, and agility – while in „comprador capitalism,” this is primarily determined by belonging to „power structures”. Cf. H. Chisholm, *Comprador*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, [in:] https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A4dia_Britannica/Comprador (derived December, 26 2020).

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 55.

⁵ In this context, the Cardinal stated: „I cannot agree to the traditional division into capitalist and collectivist schools. When it comes to these two directions: capitalist and collectivist, I believe there is no difference. Everything is on one side. However, the proletariat is not yet liberated (...). Man is not respected yet. He is still a slave, to the state, then to the matter. But it does not change the form of things, to whom it is a slave: gold, matter or the state” (S. Wyszyński, *Moc żywej wiary w ciężkiej sytuacji Kościoła. Do duchowieństwa w Gdańsku 23. 11. 1960*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 166).

In terms of the so-called „incomplete” systemic concepts, Cardinal Wyszyński had in mind not only liberal capitalism (especially in its original Comprador form) but mainly materialist collectivism Marxist-Leninist version. According to him, both systems turned out to be ineffective, of course, to a different extent. In other words, neither one nor the other political and economic concept has met society’s hopes and expectations⁶. „The fact that communist states based their economy on the capitalist labor system is simply the fruit of the derivative of collectivism with capitalism. It is their original sin. For both systems arise from the same materialistic philosophy, both practically proclaim the primacy of things over the person – and both do not effectively defend man against the demon of technocratism who has put himself at the service of economics against human rights”⁷.

Thus, a slightly closer look at radical concepts of social life allows us to understand better the danger of distorting the state’s systemic vision and understand the elements of falsification of the above ideologies⁸.

1. Capitalism: Liberalism, Individualism and the Primacy of *Homo Oeconomicus*

Although Catholic social thought refers to market concepts practically from the beginning of its reflection, Leo XIII’s encyclical „*Rerum Novarum*” (1891) is the first formal response of the Church’s Magisterium to the involvement of Christians in contemporary liberal political and economic concepts. In this context, Catholic social teaching has developed a wide range of official Church statements. The above teaching forms the perspective in which the fundamental issues relating to contemporary economic concepts based on the assumptions of liberal capitalism fit⁹.

⁶ S. Wyszyński, *Nasze dezyderaty. Do profesorów katolickiej nauki społecznej. (Jasna Góra, 22. 01. 1963, [in:] Nauczanie społeczne, p. 196.*

⁷ *Problem pracy górników w Polsce. List do księdza biskupa Herberta Bednorza 2. 02. 1978, [in:] Nauczanie społeczne, p. 810-811.*

⁸ *Moc żywej wiary w ciężkiej sytuacji Kościoła, p. 167.*

⁹ As Cardinal S. Wyszyński states: „Today, after years of various hardships and efforts, we notice that it is not enough to” save „only the economy and production because new situations are emerging, showing new tasks. Modern development no longer follows the question line: what do you have, what do you have, and what do you lack? Rather, we ask: who are you? What is your value? What do you bring to your family, work, social, economic, and religious life? A new problem emerges – not so much of one system or another, but of a human being. The point is that a person, to whom the organization of economic life and production technology helps to master the world, should not be enslaved by the conditions of dependent work” (S. Wyszyński, *Duch*

Even so, liberal capitalism has created a diversified system in which both positive and negative effects can be seen. Many difficulties in the proper diagnosis of the existing problems are associated with the dilemma of defining capitalism as a political and economic system. Moreover, classical capitalism tended to present the human person as a kind of „by-product” of human labor and – consequently – to distort the theological perspective and the fundamental goals of economics in the context of the human person’s needs and requirements. On the other hand, as an essential component of liberal capitalism, extreme individualism essentially opposes the principle of solidarity and directly affects the Church’s teaching community dimension. An important example of this is the activity of large corporations, which not only pose a threat to local economic initiatives but also undermine the principle of subsidiarity¹⁰.

In this sense, classical compadre’s capitalism, in particular, tended to devalue the human person only to the dimension of a kind of product: the labor process’s product. Also today, it tends to distort and distort the theological sense of economic activity understood as a service for the integral satisfaction of human and community needs. Additionally, extreme methodological individualism directly opposes the principle of solidarity. It may also lead to a depreciation of the community dimension of involvement in socio-political life. In practice, large corporations often seek to marginalize – and consequently – liquidate local economic activity. Admittedly, this may not be an essential feature of capitalism. Nevertheless, efforts to monopolize the market pose a severe threat to local economic initiatives, as well as the principle of subsidiarity¹¹.

This kind of action can be observed mainly in the case of such post-communist countries as Poland. Generally speaking, the Eastern Bloc state’s systemic transformation was associated with the introduction of a particular type of capitalism, which entailed many negative consequences both in the sphere of social and political life, as well as economical. In other words, the systemic transformation of post-communist countries took over many controversial concepts

Ewangelii w organizacji życia społeczno-zawodowego i publicznego w Polsce. Do wiernych w archikatedrze warszawskiej 6. 01. 1978, [in:] Nauczanie społeczne, p. 802).

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, distinguished the so-called „Early capitalism” from the so-called „Reformed capitalism. Overall, this corresponds to the distinction between the so-called „economy of early capitalism” and the economic concept of Keynes. In other words, „(...) the error of primitive capitalism can repeat itself wherever a person is treated, in a way, on an equal footing with the entire set of material means of production, as a tool, and not – as it corresponds to the proper dignity of his work – as the subject and agent, but through the same as the appropriate purpose of the entire production process” (*Laborem exercens*, no 7).

¹¹ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life: An Applied Analysis of the Theological Anthropology of Cardinal Stefan S. Wyszyński, Primate of Poland*, Toruń 2020, p. 113-118.

from the – broadly understood – capitalist system and applied them selectively and not always prudently, shaping its own model of the market economy¹².

In the case of Poland, the selectively treated capitalism as an implemented model of fumigation of socio-political and economic reality was characterized by many peculiar features, including the concept of „moral pluralism” inscribed in the idea of a world-neutral state, emphasis on the rapid modernization of economic infrastructure combined with hasty privatization fondness for the native tradition, or the lack of decommunization leading to the enfranchisement of the former communist nomenclature. The above version of the so-called „selective capitalism” also favored the libertine idea of moral permissiveness and reduced ethical norms only to the dimension of individual beliefs, which – in practice – should not affect the formation of social consciousness and national identity¹³.

After 1989, the idea of democratic participation in the state’s life as a fundamental principle of social and political life, as well as the concept of national unity and responsibility for the common good, was not implemented in most Central and Eastern European countries. However, much attention was paid to individualism, the particular interests of the beneficiaries of the systemic transformation, the activism of dissident social groups, as well as the emphasis on individual human and civil rights. This type of „new philosophy of peripheral democracy” made it difficult to start a substantive discussion on the fundamental issues related to the formation of the new socio-political system of the for-

¹² However, the Church’s social teaching has never ensured that adopting a Christian vision of morality would bring immediate positive economic effects. Economic criteria are not the only factors that should shape the methods and goals of economic activity. Economic development may periodically collide, for example, with respect for working people’s rights, with the principles of social solidarity, and finally with the national *raison d’état*, and even be associated with a threat to the independence and sovereignty of the state. Economics is not a god to whom man must fall to the dust. Nor is it the essential part of human life. The Christian economy is based on the „economic man” and not on things. Economic life, production and its methods and goals, exchange and paths, and distribution of social income, as well as consumption, should be organized and assessed in terms of human needs, both personal and social. (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna. Rozważania społeczne*, Poznań 1993, p. 320).

¹³ Cf. A. Kobyliński, *The Role of Solidarity in an Open Society*, in: *Europske konteksty interkulturalne komunikacije*, eds. Peter Ivanič, Martin Hetenyi and Zvonko Taneski, Nitra 2009, p. 141-142. „One should be surprised how even economic life is possible in the prevailing spirit of distrust, aversion and resistance. Therefore, care should be taken to expand the scope of cooperation between people and to establish direct contact so that relations at work become more and more human. Observance of Christian morality at work (...) The immorality of employers and the carelessness of workers, who have bad examples in their superiors’ lives, turn the workshop into a place of constant violation of God’s law. Therefore, it is necessary to fight the breakdown of the economy with ethics, the acquisition of wealth at any cost. You have to strive for the return of conscience to the factory. Finally – preservation and protection of social legislation” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 383-384).

mer Eastern Bloc countries, and also prevented the development of strategic political and economic goals for the state as a whole, shaping the national ethos and the hierarchy of values fundamental to democracy. In turn, it made it impossible to shape the social integration and national identity of citizens who were so heavily infected by the communist and, at the same time, socially destructive idea of *homo sovieticus*¹⁴.

In other words, „selective liberalism” sought to identify democracy with a specifically understood liberal ideology, and thus understood „liberalization” with the so-called „open society.” In practice, the proclaimed concept of „liberalism” created a peculiar synthesis of leftist views combined with a liberal, and even libertine ideology. Of course, this kind of „synthesis” also functions in Western democracies. It lacked the development of many essential elements characteristic of mature democratic systems. They included, among others, the idea of justice, which in the understanding of John Rawls is of fundamental importance. In this sense, „selective liberalism” in its Polish version can hardly be considered a classical liberal system based on ideological pluralism and free market principles. Nor is it political liberalism as understood by Rawls. In his opinion, the idea of justice and equality before the law, which are axiologically rooted in the Christian system of values, plays a significant role in this type of system. According to John Rawls, the generally accepted civic consensus goes far beyond the constitutional norms and principles characteristic of the rule of law. The basic civil consensus has a moral dimension¹⁵.

Modern market economy systems based on liberalism encompass a wide variety of schools and competing concepts. They include, among others: „Chicago school”¹⁶, „Austrian school”¹⁷, representatives of „Public Choice Theorists,”¹⁸

¹⁴ Cf. Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii*, Gdańsk 2003, p. 19: „Today – says Primate S. Wyszyński – after years of various hardships and efforts, we notice that it is not enough to” save „only the economy and production because new situations are emerging, showing new tasks. Modern development no longer follows the question line: what do you have, what do you have, and what do you lack? Rather, we ask: who are you? What is your value? What do you bring to your family, work, social, economic, and religious life? A new problem emerges – not so much of one system or another, but of a human being. The point is that a person, to whom the organization of economic life and production technology helps to master the world, should not be enslaved by the conditions of dependent work” (S. Wyszyński, *Naród-Kościół-państwo*, Kazanie świętokrzyskie 25.01.1976, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 707).

¹⁵ Cf. A. Kobyliński, *Post-Communism, Liberalism and Solidarity in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*, „Seminare” 39 (2018) 4, p. 112.

¹⁶ Cf. R. B. Emmett, *The Elgar Companion to the Chicago School of Economics*, Cheltenham, 2010.

¹⁷ Cf. H. Hagemann, T. Nishizawa, Y. Ikeda, *Austrian Economics in Transition: From Carl Menger to Friedrich Hayek*, London-New York 2010.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Behrends, *Neue Politische Ökonomie. Systematische Darstellung und kritische Beurteilung ihrer Entwicklungslinien*, München 2001; R. G. Holcombe, *The Median Voter Model in*

„institutional economists”¹⁹, monetarists²⁰, representatives of „Keynesian concept”²¹, „Georgism”²², distributionists²³, socialism²⁴, as well as other economic concepts related to the above ideas. Nevertheless, in the common understanding, political and economic liberalism issues are understood in the broad sense understood in terms of „neoclassical theory.” In other words, they refer to classical capitalist ideas, usually associated with the concepts of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, or other ideologues of the system from the 19th and early 20th centuries. By presenting the above ideas in the light of contemporary political and economic conditions, they usually ignore the fundamental Christian concepts referring to the thought of St. Thomas of Aquinas, Aristotle, or representatives of Christian personalism. This is especially important in the context of such vital issues as the concept of social justice or the idea of social solidarity²⁵.

By exposing this concept, the Catholic social teaching of the Church points to the achievements of not only Thomistic but also personalist thought. This is especially important now when social sciences, emphasizing the broadly understood „humanitarianism,” distance themselves from the idea of love and mercy as an essential principle of social life²⁶. Moreover, the concept of love, mercy, and compassion does not find practical recognition in contemporary sociological theories. It has insufficient importance in today’s psychology and modern

Public Choice Theory, „Public Choice” 61 (1989), p. 115–125.

¹⁹ Cf. K. W. Kapp, *The Foundations of Institutional Economics*, London-New York 2011.

²⁰ Cf. J. K. Galbraith, *Das Scheitern des Monetarismus. Von den Theorien Milton Friedmans zur Weltfinanzkrise*, „Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik”, 9 (2008), p. 69–80.

²¹ Cf. R. Dimand, *The origins of the Keynesian revolution*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 1988; R. J. Gordon, *What Is New-Keynesian Economics?*, „Journal of Economic Literature” 28: 1990 (3), 1115–1171.

²² Cf. *Council of Georgist Organizations, An Introduction to Georgist Philosophy and Activity*, <http://www.cgocouncil.org/cwho.html> [9. 12. 2019].

²³ Cf. D. W. Cooney, *Distributism Basics: A Brief Introduction*, <https://ethikapolitika.org/2014/08/08/distributism/> [9. 12. 2019].

²⁴ Cf. P. Wilberg, *Deep Socialism: A New Manifesto of Marxist Ethics and Economics*, London 2003, p. 3-38; R. Pipes, *Property and Freedom*, New York 2000, p. 209-281.

²⁵ Cf. G. Small, *Connecting Economics to Theology*, „Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics” 1 (2011) 1, p. 1-2.

²⁶ In this context, justice in the economy fits into the perspective of love, as do the various forms of social and economic involvement, which appear not only as a gift and a task but above all as a manifestation of love. „Whoever thinks that truth, freedom, and justice are sufficient for a man does not know a man. Those who think that these three powers can fulfill the essence of human endeavor are wrong. There is another power in man: it is the power of love. It takes up so much space in human nature that the forces of truth, freedom, and justice are only the threshold at the door, behind which we can experience the reality of love” (S. Wyszyński, *Kamienie węgielne budowania na górach świętych (Jasna Góra 2. 11. 1956)*, [in:] *Wielka Nowenna Tysiąclecia*, Paris 1962, p. 41).

economic systems. Undoubtedly, both Thomism and personalism are based on the idea of love and mercy as a foundation for other social principles. Therefore, the social teaching of the Church emphasizes the need to show the importance and co-relationship between social justice and economic justice. The concept of social justice is deeply rooted in the idea of human dignity, which, in turn, seems to undermine the legalistic logic of property rights, the distribution of goods, and contemporary political and economic relations that condition the idea of economic justice²⁷.

Cardinal Wyszyński is aware of this. In his teaching, he often mentions „social dispositions” rooted in the Christian system of values, which should not only stimulate but also shape both the socio-political and economic transformation of earthly reality. In other words, the social order based on the personalist system leads to the transformation of the human person, both individually and socially. Therefore, only a moral change directed at a mature personality is a condition for the proper modification of all structures of public life, as well as a basis for building the „common good” of the whole society. The fact that the communist states based their economy on the capitalist labor system continues the Primate is simply the fruit of the derivative of collectivism with capitalism. It is their original sin. For both systems stem from the same materialistic philosophy, both practically proclaim the primacy of things over the person – and both do not effectively defend man against the demon of technocratism who has put himself at the service of economics against the rights of the human person²⁸. In other words, Catholic social thought represented by Wyszyński proposes a broader and more critical view of the methodology defined by contemporary economic doctrines referring to the classical ideas of liberal capitalism.

Generally speaking, capitalism has a lot of merit in emphasizing the theological vision of earthly reality as a gift and good that the Creator has placed in man’s hands. The question of responsibility for the work of creation is also essential, as is the apotheosis of human creativity and innovation. Thanks to capitalism, poverty, and underdevelopment of many hitherto peripheral areas of the modern world have been significantly reduced²⁹. Moreover, classical liberal

²⁷ As Cardinal S. Wyszyński states: „If a man were aware that the essence of the whole matter is to love one’s neighbor as himself, it would be easier to improve mutual relations, establish the principles of distributive, social or any other justice. The law of love and its specification – social justice – are inspired by Christian hope” (*Naród-Kościół-państwo*, p. 707).

²⁸ *Problem pracy górników w Polsce. List do księdza biskupa Herberta Bednorza* (2. 02. 1978), [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 810-811.

²⁹ Cf. Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 34. Zdaniem Arthura Brooksa, prezydenta Amerykańskiego Instytutu Przedsiębiorczości (the American Enterprise Institute): *It turns out that between 1970 and 2010 the worst poverty in the world – people who live on one dollar a day or less – that has decreased by 80 percent. You never hear about that. It is the greatest achievement in human history. It is the best anti-poverty measure ever invented*

capitalism practically from the beginning of the industrial era proclaimed the apotheosis of socio-economic freedom, understood as freedom of economic activity, uninhibited entrepreneurship, and free trade-oriented at maximizing profits. Simultaneously, it was emphasized that economic efficiency and prosperity could only be achieved through economic freedom and competition³⁰.

2. The Concept of „Real Socialism”: A Deceitful Duplicity

In response to many shortcomings relating to classical capitalism, many alternative political and economic systems have emerged. One of them was the collectivist system, especially its communist variant, based on an ideology developed mainly by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and modified by Vladimir Lenin. The above design was the subject of particularly intensive analyzes performed by Wyszynski. For most of his life, the Primate of Poland had to face the Marxist-Leninist concept of an atheist communist system that not only fought with God but also – and perhaps most of all – with a man³¹.

Significantly different from the individualist-liberal ideology, but close to the collectivist conception of man, was the variant „Nazi National Socialism”³². It is worth noting that the above doctrine became the official program of the Nazi National Socialist party of the NSDAP. Thus, it laid the theoretical foundations for Hitler’s military expansion strategy that led to World War II’s terrible hecatomb³³.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the turbulent period meant that the ideology developed by Vladimir Lenin adopted the Marxist concept. In his doctrine, Lenin emphasized the vital role of the „dictatorship of the proletariat” as a political „prelude” to introducing the socialist system. In this

(Cf. M. J. Perry, *It's the Greatest Achievement in Human History, and One You Probably Never Heard About*, [in:] *American Enterprise Institute*, November 3 2014, www.aei.org/publication/greatest-achievement-human-history-one-probably-never-heard) [3.04.2019].

³⁰ Cf. I. Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism with Capitalist Civilization*, London-New York 2011, p. 45-71.

³¹ Cf. S. S. Wyszynski, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 46-47.

³² Referring to the Nazi-Nazi concept of man, S. Wyszynski states with a specific dose of sarcasm: „The greatest disgrace for man would be any relationship with God, especially in the Christian sense. Is man a creature of God? This wording alone is enough to draw upon him all the hatred he has for God. Universal contempt for God’s image in man is proclaimed, the easier it is to perpetuate the fact that people do everything not to resemble God in anything. A man stripped of the remnants of a relationship with God is considered directly as a fertilizer that is being thrown for future generations” (S. Wyszynski, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 47).

³³ Cf. R. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*. London 2005; D. Redles, *Hitler's Millennial Reich: Apocalyptic Belief and the Search for Salvation*. New York 2005.

process, a fundamental part was to be played by the vanguard of the communist party, composed of professional and committed revolutionaries. The class-conscious communist party's role was to lead the working-and-peasant masses through ideological indoctrination and an organization to achieve the „political consciousness” necessary to overthrow the „despotic” capitalism revolution³⁴. In this sense, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, in the name of the struggle to take complete control over man, not only denied the promotion of his freedom and personal dignity. As a socio-political system, it is responsible for many horrific crimes and perverse distortions.

In the official version, the goal of Marxism-Leninism was to transform the traditional „bourgeois” state into a „socialist state.” It was to be realized through a proletarian revolution led by professional revolutionists, the working and peasant class, which had matured into revolutionary consciousness through dialectical class struggle. At this level of the revolution, the socialist state – represented in Marxist-Leninist terminology as the „dictatorship of the proletariat” – was to be led exclusively by the revolutionary party vanguard through the process of so-called „Democratic centralism” defined as „diversity in the discussion, unity in action”³⁵.

³⁴ Marxism played a fundamental role in the history of the Soviet revolution as a theoretical concept. However, the genesis of the system dates back to the nineteenth century, when it became a radical criticism of capitalist society. Karl Marx (1818–1883), from whose surname the entire direction took its name, proclaimed the need to overthrow unjust capitalism through proletarian revolution. As a result, a perfect communist society was to be created. For the first time in the world's history, this society bringing new values and a new man was to give a system of universal equality, justice, fraternity, and the abolition of exploitation. Marxism recognized equality as the fundamental value of social life – he had no respect for freedom, in which he saw many threats. He considered the deep understanding of history's nature to be full of freedom, which was perfectly reflected in the famous phrase, adopted from Georg Hegel (1770–1831), but also adequate for Marx's own thoughts that *freedom means the understanding of necessity* (Quotation after: M. Bankowicz, *Krytycy marksizmu*, Kraków 2014, p. 16). According to Marx, modern societies are divided into the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie), controlling capital and seizing profit, and the proletarian class, which has nothing but its own labor. The working and multilaterally exploited proletariat obtain incomes so minimal that, in principle, it only allows for survival. Workers and others making a living by their own labor constitute the oppressed majority of society. They must transform into a revolutionary force and seize political power. The transition to communism, however, requires the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its task comes down to the ultimate crushing of class opponents and socialization, that is, in essence, the nationalization of property, since private property, recognized as the primary source of exploitation, should be liquidated (cf. *ibid.*).

³⁵ Cf. M. Albert, R. Hahnel, *Socialism Today and Tomorrow*. Boston, Massachusetts, USA 1981, p. 24–25. Analyzing the collectivist Marxist-Leninist ideology, S. Wyszynski emphasized: „Man has no personal value in their eyes. Not only is it not the center of the world, but it is also simply nothing. It derives all its value from being granted the state through social coexistence. Hence, first of all, man is denied the

It is no wonder then that Wyszyński opposed the Marxist-Leninist materialist ideology and considered it the greatest danger to Christianity. As an ideology spreading a materialistic vision of the human person and social life, it was deemed hostile to Christian aspirations promoting respect for human dignity and shaping the Christian social order. Moreover, materialism denies the existence of any spiritual dimension in social life. Thus, it is a progressive deviation from a supernatural, spiritual and religious reality that recognizes only a fact that can only be grasped by sense experience, but in order to blind people and thus dissuade them from the supernatural and eternal realm.

According to the Marxist-Leninist concept, a man is a socialized being who defines himself by belonging to a group that is the source of his identity. Therefore, he does not need to realize his individuality through action, including the action of a public nature. Man's socialization was to be associated with creating „natural” harmony between people, possible thanks to the harmonization of their interests and the abolition of the existing divisions, including, above all, class division. This process was to be accompanied by the withering away of the state, and hence the death of the entire public sphere, which, paradoxically, would lead to the „kingdom of freedom.” This socialization of man, or „the intrusion of society into privacy,” was in practice to be associated with the ap-

person's rights: freedom, thinking, and acting. Man is subject to absolute obedience to sovereignty: we must obey people rather than God. The human person is subjected to total contempt, the inexorable toughness of the government system, the inhumanity of the boundless arbitrariness of officials, despotism, and terror. In practice, there is the slavery of citizens to the collective. Second, man is denied the freedom to believe in and worship God. For in man, the eternal element and other destinies other than temporal ones are not recognized. It is where the organized, official struggle against religion begins – as a new task for the modern state. Organized hate! Communism wants to build a world without God. He wants to raise a man without God's commandments and religious morality, only based on the morality of the masses. So all religions must be eradicated. Technology is the new god of a man. The greatest happiness is proletarian equality. In this way, man, created in God's image and likeness, separated from his Creator, is thrown into the depths of godlessness and worldliness. Third, man's own destiny and goals are rejected. He has no soul and no destiny of his own. And by no means can man aim to pursue happiness in God. Man has a duty to pursue the goals that the state will show him. He must be completely socialized – both in the soul and in the body. He is obliged to make any sacrifice, to fulfill all the orders of the community. Finally, fourthly, a new goal is imposed upon man, indicated by collective life. Since spiritual values have no meaning, the highest goal of human life will be the good of the state, society, nation, class, party, or economic good, the good of production usually atheistically organized, temporal or material happiness, earthly or capitalist paradise – through self or also the communist profit. In a word – deification of matter, profit, production, technology” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 46-47).

propriation of all this, what is individual, which does not belong to the whole of society³⁶.

In the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, man's traditional vision as being obedient to God and shaping his identity within many natural traditional communities is entirely rejected. Instead, it offers the concept of a „new order” to be „built,” to be created, in which man will find true freedom through real emancipation. The starting point of Marx's philosophical perspective is the materialistic ontology that the basis of reality is nature, the material world, and not the idea, the Logos. There is no mind or thoughts that are primordial to nature. Likewise, the historical process principle is not the spirit, as Hegel proclaimed, but the social man who acts in nature, not by thought, but by work that determines him – sensual and material activity³⁷.

According to Wyszynski, this kind of attitude is undoubtedly characteristic of the Marxist-Leninist vision of social life. It is often expressed in the cult of corporeality, an exaggerated desire for prosperity and lack of simplicity. Moreover, there is an unbridled social pursuit of immediate gratification of various pleasures, selfishness, and a societal lack of justice. In other words, the concept of life is widely adopted, and it describes everything in terms of material well-being and down-to-earth self-satisfaction.

In Christianity, the human person – the integral unity of matter and spirit, creating the personality subject of human action – expresses his attitude towards

³⁶ Cf. H. Arendt, *Kondycja ludzka*, Warszawa 2000, p. 79. The thesis that the communist idea initiated by Marx and Engels resulted from the legacy of Enlightenment radicalism that individuals can shape nature, and therefore society according to their own goals, is, of course, a subject of dispute. What interests me most here, however, is not the genesis of the analyzed position, but one of its aspects, namely the false concept of the individual and society, which, if implemented, may, according to some critics, become the germ of totalitarianism.

³⁷ In other words, in the new socialist order, the individual is nothing, the social group is everything. Moreover, no other ideology carries such a comprehensive picture of universal history, does not formulate such a detailed outline of the past, and does not demand action in its favor as firmly as Marxism. Moreover, no other ideology is mythological and myth-creating as Marxism-Leninism, and no one desires to dominate social reality so totally. It is one of the reasons why Marxism-Leninism refers to three myths: (1) the „myth of the left”; (2) the „myth of revolution”; (3) „the myth of the people.” The myth of the left contains an alleged idea of progress, the sole guardian of which is to be the doctrine of Marxism and the accompanying political movement. The myth of the revolution dictates an uncompromising fight for the assumed ideological goals; these goals can – and must – be pursued with violence. Moreover, the myth of the revolution implies the necessity of waiting for a significant breakthrough, a social and political shock, which would break with the ordinary course of human history. This breakthrough, of course, will be the communist revolution. In turn, the „myth of the people” creates the impression that Marxist ideology represents the most comprehensive social masses and externalizes their most vital interests (cf. R. Aron, *L'Opium des intellectuels*, Paris 1955, p. 246).

the world, which boils down to multiple and complicated relations with the surrounding social reality. However, none can fully satisfy the complex and varied needs of a human being, other than a proper relationship to another human being as an individual and a community³⁸. This openness determines the potentiality of human existence, as well as the ability and possibility of its development, transcendence, and achievement of personal fulfillment³⁹. „Only a living person receives with life all the opportunities for the development and improvement of his person, has the opportunity to express himself fully with his whole life”⁴⁰.

Moreover, „(...) man’s life is the beginning, announcement, and condition of other gifts – temporal and eternal.”⁴¹ Therefore, the spiritual-corporeal nature of a human being, expressed in his free and rational action, is a constitutive quality of man. Thanks to this, the human person is permanent, integrated, despite the complexity, and unifies and integrates numerous activities and features as their subject, substrate, and cause. The spiritual element in man fulfills the role of a visible sign of God’s closeness to the material world. Through the body, a human person connects with the surrounding world; he is a part of it, lives and acts in it, is subject to its laws, and occupies a unique position. He is its master: he organizes it, controls it, transforms it, and uses it for his life and development. As a material element, the body is also a kind of bridge connecting the reality of the material world with God⁴².

3. In Search of an „Other Way”

The distorted vision of the world and the human person not only deprived man of an essential spiritual sphere but also reduced him to the product level of the material world. It leads to a distortion of human life’s fundamental dimensions, preventing man from fully realizing his needs and goals. „Nowadays, very often in various fields – says Cardinal Wyszyński – not only in the section of economic life – just such a narrow understanding of man is manifested. It is

³⁸ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Moralność społeczna*, Warszawa 1996, p. 19.

³⁹ Of course, it is not about understanding absolute perfection, but one situated on the human development line, which enables the full realization of his personality. Only such an understanding of the line as mentioned earlier of development makes it possible to show the basic needs of the human person, as well as the areas of his potential. Cf. S. S. Wyszyński, «*Homo Dei*», *I kazanie świętokrzyskie 13. 01. 1974*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 576

⁴⁰ S. S. Wyszyński, *W obronie życia nie narodzonych, Listy Pastorskie Episkopatu Polski 1945–1974*, Paris 1975, p. 118; Cf. R. Rogowski, *Antropologiczne podstawy postępu*, „*Ateneum Kapańskie*” 66 (1974) vol. 83, p. 428.

⁴¹ S. Wyszyński, *W obronie życia nie narodzonych*, p. 118.

⁴² Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Uświęcenie pracy zawodowej*, p. 200.

governed as a commodity, material, and not as a human person, having higher tasks, reaching beyond the dimension of earthly, family, national or political life”⁴³.

His criticism, however, was not only temporary. Showing the errors existing in a given political system primarily aimed to determine the basic principles on which Christians’ involvement in the state’s socio-political reality should be built⁴⁴. Of course, in his criticism of the liberal-capitalist as well as the collectivist model of social life, the Primate refers to the teaching of the Popes and the Church’s Magisterium. It is primarily about showing errors and systemic distortions. The fundamental ideas of the Christian vision of social and political life and the subjectivity of individual members of the state community have been negated. According to him, despite the undoubted advantages, liberal capitalism did not contribute to citizens’ liberation because „(...) man is not yet respected. He is still a slave, of the state, then of the matter again”⁴⁵. Therefore, only he can respect man, and only he has a future in his hand, who can give him inner freedom⁴⁶.

⁴³ S. Wyszyński, *Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku. Podczas bierzmowania młodzieży akademickiej w Warszawie 19. 05. 1977*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 779-780; Cf. S. Jarocki, *Kultura gospodarcza*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 62 (1970), vol. 75, p. 240-247; Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life*, p. 176-182.

⁴⁴ Referring to the supporters of liberal and collectivist concepts, S. Wyszyński stated: „Some people proclaim man their own god. They multiply his laws at the expense of God himself and weaker neighbors, at the expense of society and the state. Everything is to worship man. There are no restrictions here. They submit everything to the highest and irrevocable judgment of man: they proclaim his moral freedom, freedom from all social obligations. They recognize only private morality for personal use. Man can do what he pleases – morality is his private matter. They do the same with God. Religion is also a private matter of man. Perfection and the pursuit of God have no social significance. Man’s highest goal is his temporal happiness. One can pursue this goal in all ways because there are no moral principles binding here. Economics and ethics are foreign to each other. There are no higher laws, no divine commandments to which human social and economic life should be subjected. The freedom to get rich is the highest economic law. Everything should serve as protection for man in his quest for personal well-being; even religion and the state should protect his worldly interests. Man is *homo oeconomicus*. Nothing else! Everything else is just a minor addition to life and should serve one purpose. Twin – is „human material,” placed on an equal footing with the raw material in a series of production costs; co-workers – it’s the amount of work, it’s a week’s pay or a pay level, it’s „physical strength,” it’s an officer. And nothing more! Nothing else binds us to him” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 46).

⁴⁵ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Nasze dezyderaty. Do profesorów katolickiej nauki społecznej (Jasna Góra, 22. 01. 1963)*. [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 197.

⁴⁶

In the social teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński, we can distinguish several basic features of the criticism of the capitalist system as well as of „real socialism” functioning in the post-war reality of the People’s Republic of Poland. It boils down to indicating the values essential for maintaining the Christian moral and social order, threatened by liberal capitalism as well as socialism. Among them, we can distinguish: the sphere of human rights, including the right to a decent life, as well as responsibility for – broadly understood – social life. However, the most severe charge against classical liberal capitalism, as well as against „real socialism” in the Marxist-Leninist version, was the wrong conception of the human person. Analyzing the condition of the human person, overwhelmed by the technologized vision of the world, the Primate states: „A modern man – this fallen giant, chained in sheets of technology, technicalism, technocracy that binds him, which helps him to live and at the same time hinders him – must regain the freedom of God’s children so that he can stand up, walk freely and fulfill the tasks assigned to him by the Creator”⁴⁷.

According to the Primate, one of the most critical errors of modern philosophy, which laid the foundations for classical liberal capitalism, is one-sided, focusing on man as an individual, and ignoring his personal dimension. Confusing the concepts of „individual” and „person” is dangerous in their social ramifications since the individual’s autonomy does not yet mean the person’s development as such. In turn, in the Marxist-Leninist ideology, man is wholly subordinated to the „collective.” In this context, Cardinal Wyszyński states: „God can afford that each of us should be a” person, „individual, „personality, „not only a numerically and statically determined individual”⁴⁸. „In the hierarchy of values, God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth is at the forefront, then – man as a fruit of God’s love, and then – the material world, which is given to man to subdue the earth”⁴⁹. Thus, the human person is a central value, both on the individual and social level. „Man is a person, and he is a rational and free being; he is the lord of creation”⁵⁰. However, it should be remembered that the encounter in man between the reality of the divine world and the human world takes place not directly but in a mystery that unites and protects the human person’s autonomy. „For only a human person can make understandable

⁴⁷ S. Wyszyński, *Duch Ewangelii w organizacji życia społeczno-zawodowego i publicznego w Polsce*, p. 808.

⁴⁸ S. Wyszyński, *Bóg-Człowiekiem, aby człowiek był... Bogiem. Do inteligencji katolickiej. Warszawa-Miodowa 14. 01. 1970*, [in:] *„Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...”. Wybór przemówień i rozważań*, Poznań-Warszawa, p. 48.

⁴⁹ S. Wyszyński, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek, Do delegacji NSZZ „Solidarność” Region Mazowsze 19.10.1980*, [in:] *Nauczanie Społeczne*, p. 962.

⁵⁰ S. Wyszyński, *Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona*, p. 61.

any explanation of the world, because it reflects the creative wisdom of God Almighty”⁵¹.

In the opinion of the Primate, economic progress conditioned by liberalism and the classical capitalism that grew on its grounds, as well as collectivism, should definitely be subject to human authority. Therefore, one cannot agree to the accumulation of huge means of production and leaving them to arbitrariness to a small group of beneficiaries of the political and economic system. According to Wyszyński, „(...) all communities must therefore be made to measure up to man. All of them must have as a starting point the rights and obligations of the human person, so that a person feels good in them, as in well-tailored clothing. Hence, the forms of social life cannot be built differently but according to the characteristics of the human person. Whenever social institutions and forms of social life collide with rights and obligations, with the character and nature of the human person, they often become a torment”⁵².

Quoting the encyclical of Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*⁵³, the Primate states that the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few leads to a threefold struggle: it is above all about mastering economic life itself; then, the subordination of state structures, and finally by fighting social legislation, inhibiting all pro-social reforms. This state of affairs leads to the degradation of the democratic system of social and political life and the destruction of fundamental human rights. „No community, even the most powerful one, claims, can violate these rights without risking conflicts with citizens, people, and their personality. At the same time, it suffers damage that threatens its own existence”⁵⁴. Thus, maximum profit becomes the primary goal of any economic activity. „Then, man’s place as the subject of work is taken by capital, and the protection of working human rights goes unnoticed”⁵⁵. Thus, this form of capitalist liberalism makes money the measure of everything and creates the proletariat, a socially orphaned layer. Such a scenario of social life contributes to the creation of a system of social injustice. „The deification of matter and production breeds the consumption idea, the desire to get rich, the competitive struggle, and finally leads to the depreciation of man”⁵⁶.

⁵¹ S. Wyszyński, *Wołanie ludzkości o obecność Kościoła*, s. 93; Cf. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa*, [in:] *ibid.*, *Polska teologia narodu*, Lublin 1988, p.187.

⁵² S. S. Wyszyński, «*Pacem in terris*». *Konferencja II. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 27. 01. 1964*, [in:] *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 1–67, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 16, p. 124.

⁵³ Cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no 103.

⁵⁴ S. Wyszyński, *Homo Dei*, p. 577-578.

⁵⁵ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 247-248.

⁵⁶ S. Wyszyński, *Homo oeconomicus*, p. 587; „God has called us to work as sentient beings as Christians – to help Him improve the universe; to improve ourselves by using our talents; that we may increase the glory of God through our filial submission to his will; that we may finally

Cardinal Wyszyński's personalism also rejected the doctrine of „real socialism” binding in Poland's post-war reality. The communist ideal, which originated in the doctrine of Marx and Engels, meant a break with thinking about the human being as an inherently political being, thus with the classical vision of politics and active participation in it. It was a break, present in other modern approaches to the political, with the understanding of politics as a public sphere of action and the contemporary belief that society cannot exist without the state, and therefore without the political sphere. It is because it provides formal living conditions for people in the community. These conditions include, first and foremost, institutions, among which the law is at the fore⁵⁷. The modern concept of popular sovereignty was an expression of politics as drawing the ultimate source in people's will, in their freedom. The communist idea meant a complete retreat from politics, both in its broader, classical approach and in a narrower approach, characteristic of liberalism. Along with Marx, the separation of society from the state was recognized as a source of alienation of man, who was to regain his natural freedom only with the abolition of such a division, thus abolishing the political sphere. Marx recognized the superstructure's political sphere over the social interest, a sphere not corresponding to or even contradicting it.

In Wyszyński's opinion, man, thanks to his social nature, is the beginning and goal of social life. And although it needs a family, state, cultural, religious, and economic communities for its development, it goes beyond its limits due to its unusual living structure. According to Primate Wyszyński, „(...) in our socio-political thinking, we must always maintain the primacy of man (...). Even if he was born in the 20th century or the next century, he has existed in God's

show our love for God through work. This call revealed our dignity and dignity of work, which not only does the work of salvation of natural nature, not only tears the world out of the embrace of wildness, not only ennobles matter but is also the salvation and redemption of man, is his sanctification” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 355-536).

⁵⁷ Along with liberalism, the political sphere began to be understood as existing for individuals' goodness and safety and protecting their inherent freedoms. It was to be a limited sphere, but necessary nonetheless. Civil society understood as separate from the state could exist and develop thanks to the state's conditions, providing first of all the legal framework for spontaneous social self-organization and internal and external security. According to this approach, the freedom of society and, consequently, the individual's freedom requires political power. In a less extreme process, the sphere of the political – in line with the classical republican tradition initiated by Aristotle – was associated with human citizenship, with the possibility of deciding with others about the good of the community, either directly or through elected representatives. According to this classical approach, politics was a field that had a fair and just life as its object. Thus it was regarded as a continuation of ethics. Cf. D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego: współczesna debata i jej źródła*, Wrocław 2004, p. 17-56.

thoughts and plans for centuries. Therefore, it is earlier than any family, national or state community that a man has brought into existence”⁵⁸.

The concentration of capital and economic power in the hands of a few, which grew out of unfettered free competition, led to the struggle to subdue more extensive areas of economic life and, consequently, to control state structures the domination of one state over another. In effect, it caused the brutalization of economic life and lowered the state’s dignity and majesty. For selfish enrichment, various trade and industrial associations were used. Instead of serving the common good, it became a mechanism for exploiting individuals, classes, social strata, nations, and states. Referring to the Austrian bishops’ pastoral letter from the interwar period, he says that „Mammonist capitalism” brings dire consequences. Here the banking world is reaching in individual states „self-proclaimed power over state power – so that this power is no longer sovereign”⁵⁹.

The Primate, criticizing the extreme form of capitalism, states that the actual privileges and the advantage of a few over the rest of society favor the emergence of sharp class divisions and social antagonisms. Meanwhile, everyone has the right to a decent life. He accused capitalism of the collapse of morality in society. Economic living conditions can harm the moral standard of citizens. The point is that capitalism strikes at the personal dignity of the exploited worker. Then the still life leaves the workshop „ennobled,” and a person becomes common and worse. According to the Primate, this form of capitalism lost its sensitivity to all basic human life needs and conditions. Why is this happening? Because capitalism’s essence is not to meet the general public’s needs but to enrich individuals as much as possible⁶⁰.

Thus, the main flaw of this system is the recognition of profit as the overrarching goal. If profit is the only thing that counts, all God’s works disappear from view. For nature no longer appears as beauty but only takes the form of raw material. The spirit of profit and the pursuit of pennies breeds a hectic rush. In such an atmosphere, no one considers the moral and religious needs of man, and the organization of work itself becomes an obstacle in fulfilling religious duties. Then one can lower the pay for labor, threatening with reduction and unemployment⁶¹. In this way, the goal to be pursued is to reconcile the distribution of created goods with the common good and social justice principles. The exaggerated abyss between a small group of the very rich and many poor people displays a severe capitalism shortage⁶².

⁵⁸ S. Wyszyński, *Matka-Syn-rodzina*, p. 679

⁵⁹ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 247; Cf. *Ibid.*, *Katolicyzm, kapitalizm, socjalizm. List pasterski biskupów austriackich*, Lublin 1935, p. 12.

⁶⁰ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 247.

⁶¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 245-246.

⁶² Cf. P. Raina, *Kardynał S. Wyszyński*, vol. I, London 1979, p. 53.

The Christian vision of commitment to socio-economic life, embracing a mysterious synthesis of suffering and joy, reflects grace and sin's age-old dichotomy. It becomes a dramatic struggle which, while bringing satisfaction and delight, at the same time provides toil, torment, and suffering. Although it is expressed in various forms, it is an inseparable element of all human socio-economic activity.

Speaking about the errors and distortions of the political and economic system, the Primate raises social responsibility. He accuses economic liberalism of radicalizing workers' views and thereby magnifying the influence of socialist ideology. Labor exploitation stimulated energetic individuals to find ways out of the impasse and to remedy injustice. Theoretical freedom and even the working people's political powers cannot prevent abuses by capital without bold and resolute economic reforms⁶³. However, in the opinion of Cardinal Wyszyński, the reform will be possible to implement effectively only if it is related to morality. „When the morality of Christian love disappears, then the love of pocket and personal gain will take first place”⁶⁴.

„A socio-economic system without morality becomes the direction of an anti-humanist economy”. Then the only goal is to be rich. Then „be rich at all costs – who can and as only can!”⁶⁵ However, it must be said that despite the criticism of capitalism – under papal encyclicals and the teaching of the Church – the Primate did not demand the complete abolition of free competition, which is one of the factors shaping economic life. The emphasis was only on allowing workers to participate in the company's management and capital to change the very nature of capitalism. „Ultimately, the transformation of the socio-economic system depends only on the man who should focus on morality as the foundation of all activities”⁶⁶.

However, the most severe error of capitalism and communism was a misunderstanding of the concept of the human person. In the classical philosophy of liberal capitalism, the individual is regarded as the only measure of everything, and his freedom is absolute and indisputable. In this way, the absolutely understood freedom of individual action seeks to liberate man from all dependence⁶⁷. In this case, detached from obedience to the truth, the concept of human freedom becomes a threat to other people's rights. Then it isn't easy to talk about any morality. In turn, based on Marxist doctrine, the socialist economic system,

⁶³ Cf. A. Zwoliński, *Ks. Stefan S. Wyszyński wobec kryzysu gospodarczego*, Lublin 1990, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 240.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ S. Wyszyński, *Nasze dezyderaty. Do profesorów katolickiej nauki społecznej*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 197.

⁶⁷ Cf. P. Raina, *Kardynał S. Wyszyński*, p. 58.

through its all-encompassing economic machine dominated by the state and bureaucratic structures, has become one of the most effective tools in history that prevent man from fulfilling himself in social life⁶⁸.

Securing the „common good,” and thus a service role towards the nation and its basic social structures, is a fundamental task of the state, „because the state is a” *bonum commune*, „a common good of the entire nation and all citizens”⁶⁹. Therefore we expect the state community to serve the common good of the entire diverse community of citizens of our country”⁷⁰. The common good, however, cannot be understood solely in terms of material well-being. The above term also includes spiritual goodness. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to a material level only, the quality of public services, or measured solely by economic or ideological parameters. Wyszyński repeatedly emphasized that the common good contains both temporal and supernatural elements. The human person, on the other hand, has transcendental hopes and aspirations⁷¹.

Primate Wyszyński’s teaching’s praxeological character means that his interest in the discussed issues focuses primarily on the human person’s axiological transcendence. It is expressed in man’s attitude towards the sphere of lower values – economic or vital – as well as higher values – cognitive, moral, and aesthetic⁷². The realization of these values determines not only the proper psychological and spiritual development of a person but also the final achievement of the transcendent dimension of humanity, which is fully realized in God. From a socio-economic perspective, this manifests itself in a commitment to transform the temporal world.

In addition to being a means for contemporary man to satisfy his needs and secure his dignity, human life’s socio-economic dimension is also becoming the fundamental way of realizing himself, both in the natural and supernatural dimensions. Thus, socio-economic life confirms the full and authentic extent

⁶⁸ In this context, Primate S. Wyszyński states: „Disputes in the socio-economic field between employers and the working world have moved to the territory of a living person. And so, the focus was not so much on socio-economic problems, as the whole man with his destiny, dignity, spiritual qualities, with his rational and free personality, unable to be included in specific statistical or economic dimensions” (S. Wyszyński, *Duch Ewangelii w organizacji życia społeczno-zawodowego i publicznego w Polsce. Do wiernych w archikatedrze warszawskiej 6. 01. 1978*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 802).

⁶⁹ S. Wyszyński S., *Naród – Kościół – Państwo. Kazanie świętokrzyskie 25.01.1976*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 713.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 711.

⁷¹ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Sumienie prawe*, p. 992

⁷² Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Budowa kultury chrześcijańskiej. Do członków „Odrodzenia”, na Jasnej Górze 15. 09. 1979*, [in:] *Nauczanie społeczne*, p. 895-897; *ibid*, *Budowanie Wrocławia*, p. 104-106.

of human transcendence. The main goal of involvement in the economy is not limited to the economic dimension. It allows man to look at his life as a gift of God that transcends mortality limits. Therefore, the world cannot obscure God himself, nor can it stand in the way of his comprehensive self-development or fulfillment⁷³. This challenge is addressed to all Christians who, in the perspective of the „new heaven and the new earth” (cf. Rv. 4, 2-8; 21, 2-10), are understood as „God’s elite!” She will bind her life in kinship with God. He will justify his life value through work, and this through the work of the whole person: and of his soul and body; both in nature and in grace. He will bind the earth to heaven. He will restore God to the world, and he will give the world to God and thus make the world possible for everyone to live and seek God!”⁷⁴

4. Conclusions

The analysis of Christian activity issues in the socio-economic and political dimension in the teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński places his innovative reflection in the plane of the theology of earthly reality. Human involvement in the temporal reality becomes a fundamental dimension of the human relationship to the world, expressed in the mutual process of co-shaping both the human person and the earthly realm, which is the environment of his life and development. Showing this reality in God’s perspective, the Creator and Savior acting in a specific systemic existence *hic at nunc* allow us to look at this aspect of human activity as an essential dimension of the human vocation, revealed in the reality of the world.

Nevertheless, the personalist concept of social life as understood by Cardinal Wyszyński was not limited only to the criticism of political systems based either on the assumptions of capitalist ideology or on the communist collectivist doctrine of the Marxist-Leninist provinces. Wyszyński repeatedly spoke about socio-economic and political issues. However, he always did it through the prism of the deposit of Christian faith and morality. However, in the case of many political science representatives, one can notice not only efforts to emancipate this field of science, but most of all attempts to free themselves from any ethical and moral conditions and assessments. This kind of aspirations’ main argument was to emphasize the autonomy of earthly reality understood in terms of distancing itself

The Christian vision of social life does not allow the socio-political and economic reality to be reduced to a strictly technocratic system, which can only be analyzed on empirical sciences. Of course, Catholic social teaching applies to

⁷³ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, p. 52.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

one political sphere or another and endorses the reality of the market economy and competition as essential tools for shaping modern social life. However, this does not mean accepting such a model of the functioning of the state, where material goods are placed above the good of the human person, and the individual interests of individuals dominate the „common good” of the entire civil society, at the same time violating the principle of solidarity. Therefore, the Magisterium of the Church in its teaching emphasizes the necessity to place involvement in socio-economic and political activity in a broader moral context. Consequently, it cannot be agreed that the state’s systemic reality should be transformed into a kind of political system serving only a secularized liberal ideology⁷⁵.

Rooting the reflection primarily in the biblical revelation and Catholic social doctrine – supported by the knowledge of other scientific fields, as well as a good orientation in the then historical, social and economic, as well as political transformations – creates an original concept of activity in public life, showing the systemic sphere of the state as a dimension human involvement in the perspective of God’s economy of salvation. It is essential, especially in the context of the country’s specific socio-political situation, dominated by the Marxist ideology, which, by proclaiming an apparent cult of work and progress, degraded all human activity dimensions, including himself.

On the Contrary, a personalist vision of involvement in public life, presented by Cardinal Wyszyński, shows human socio-economic and political activity from God’s mystery, the Church, and salvation events. Thanks to this, by cooperating in the work of creation, man participates in God’s creative mystery, additionally confirmed by Jesus Christ who manifests himself in the Church. Thus, man’s creative involvement in earthly life becomes the plane of his meeting with the Person of Creator and Savior.

Finally, the public sphere becomes a place where man’s personalist world meets the world of matter. The conclusion is that all the products of human creative activity cannot be seen only in marketing terms but are a revelation of the human person in the space of material reality. Through creative activity understood in this way, man defines his personality and reveals the truth about himself. The personalist outline of Cardinal Wyszyński’s teaching, emphasizing the significant dimension of human involvement in earthly life, is understood primarily in terms of a personal vocation that each human person is endowed with. Its implementation becomes the essential task of every human being – which is of fundamental importance both in the natural and supernatural dimensions.

⁷⁵ Cf. M. Gierycz, *Przejawy instrumentalizacji religii w polskiej polityce*, [in:] *Ile Kościoła w polityce, ile polityki w Kościele*, (ed.) P. Burgoński, S. Sowiński, Katowice 2009, p. 179-203.

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