

Ryszard Ficek

Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Polska
rficek@optonline.net
ORCID: 0000-0001-5238-6767

Irrational Rationality of Individualism, Tortuous Logic of Collectivism, and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's Integral-Humanist Concept of Socio-Political Life

Irracjonalna racjonalność indywidualizmu, pokrętna logika kolektywizmu i Stefana Wyszyńskiego integralnie humanistyczna koncepcja życia społeczno-politycznego

ABSTRACT: Stefan Wyszyński's social thought can be defined as an integral-humanistic concept of sociopolitical life. This study, based on the analysis of source texts and studies using the historical and analytical method, examines the specificity of collectivism and individualism as two radically different attitudes in opposition to the personalistic and integral-humanistic conception of the human person presented by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the Primate of Poland. The cardinal's sociopolitical thoughts will be explored, reconstructed and reinterpreted with the employment of the inductive-deductive method. The interpretation of source materials will unravel the role and meaning of the personalistic view in the context of "incomplete" ideological concepts shaping the present reality of social and political life. Therefore, an essential goal of this study is to present the most critical components of the teaching and pastoral ministry of the Primate of the Millennium concerning collectivism and individualism. The author of the article raises a question whether the integral-humanistic concept of the human person and his involvement in the world as presented by Wyszyński can be applied to the specific realities of modern-day social life. The answer is significant, especially in the context of the contemporary reality of the Church, civil society, nation, and state.

KEY WORDS: collectivism, individualism, personalism, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, anthropological error, common good

ABSTRAKT: Wielu uczonych analizujących myśl społeczną Stefana Wyszyńskiego określa ją jako integralnie humanistyczną koncepcję życia społeczno-politycznego. Niniejsze opracowanie analizuje specyfikę koncepcji indywidualizmu i kolektywizmu jako dwóch radykalnie odmiennych ideologii, będących w opozycji do personalistycznej i integralnie humanistycznej wizji osoby ludzkiej prezentowanej przez Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Prymasa Polski. Eksploracja podjętego tematu badań będzie polegała na analizie tekstów źródłowych oraz opracowań metodą historyczno-analityczną w celu rekonstrukcji myśli społeczno-politycznej Wyszyńskiego i ich reinterpretacji metodą indukcyjno-dedukcyjną. Interpretacja materiałów źródłowych koncentruje się na ukazaniu roli i znaczenia myśli personalistycznej w kontekście „niepełnych” koncepcji ideologicznych kształtujących obecną rzeczywistość życia społeczno-politycznego. Istotnym celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie najistotniejszych komponentów nauczania i posługi pasterskiej Prymasa Tysiąclecia w odniesieniu do kolektywizmu i indywidualizmu. W tym kontekście autor artykułu stawia pytanie, czy prezentowana przez Wyszyńskiego integralnie humanistyczna wizja osoby ludzkiej i jej zaangażowania w doczesność może być aplikowana do konkretnych realiów współczesnej rzeczywistości życia społecznego. Odpowiedź na tak postawione kwestie jest niezwykle istotna, zwłaszcza w kontekście kształtowania współczesnej rzeczywistości Kościoła, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, Narodu i państwa.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: kolektywizm, indywidualizm, personalizm, Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński, błąd antropologiczny, dobro wspólne

Introduction

The methodology of both individualism and various collectivist concepts are currently experiencing their undoubted renaissance, significantly impacting contemporary sociopolitical life. Theories that follow extreme individualism model the fundamental dimensions of social life, emphasizing the fact that all social phenomena should be interpreted in light of facts about individuals but do so in ways that fail to capture reality in its completeness and diversity. On the other hand, collectivist concepts argue that human behavior is shaped primarily by sociological rules that cannot be reduced to particular individual facts. Collectivism comes perilously close to conformism and passivity and, consequently, apathy that leads to social stagnation. As an extreme individualist a person only seeks his own good (social egoism); as a member of a collective – he subjects himself to community aspirations, to the – very often – intangible “good of all people.”

Wyszyński believed in a different approach to social life, which can be defined as co-relational personalism expressed in the Integral-Humanist Concept of Social Life.

All communities must be of human measure. All of them must have as a starting point the rights and obligations of the human person so that a man can feel good in them, as in well-tailored clothing. Hence, social life forms cannot be built differently but according to the human person's characteristics. Whenever social institutions and forms of social life collide with rights and duties, with the human person's character and nature, they often become a torment.¹

The methodology for researching economic matters is here referred to as methodological personalism which centers around the social subject, the person of the act who is actively involved in social affairs. It makes the close interconnection of the person-individual with the community and the community with the person integrally related to each other. The feedback that an individual receives causes him to become himself through the service for the community, and the community achieves its "quasi-personal" existence only by serving its members.² Thus, in contrast to individualistic concepts which one-sidedly emphasize the intrinsic sufficiency of the individual while ignoring its community orientation – and also unlike the collectivist ideas about man which in turn perceive only the collective, reducing the individual's autonomy in it – the Christian view of man is a synthesis of individuality and community.³ The final effect of the harmonious operation of the whole social reality and its progress is made possible by God and His Providence because "the Holy Trinity directs (...) man as a social person to social life with other people. They are so necessary for him to exist and fully develop that a person stops in his development without coexistence with other people."⁴ "The Gospel, therefore,

¹ S. Wyszyński, *Pacem in terris. Konferencja II. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 27.01.1964* [*Pacem in terris. Conference 2. Warsaw, St Anne's Church, 27.01.1964*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981* [*Sermons and Authorised Speeches 1956–1981*], vols. 1–67 (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 16), p. 124.

² The views of Jacques Maritain and Émile Muniér, representatives of contemporary Catholic personalism, influence the understanding of the human person and thus the entire vision of the Primate's concept of social life. However, from the beginning of his scientific activity, Stefan Wyszyński has presented an original understanding of this thought, shaped by different sociopolitical conditions and the specific spirit of Polish Catholicism. He seems to have created a concept called "parallel personalism" or "co-relational personalism." Cf. R. Ficek, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijan w życie publiczne w kontekście nauczania kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Prymasa Polski* [*The Involvement of Christians in the Public Life in the Context of Stefan Wyszyński's Teaching*], Lublin 2020, pp. 44–47.

³ Cf. R. Ficek, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijan...*, op. cit., pp. 44–47.

⁴ S. Wyszyński, *Społeczna krucjata miłości* [*Social Crusade of Love*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *„Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...”*. *Wybór przemówień i rozważań* [*There Goes a Tribe of New People...* *A Selection of Speeches and Reflections*], Poznań–Warszawa 1973, p. 225.

establishes a real parity of humanity, measuring the value of man with the purposes of the Creator.”⁵ Everything that makes up the reality of the human person is, then, a gift from God. Hence, by the will of the Creator and with this priority, the entire material order is subject to him, both in the temporal and eternal dimensions.⁶

The personalistic vision of the human person, showing the greatness of man, at the same time emphasizes the infinite dignity of his person. Man is a child of God – this is *homo Dei* in an ontic, moral and praxeological sense.⁷ As a human person, it is a kind of micro-world, micro-community. It is a world co-created by God and, together with society, realized in history, redeemed by Christ, complemented by the work of the human spirit and man’s hands, and, then, fulfilling the *kairos* of God’s economy of salvation.⁸ It is in God the Creator that all the human person’s desires and needs have their source.

Man’s needs and aspirations coincide with the qualities of the Creator. So we have the inheritance of the Heavenly Father that Christ makes us aware of. We can safely say that we carry within us the qualities of our Creator, our Father, and our aspirations are implanted in us in the great and powerful Womb of Heavenly Father, from which we all come.⁹

⁵ S. Wyszyński, *Pacem in terris...*, op. cit., p. 127.

⁶ Cf. S. Rosik, *Promocja aksjologicznej pozycji osoby ludzkiej i wspólnoty rodzinnej w niektórych dziełach Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego* [*Promotion of the Axiological Status of the Human Person and Family Community in Selected Works of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński*], “Roczniki Teologiczne” 38–39/3 (1991–1992), pp. 83–103; H.C. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism*, Boulder 1995, p. 13–15.

⁷ Cf. S. Wyszyński, „*Homo Dei*”, *I kazanie świętokrzyskie 13.01.1974* [“*Homo Dei*”, 1st *Sermon in the Church of the Holy Cross 13.01.1974*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981* [*Social Teaching, 1946–1981*], Warszawa 1990, pp. 574–580; C. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodu* [*Christian National Paedagogy*], [in:] C. Bartnik, *Polska teologia narodu* [*Polish Theology of the Nation*], Lublin 1988, p. 187.

⁸ Cf. S. Wyszyński, „*Jasnogórskie zobowiązania...*”. *Bydgoszcz 19.12.1956* [“*The Jasna Góra Vows...*” *Bydgoszcz 19.12.1956*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia...*, op. cit. (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 1), pp. 303–304; S. Wyszyński, *Ojciec nasz. Warszawa 4–8.12.1961, Do Instytutu Prymasowskiego podczas rekolekcji* [*Our Father. Warsaw 4–8.12.1961, To the Primate’s Institute During a Retreat*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia...*, op. cit. (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 19), p. 29; S. Wyszyński, *Kościół wspólnotowórczy, Warszawa-Miodowa 4.08.1970* [*The Community-Forming Church, Warszawa-Miodowa 4.08.1970*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia...*, op. cit. (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 34), pp. 149.

⁹ S. Wyszyński, “*Homo Dei*”..., op. cit., p. 576.

The justification of the human person's dignity in the teaching of Primate Wyszyński derives not only from the natural level but also from the supernatural one.¹⁰ In this sense

the greatest work of God in the supernatural order is a man. Created in the image and likeness of God, barely smaller than the Angels, crowned with glory and honor by the Creator, man stands between heaven and earth as the King and Ruler of the earth and as the heir to heaven.¹¹

The real pedigree of man, therefore, arises from the act of God's love.

Therefore, in our socio-public thinking, we must always have (...) the awareness that as a being, essentially, personally – let's say ontologically as 'ens' – man comes from God. Therefore, he was earlier than any family, national or state community that a man had brought into being.¹²

Incomplete ideological concepts and their erroneous anthropology

The entire social teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński, very firmly inscribed in the doctrine of the Church, is focused on man, his dignity as a child of God, and functioning in a reality shaped by various types of – often unfavorable – ideologies.¹³ The Primate believed that the most severe problem of the

¹⁰ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Jego królewska mość – człowiek. Warszawa 29.12.1963* [*His Majesty the Man. Warsaw 29.12.1963*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Idzie nowych ludzi plemię, 1946–1981* [*There Goes a Tribe of New People, 1946–1981*], Poznań 2001, p. 15.

¹¹ S. Wyszyński, *O katolickiej woli życia. List pasterski na Wielkanoc 1947* [*On the Catholic Will to Live: Pastoral Letter for Easter 1947*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 34.

¹² S. Wyszyński, *Matka–Syn–rodzina, kościół św. Krzyża 11.01.1976* [*Mother–Son–Family, Church of the Holy Cross 11.01.1976*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 679.

¹³ The Catholic Church has long been reflecting on the social systems emerging in Europe from an anthropological and ethical point of view. The most important documents of this reflection are the encyclicals of Leo XIII: *Rerum novarum*, Pius XI: *Quadragesimo anno*, John Paul II: *Laborem exercens*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* and *Centesimus annus*. The last encyclical is, in a way, a summary of the Church's centuries-old reflection on social matters. Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Grundsatz – Raden aus fünf und Jahrzehnten*, Regensburg 2005; J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, M. Pera, *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, New York 2007; J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, San Francisco 2006; A. Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and*

so-called “incomplete ideologies” was their distorted anthropology, especially a very “specific” understanding of the concept of the human person. Unlike traditional philosophical notions (Thomism or Christian personalism), both collectivism and extreme individualism do not consistently refer to a specific, expressive image of man but try to reconcile different, often inconsistent ideas and views on the human being.¹⁴

Among the collectivist concepts, the anthropology of Marxism-Leninism functioning in the postmodern reality bears a certain stigma of syncretism, which is its main disadvantage. It is often accused of having a tribalist and “ludic” vision of society, which has very negative consequences for understanding the role of the individual in social life and which reduces the personal dimension to a conscious extent. Consciousness understood in this way is recognized in many dimensions of social life as the creator of reality. Collectivism also emphasizes that man is only a social being whose individual needs are secondary to the social needs. The person’s uniqueness has been subjected to a society understood as a collective.¹⁵

It needs to be acknowledged that even in the pre-war period, both in Stefan Wyszyński’s journalism and in the writings of most influential Catholic circles, the main subject of criticism of collectivism was the broadly understood socialist doctrine referred to as “the disease of the age.”¹⁶ Unfortunately, it was a “knowledge” that denied God and man’s personality, from which flowed the renunciation of ownership, freedom, marriage, family, faith, and truth. In the opinion of representatives promoting the then “collectivist” concepts, religion was only an delusion, while law, as a postulate of reason, was the produce of

the Making of a Radical Pope, New York 2014; T.J. Craughwell, *Pope Francis: The Pope from the End of the Earth*, Charlotte 2013; D. Willey, *The Promise of Francis: The Man, the Pope, and the Challenge of Change*, New York 2017.

¹⁴ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *O katolickiej woli życia...*, op. cit., pp. 34–36.

¹⁵ Cf. D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Błąd antropologiczny komunizmu i odwrót od polityki* [*The Anthropological Error of Communism and the Retreat from Politics*], [in:] *Totalitaryzm a zachodnia tradycja* [*Totalitarianism and the Western Tradition*], M. Kuniński (ed.), Kraków 2016, p. 102.

¹⁶ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Inteligencja w przedniej straży komunizmu* [*The Intelligentsia in the Front Guard of Communism*], Katowice 1939; S. Wyszyński, *Katolicki program walki z komunizmem* [*Catholic Programme for Fighting Communism*], Włocławek 1937; S. Wyszyński, *Socjalistyczna własność wspólna w ocenie „Rerum novarum”* [*Socialist Common Property in “Rerum novarum”*], “Ateneum Kapłańskie” 28 (1931), pp. 470–486; S. Wyszyński, *Pius XI o walce z komunizmem* [*Pius XI on the Fight Against Communism*], “Ateneum Kapłańskie” 39 (1937), pp. 466–478.

the judgment of the majority.¹⁷ In turn, individualism – and especially classical capitalism based on this idea – tends to devalue the human person only to the dimension of a labor product – a kind of by-product of socio-cultural processes. Such an approach alters and distorts the anthropological, philosophical, and theological significance of human participation in social life, understood as a service to satisfy the needs of man and society.

Extreme methodological individualism directly opposes the principle of solidarity. It may also lead to a depreciation of the communal dimension of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural lives. In the practice of contemporary globalism, very often, large corporations seek to marginalize – and consequently – liquidate the local economic activity. Perhaps this is not an essential feature of capitalism. Nevertheless, efforts to monopolize the market pose a severe threat to local socio-economic initiatives and violate the principle of subsidiarity.¹⁸

Yes, along with the so-called “industrial revolution” began with the “economy of abundance,” the growth of interpersonal dependence and solidarity, urbanization with all its socio-cultural effects, the emergence of a common civilization, slowly embracing broader and widespread social circles, open to changes and renewal. “Only a living man receives with his life all the opportunities for the development and improvement of his person, has the opportunity to express himself fully with his whole life.”¹⁹ It was also an era of rationalism. Belief in the power of reason was combined with the idea that rationalism would lead humanity to a happy age. Contemporary analyses of reality, however, belies the

¹⁷ Critics of communism accused this system of nihilism: the intention to destroy the social foundations and build a new order on the ruins of what grew out of tradition. Such understood nihilism in socialist doctrine was directed against society and its essential traditional tissue. Proclaiming the principle of material equality, communism opposed natural social development and subjected it to the yoke of collectivism. Therefore, the communist doctrine was seen as another utopia with new elements such as the relegation of religion to the sphere of personal beliefs. The novelty of the communist doctrine consisted in the fact that, contrary to all existing notions of social thought, communism did not take into account any human needs other than material needs. Not some “ideal” goals and aspirations, which had guided humanity for several millennia, were brought to the fore. Still, it considered man as a corporeal being understood as the only thing of value. Nevertheless, Marx’s materialism does not deny that ideas and values are essential. However, it was based on the assumption that all ideas and values have a material basis. Cf. M. Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology*, New York 2010, pp. 23–61.

¹⁸ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life: An Applied Analysis of the Theological Anthropology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland*, Toruń 2020, pp. 106–119.

¹⁹ S. Wyszyński, *W obronie życia nienarodzonych [In Defence of the Unborn]*, Warszawa 1952, [in:] *Listy Pasterskie Episkopatu Polski 1945–1974 [Pastoral Letters of the Polish Episcopate 1945–1974]*, Paris 1975, p. 118.

belief in the unlimited progress of knowledge and prosperity. Indeed, the welfare achievements in the industrialized countries are significant: the economy of abundance, elimination of epidemics and many diseases, significant reduction in child mortality, longer life expectancy, commonly available health service, diversified education, communication facilitation, and modern mass media.²⁰

This increase in prosperity has not been accompanied by an increase in human happiness and moral maturity. The old days' ideals have collapsed: homeland, family, freedom, progress. Mental weariness and tension caused by the nervous lifestyle, noise, and rapid changeability of everyday living conditions have emerged. Growing atheism and religious indifference, stemming from the luxury of life, cause deep ruptures in the whole life of a person who, apart from a better – technically and economically – life, needs stability, security, and moral values.²¹ There have emerged trends that may weigh heavily on the entire future of the world: increasing consumption, waste of human resources, ecological crisis, armaments race, the growing gap between rich and poor, which is increasingly an inexhaustible source of conflict and war, the development of science and technology that enable unrelenting manipulation of people, a crisis of moral values afflicting all social institutions (family, state, nation, international community), etc.²²

²⁰ Cf. A. Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, New York 1988, pp. 3–64.

²¹ The Christian interpretation of the rights and obligations of the human person presented by Cardinal Wyszyński emphasizes, above all, their “organic connection” with natural law, in which they find their foundation. He opposes the concepts of legal positivism that treats human rights as certain conventions or determinations of political power. Cf. H. Waśkiewicz, *Prawa człowieka w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego* [*Human Rights in the Teaching of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński*], “Roczniki Nauk Społecznych” 10 (1982), pp. 3–12.

²² Catholic social doctrine has never intended to create a “third way” between liberal capitalism or all kinds of socialist collectivism. Throughout her long history, the Church has coexisted with various models of sociopolitical 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 its prophetic mission and mission to change contemporary and future models of social and political life based on the Gospel's standards, spreading the Christian vision of the human person. Cardinal Wyszyński spoke in a similar vein. Although he saw the need to change the structures of public life, he did not consider them to be the primary duty of the Church. Nor did he feel that he was called to change the sociopolitical regime. His criticism concerned primarily the anthropological and moral dimension of socio-political life. 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 repeatedly spoke of a “social disposition” that would favor fair sociopolitical transformation. The social disposition – in his opinion – should be based on the canvas of the Christian

The consequence of the above views is to impose anthropology on people without God and Christ. Here you can see how the rejection of God leads to the abandonment of man. The absolutization of the individual is spread throughout social life. Man makes himself a god, becoming not so much a victor, but de facto a victim of relativism, nihilism, omnipresent consumption, extreme pragmatism, and even hedonism that exposes the gloomy and depraved face of the civilization of death.²³

Another link in the process of deification of man in the name of God's negation is – specifically – the deification of freedom. The so-called “incomplete ideologies” promoters assert that man is essentially freedom itself and, therefore, can exist “beyond truth” and, consequently, beyond good and evil. Thus, man wants to establish new truths and rules in the epistemological and new values in the axiological order. It is a freedom that converts him into an “Übermensch”: freedom that elevates a human person to the rank of a self-sufficient subject of being. In the opinion of the “new order” promoters, everything that is in the world today is pitted against God, while God – in their understanding – either never existed (atheism) or does not interfere in reality (deism).²⁴ Therefore, the man himself becomes absolute freedom devoid of all determinants, including God. That is the reason why the contemporary human being feels so dramatically and hopelessly alienated in this world: nothing and no one can save him.²⁵

Indeed, the social teaching of the Church is very affirmative about “humanist-personalist integral” ideology that influenced the sociopolitical system operating within the framework of appropriate legal regulations.²⁶ However, it should not be forgotten that it is also a dispute about preserving the “truth” about

values which aim to change the human heart. Changed people may become the right subject and base for the proper shaping of the “common good.” Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Czas to miłość. Podczas uroczystości Wniebowzięcia Matki Bożej (Jasna Góra, 15.08.1979)* [*Time Is Love: During the Celebration of the Assumption of Our Lady (Jasna Góra, 15.08.1979)*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., pp. 889–891; S. Wyszyński, *Nasze dezyderaty. Do profesorów katolickiej nauki społecznej (Jasna Góra, 22.01.1963)* [*Our Desiderata: To the Professors of Catholic Social Teaching (Jasna Góra, 22.01.1963)*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 196; S. Wyszyński, *Problem pracy górników w Polsce. List do księdza biskupa Herberta Bednorza 2.02.1978* [*The Problem of Miners' Work in Poland: Letter to Bishop Herbert Bednorz 2.02.1978*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., pp. 810–811.

²³ Cf. R. Ficek, *(Post-)Modernity and Christian Culture in the Context of the Personalism of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński*, “Roczniki Kulturoznawcze” 11/2 (2020), pp. 50–54.

²⁴ Cf. R. Ficek, *(Post-)Modernity...*, op. cit., pp. 57–65.

²⁵ Cf. P. Henrici, *Modernity and Christianity*, “Communio” 17/2 (1990), pp. 141–152.

²⁶ Cf. B. Laurent, *Catholicism and Liberalism: Two Ideologies in Confrontation*, “Theological Studies” 68 (2007), pp. 810–816.

Christian religion (the Catholic Church), man, and the richness of human life forms. It is Christianity that created and strengthened the personal understanding of man in the Western world. Hence, all the postulates of secularism or slogans of a radicalized form of the separation of the Christian religion from public life and culture, not to mention the propagation of atheism or religious indifferentism, are detriment not only to Christianity and the religious life born in it, but also to the Western civilization that grows, lives and develops from the affirmation of man's personal life and from respect for the truth that man is a *persona*.

The deceitful perception of man: its inaccuracy, inconsistency, and ambiguity

All worldviews and ideologies that indulge in deconstruction – including the destruction of the integral human vision of man – fall into the trap of committing an “anthropological error.” The Magisterium of the Church disagrees with ideological concepts that reject the integral notion of the human person and the idea of natural law in defining man as well as the specific socio-political order that forms the human being. The deviation from the Christian concept of man and the abandonment of natural law entails severe consequences at both an ontological and axiological level.²⁷

Properly constructed ethics of social life is only possible on the foundation of integral anthropology that embraces the human being in all its fundamental dimensions. The core of the “anthropological error” arises the fact that man is viewed and treated fragmentarily.²⁸ Such perception is influenced by numerous philosophical directions, which involve the destruction of the appropriate image of man, especially in relation to God the Creator and Savior. The anthropological error is a distorted, not entirely coherent and integrated, vision of man. Rooted in culture, morality, media spirituality, and various spheres of education, it constitutes the motivation for human behavior. Its main inspiration is the “horizontal-atheistic humanism.”²⁹

In his reflection on the criticism of “incomplete systems” of social life, Cardinal Wyszyński draws on the experience of the Church. In reference to

²⁷ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Matka–Syn–rodzina...*, op. cit., p. 679.

²⁸ Cf. D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Błąd antropologiczny...*, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁹ Cf. I. Dec, *Humanizmy i ich roszczenia w wyjaśnianiu człowieka* [*Humanisms and Their Claims in Explaining Man*], [in:] *Błąd antropologiczny* [*An Anthropological Error*], A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień (eds.), Lublin 2003, pp. 49–72.

the popes' teachings, the Primate states that the fundamental error of both concepts promoting collectivism and liberal individualism anthropologically consists in a misunderstanding of the fundamental ontological structures that define man. In his opinion, therefore, the essential subject of the personalist concept of social life is the integral vision of the human person, which is the basis for the existence and functioning of all social structures. "Outside man, there is no personality, no rationality, and no freedom."³⁰ When asked where the erroneous understanding of human nature and the exclusion of society's subjectivity came from, whether in Marxist materialism or extreme liberalism, Cardinal Wyszyński replied that atheism, and religious indifferentism, leading to the secularization of society were the prime sources of materialism. Thus, a distorted vision of the world and the human person not only deprives man of the spiritual sphere that is fundamental to him but also reduces him to the level of a product of the material world. It leads to a distortion of essential dimensions of human life, preventing man from fully actualizing his personal needs and goals.³¹

It is no wonder then that Wyszyński opposed all forms of collectivist materialistic ideology and considered it the greatest danger to social reality and Christianity itself.³² 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.

³⁰ S. Wyszyński, *Spoleczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona, Warszawa, kościół św. Anny 16.02.1957* [*The Natural and Supernatural Community, Warsaw, St Anne's Church 16.02.1957*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia...*, op. cit. (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 2), p. 61.

³¹ "Nowadays, very often in various fields – says Cardinal Wyszyński – not only in the section of economic life – such a narrow understanding of man is manifested. It is confined to a commodity, matter, and not as a human person, having higher tasks, reaching beyond the dimension of earthly temporal, family, national or political life" (S. Wyszyński, *Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku. Podczas bierzmowania młodzieży akademickiej w Warszawie 19.05.1977* [*The Spirit of God in a Free Man. During the Confirmation of the Academic Youth in Warsaw on 19.05.1977*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., pp. 779–780); cf. M. Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology*, op. cit., pp. 63–72.

³² According to Cardinal Wyszyński, the most severe problem, especially of the Marxist-Leninist concept, was its anthropology – mainly, a particular vision of the human person. Unlike traditional philosophical concepts, Marxism does not consistently refer to one image of a human being but tries to reconcile different, often inconsistent, ideas about a human being. Marxist anthropology bears the stigma of syncretism, which is its main drawback. Marxism is accused of a tribalistic and collective vision of a society, which has very negative consequences for the understanding of the role of the individual in social life. Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 152–153.

Materialism, which denies the existence of any spiritual dimension in social life, is a progressive deviation that threatens the supernatural, spiritual and religious reality of human beings.³³

In turn, individualism and liberal capitalist ideology, in the Primate's opinion, seduce contemporary societies towards consumerism and economism³⁴ in opposition to which Christianity advocates the idea that "being is more important than having." Stefan Wyszyński denounced such a form of individualism which viewed the human person as a kind of by-product of human activity that sought to transform temporal reality and – as a consequence – a distort the theological perspective and the primary goals of creative activity in the context of the needs and requirements of the human person. Extreme individualism essentially runs counter to the principle of solidarity and directly affects the communal dimension of the Church's teaching. The activity of large corporations can serve as an example. They not only pose a threat to local economic initiatives but also undermine the principle of subsidiarity.³⁵ Though the social teaching of the Church is very positive about free-market competition within the framework of appropriate legal regulations, the Magisterium of the Church has never ceased to criticize the utilitarianism and materialism of modern capitalist societies. Only a return to the anthropological and theological foundations of the Christian vision of social life can guarantee integral development and ensure the stability of the sociopolitical order.³⁶

The characteristic feature of a false vision of man in the contemporary world – where God has been replaced by a postmodern lifestyle – is his deification. It manifests itself in placing man at the center of the world as his master. All of this is coupled with a non-Christian eschatology which aims at the liberation of man and creation of paradise on earth. Utopian promises are supposed to liberate man from the circle of an evil world, full of wars and hatred, and to place him in the "space" of eternal peace and love.³⁷

The deification of man is by no means anything positive, nor is it anything that could enable the moral or spiritual development of the human person. The

³³ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna [Charity and Social Justice]*, Poznań 1993, pp. 46–47.

³⁴ Cf. H. Waśkiewicz, *Prawa człowieka...*, op. cit., pp. 9–12.

³⁵ Cf. R. Ficek, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijan...*, op. cit., pp. 269–278.

³⁶ Cf. B. Laurent, *Catholicism and Liberalism...*, op. cit., pp. 810–816.

³⁷ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Wiecznie oporny: człowiek Boży. Do aktorów i pracowników pióra, Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15.05.1977 [Ever Resistant: Man of God. To Actors and Men of Letters, Warsaw, St Anne's Church 15.05.1977]*, [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Prymas Tysiąclecia [Primate of the Millennium]*, Paris 1982, p. 249.

absolutization of man aims at satisfying all human needs, regardless of their moral importance. Humanity is reduced to experiencing pleasure (extreme hedonism). Self-satisfaction is perceived as the only valuable facet of life. Also God is supposed to serve this need, hence religion is only expected to provide joyful experiences. This hedonistic picture of religion is to rule the world of “liquid postmodernity.” The slow apostasy of the contemporary world’s socio-cultural reality is pushing God, thus Christ, to the margins of society. Faith is deprived of its social, communal, and liturgical dimensions and is meant to be confined to the private sphere of life. The breakdown of community (an inherent element that constitutes religion) directly affects man, depriving him of his bond with other people and with God. Man is left alone in the chaos of ideas and dreams, and given some substitutes of spirituality instead. Such an approach inevitably leads to the denial and, consequently, the rejection of the entire spiritual tradition of Christianity.³⁸

The greatness of man consists primarily in the fact that through his awareness and the ability to decide about himself, he reaches the peaks of his existence and thus rises to the order of the Absolute. In a certain sense – man is endowed with “the principle of divinity.”³⁹ Truth and freedom – the fundamental values of human existence and action – have an absolute, unconditional character, i.e., they are possible and take place on the level of all being, of existing in general, of being as such, and not in a limited area of specific, concrete things enclosed within earthly values. Such a person has a special place in the universe. This finite world is not enough for him. Man’s possibilities go beyond this world, and they transcend visible reality. One of his essential features is the everyday ability to cross all kinds of borders and limitations. In shaping one’s own life at various levels, with openness to the future, the emphasis on “being rather than having” plays a significant role in multiple forms and dimensions.

Man’s desires and aspirations overlap with the qualities of the Creator. We have the inheritance of the Heavenly Father that Christ makes us aware of. We can safely say that we carry within us the qualities of our Creator, our Father, and our aspirations are implanted in us in the great and powerful Bosom of Heavenly Father, from which we all come. From him, we inherit all desires, aspirations, and yearnings for self-fulfillment, which are also our life longing.⁴⁰

³⁸ Cf. R. Ficek, *(Post-)Modernity...*, op. cit., pp. 57–65.

³⁹ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 23–27.

⁴⁰ S. Wyszyński, “*Homo Dei*”..., op. cit., p. 576.

Collectivism: mirage, impression, and reality

Collectivism in the methodology of social sciences expresses a view opposed to individualism: it treats the community of people as an elementary social unit. The same term also implies a method of farming based on common ownership of the means of production, and is a positive evaluation of such a form of work. Therefore, collectivism has found its place in the ideas of socialism and communism. As an economic model, socialism is an alternative to capitalism.⁴¹

Today, collectivism, understood as socialism, is perceived in three senses: (1) as an economic model, associated with some form of planning that limits capitalism for the benefit of the broader social interest; (2) as an instrument of the trade union movement representing the interests of the working class and promoting its interests; (3) as a doctrine or political ideology, characterized by a specific combination of ideas, values and theories, the most important of which are community, cooperation, equality, social class, and common property.⁴²

The collectivist vision of man as a social being emphasizes the human ability to cooperate in creating a common good. Collectivists argue that individuals can only be understood by the groups to which they belong. The natural relationship between people is cooperation, not competition. The most important feature that defines collectivism in the sense of socialist ideology is equality. Supporters of collectivism believe that equality is a condition of justice which in turn is based on the equality of material status of particular individuals.⁴³ Social equality is at the heart of cooperation and community. By introducing the concept of class as a group of people sharing a similar social and economic position, collectivism treats it as the most important source of social divisions. By reducing inequalities between people, collectivists seek to create classless societies. Collectivism abolishes private property of the means of production, which is blamed for social injustice.

⁴¹ Deliberations on the "collective" are rooted in liberal-conservative and religious thought, so they always contain an element of criticism of a free-market economy, dominated by individualism and liberal political views. Analysis of the notion of community invariably raises questions about a more basic reality: the individual or the society? The culture of individualism recognizes the individual as a primary value. The collectivist's point of view, however, assumes that the individual emerges only in the process of interaction with others (socialization). Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 124–129.

⁴² Cf. *Antykomunizm polski. Tradycje intelektualne (wybór tekstów źródłowych)* [Polish Anti-Communism. Intellectual Traditions (Selection of Source Texts)], B. Szlachta (ed.), Kraków 2000, pp. 290–292.

⁴³ Cf. R. Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization, Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton 1997, pp. 11–28.

Socialist ideology is realised through revolutionary socialism and evolutionary socialism. The former tries to overthrow capitalism violently. Socialism took the form of state collectivization. Historically, the revolutionary path towards socialism has been associated with dictatorship and political repression.

Christian religious conviction defends the existence of the communal dimension of social life through its rituals as well as religious celebrations and moral norms that shape and influence social feelings, the system of socio-political, cultural, and economic order, as well as the entire relation between *sacrum* and *profanum*. Thus, the notion that the rising of the social structures and their disappearance hides a mystery, which – to some extent – is sacred, is not an isolated view.⁴⁴ In their many versions and variants, Marxism and neo-Marxism have contributed to shaping the collectivist concept of man, perhaps most strongly in contemporary culture. It carried an idea of a man understood as an “effluence” of the collective, a non-sovereign “emanation,” the specificity of which is only revealed by relating him to a community organized into antagonizing social groups called “classes.”⁴⁵

In Western Europe, where democracy was well established, socialists attempted to attain socialism by way of evolution, availing themselves of parliamentary procedures. Marxism is a specific form of socialism rooted in collectivist ideals. Marx believed that communism was “a real movement that does away with the present state.” It is an ideal that is to guide reality because people “have so far created a false image of themselves, what they are or what they should be.” His heirs, especially Lenin, maintained that the strength of his doctrine was determined by the fact that it was “real and comprehensive,” and thus gave a person a coherent and harmonious worldview.⁴⁶

Marxist doctrine rejects the traditional vision of man who is obedient to God and develops his identity within many natural traditional communities. Instead, it offers the concept of a new order to be built, created, in which man will find true freedom through true emancipation. Marxist materialistic ontology is founded on nature as the basis of reality, the material world, and denounces the *Logos*. There is no reason or thoughts that might be prior 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 through sensual and material activity.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. Mikołajewska, *Zjawisko wspólnoty [The Phenomenon of Community]*, New Haven 1999, pp. 235–238.

⁴⁵ Cf. R. Ficek, *Collectivism, Individualism, and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's Personalistic Concept of Man*, “Roczniki Nauk Społecznych” 12/1 (2020), pp. 7–9.

⁴⁶ Cf. D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Błąd antropologiczny...*, op. cit., p. 103.

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 revolutionaries, the working and peasant classes, whose revolutionary consciousness matured through class struggle. At this level of revolution, the socialist state – ruled/governed by the dictatorship of the proletariat to use Marxist-Leninist parlance – was to be led exclusively by the revolutionary party vanguard, through the process of the so-called democratic centralism defined as “diversity in the discussion, unity in action.”⁴⁷

Such political strategy enabled the communist party to take over the most important political institutions in the state, becoming the main force shaping all organizations of social and political life. The ultimate goal of Marxism-Leninism was to transform the “dictatorship of the proletariat” into the highest form of socialism: communism. i.e. a classless society, common ownership of the means of production, and the complete social equality of all citizens.

Communism opposes the spiritualist and intellectual conception of man, combats his spirituality, appeals to basest drives and passions, and distrusts reason which demands freedom of thought. Communism wants to seize thought for itself and fully utilize it, simultaneously striving to confine human life within the boundaries of the material world.⁴⁸ Communist materialism interrupted the ongoing development of man and caused his diminution, de-classification, and de-personification. In communism, man occupies a subordinate position.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Cf. M. Albert, R. Hahnel, *Socialism Today and Tomorrow*, Boston 1981, pp. 24–25.

⁴⁸ Cf. L. Kołakowski, *The Myth of Human Self-Identity*, [in:] *The Socialist Idea: A Reappraisal*, L. Kołakowski, S. Hampshire (eds.), London 1977, pp. 33–37.

⁴⁹ Analyzing collectivist Marxist ideology, Wszyński emphasized: “Man has no personal value in their eyes. Not only is it not the center of the world, it is simply nothing. He derives all its value from being granted the state through social coexistence. Hence, first of all, man is denied the rights of the person: freedom, thought and action. Man is subject to absolute obedience to sovereignty: he must obey people rather than God. The human person is subjected to total contempt, the inexorable harshness of the system of government, the inhumanity of the boundless arbitrariness of officials, despotism, and terror. In practice, citizens are enslaved by the collective. Second, man is denied the freedom to believe in and worship God. For in man, the eternal element and destinies other than temporal are not recognized. This is where the organized, official struggle against religion begins as a new task for the modern state. Such organized hate! Communism wants to build a world without God. It wants to bring up 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. The greatest happiness is proletarian equality. In this way, man, created in the image and likeness of God, 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. Man can no longer aim to pursue happiness in God. Man

The core of the anthropological error of communism is based on this inaccurate philosophy of man, on assigning him a new role that contradicts his dignity and goals, on transforming the human psyche and striving to automate the individual, to place human life on a completely different basis. This difference shows above all in the postulated ideal of social unity. The greatest tragedy of the communist man was the enslavement of thought, which was a manifestation of that unity. The death of individuality deteriorated the spiritual sphere. The freedom of thought was no longer needed because it was the ideology that decided what was right and what was wrong, that defined truth, beauty and goodness. As Leszek Kołakowski noted, it was an ideological belief that we know, or at least some of them know, what a real man is, what his essence is, and that the nature of man, the empirical man, can be reduced to unity.⁵⁰

The materialistic concept of man understood as a biological specimen of a particular species and adopted by Marxist ideologies proposed that a dictatorship of the proletariat establish social order. The above dictate – and, in fact, the tyranny of the ruling class – became the essential category within which all communist statutory law was defined. Strictly speaking, it is the dictate of the ruling class. Nevertheless, it is not an ordinance – in the dimension of a specific human person – aimed at the common good. In practice, this is an imperative that protects the interests of the ruling class.⁵¹

must follow the goals that the state will point to. He must be thoroughly socialized, in soul and body. He is obliged to make any sacrifice, to fulfill all the orders of the community. Finally, fourth, a new goal is imposed on 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 interest, the good of production usually atheistically organized, temporal or material happiness, earthly or capitalist paradise through self or also communist profit. In a word – deification of matter, profit, production, technology” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., pp. 46–47).

⁵⁰ Hence, a man appears over here as an “emanation” of the material world, as a child of nature – or more precisely, as a product of the community, which, while giving birth to a man, simultaneously gains the right to rule over him, which is reflected in collective upbringing, education, collective work, and collective participation throughout the culture, as well as the collective judgment that is applied to the individual, perceived as a dependent element whose happiness is positioned in the absolute unification and amalgamation with the collective. Cf. L. Kołakowski, *Rozpad komunizmu jako wydarzenie filozoficzne* [*The Collapse of Communism as a Philosophical Event*], “Etyka” 27 (1994), pp. 62–65.

⁵¹ According to Marxist collectivist anthropology, each class society is an antagonized group: it is a field of contradictory, mutually exclusive class interests. Therefore, a collaboration between classes is not possible; it is always illusory, harming. Class struggle is a struggle “for life and death.” For this reason, every class society is doomed. Marxism and its ideology want this elimination. It is the ideological base for annihilating class society. The

It is primarily about economic advantages and profits, which – according to the principles of the Marxist vision of social life – are the highest in the hierarchy of goods. Therefore, their extent and quality determine the right to exercise state power. The primary determinants of Marxist anthropology are, then, materialism and utilitarianism. The above system contradicts any transcendent good and value in relation to the natural world, especially human life. The Marxist understanding of the goal of human life does not relate to the human-individual understood in terms of an accidental being. The fundamental goal of human life for this ideology is the realization of the good of the community. According to Marxism, the individual-man exists for the collective through the collective and thanks to the collective. Man cannot live and function alongside or outside the community because the most critical sin against Marxist ideology is the violation of a specific “collectivist natural order.”⁵²

Since the collective possesses everything, it also has the right to everything because – as collectivists say – power derives from possession. A principle was adopted that the scope, quality, the level of ownership and control determine the area and the possibility of exercising power. This type of collectivism perceived the foundation of social life primarily in material resources and coercion that, in this system, is always associated with them.⁵³

leading position in this ideology is played by the working class, which is like a “new chosen people” with a saving mission in which all those who are part of it participate. As stated by Marxists, the development of each class is associated with the acquisition by its members of class consciousness that begins to play an integrating role. Classes go through phases from the so-called “classes in themselves” (not fully conscious human mass) to “classes for themselves,” that is, an association with a clear, well-established ideology, aware of both its interests and mission. Each class fights other classes in three ways: economic, political, and ideological. The fullest expression of this struggle can be found in the battle of political parties, which are always tools for the realization of class interests. In this context, the Communist Party is the highest form of class organization. Cf. R. Boer, *Stalin: From Theology to the Philosophy of Socialism in Power*, New York 2017, pp. 65–183; G. Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System*, Cambridge 2010.

⁵² Cf. M. Ziółkowski, „Uniwersalne wartości” a regionalne doświadczenia. *Europa Środkowa wobec współczesnych debat o wartościach i celach rozwoju* [“Universal values” Versus Regional Experiences. *Central Europe in the Face of Contemporary Debates on Values and Goals of Development*], “Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny” 65/3 (2003), pp. 224–228.

⁵³ Do not forget that materialist Marxist anthropology postulated the elimination of natural human associations (family, nation-state, state, etc.) because these, in the light of the assumptions of this anthropology, appeared as historical and temporary creations, and at the same time, as those that required liquidation because their persistence presupposes the prolongation of a given social order. Here another thesis of collectivism manifests itself, which is also shared by individualism. It is the belief that everything changes. Change is permanent and inevitable, and ultimately, despite perturbations, it leads to progress, i.e.,

The particular dimension of collectivist Marxist anthropology, on which the communist social order is based, is expressed in the category of social class. Although throughout history in many societies it is possible to distinguish social groups (family, lineage, tribe, clan, people, tribe, etc.), related to each other either by blood ties, or by a common type of productive activity, or by a similar economic status, intellectual, moral, social, ethnic, etc., the emphasis on social classes and the vision of social life through the lens of a class is the work of modern times and the contemporary approach to human social life. Based on dialectical and historical materialism, Marxism-Leninism developed the most famous and most influential understanding of social classes in modern times, which penetrated to a large extent into social sciences, with a particular impact on sociology, economics, pedagogy, and legal sciences. In other words, the idea of various types of hierarchized social groups and the vision of social life in terms of social classes are a product of the present day, reflecting the contemporary approach to human social life.⁵⁴

All the phraseology of Marxism, therefore, directly and indirectly, pertains to collectivist anthropology, as expressed in the theory of social classes.⁵⁵ Collectivist anthropology encapsulated in the ideology of competing social classes is also the foundation of the Marxist vision of politics, law, state, and economy. It is essential to understanding history and the “end of history” as a collectivist vision of classless social life. The elimination of class antagonism (class struggle), that is, the liberation of man from the fundamental evil of class inequality, can, according to radical Marxists, only be achieved in a revolutionary way by eliminating the class that owns the means of production. It can only be brought about by the peasants and workers, aware of their historic mission and interests, through their dictatorship, by all means, including terror, turmoil,

development, which will be a much more perfect state/condition than before. Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 159–162.

⁵⁴ Cf. P. Skrzydlewski, *Kolektywizm, indywidualizm a osobowa wizja człowieka* [*Collectivism, Individualism Versus the Personal Vision of Man*], [in:] *Spór o osobę w świetle klasycznej koncepcji człowieka* [*The Dispute over the Person in the Light of the Classical Concept of Man*], P.S. Mazur (ed.), Kraków 2012, pp. 133–136.

⁵⁵ Marxist phraseology coined such terms as: alienation, class antagonism, class vanguard, base and superstructure, the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the hegemony of the social class, the historical mission of the proletariat, ideology and ideological struggle, internationalism, capitalism, class interest, communism, conflict, culture, historical and dialectical materialism, morality, state and law, party, politics, progress, work, religion, revolution, socialism, society, justice, class consciousness, worldview, power, war, and others. They are even – according to Marxists themselves – a derivative of the collectivist approach to human existence. Cf. R. Ficek, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijan...*, op. cit., pp. 116–121.

coercion and violence. The result of such activities is the creation of a single community of people equal and free from all “bourgeois degeneration” and exploitation, including private property, religion, and family because – as Marxists believe – these are factors that lead to the alienation of man. Socialism will be achieved by humankind after abolishing the capitalist form of social life and the introduction of the socialist order, that is, community with the state-owned means of production (in Marxist dialectics: the highest stage of communism).⁵⁶

Marxist collectivist anthropology attempts to remove from politics the classically understood common good regarded as human good in favor of the utilitarian class interest. As the vanguard of the “new progressive world,” it will also replace the political strategy oriented towards realizing the human good for the sovereign communist power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat. Politics conceived in this fashion after the destruction of all social classes has the ambition to build on earth a kind of communist paradise in which everyone will be equal (universal egalitarianism understood in Marxist terms) and free.⁵⁷

The actions of the vanguard of the collectivist party personify “the good of all” and, therefore, the good of the individual. Such visions have been adopted not only by Marxists but also by neo-Marxists and all kinds of left-wing anarchists, who aims to “liberate humanity” through the cancellation of Christian culture and remodelling of traditional forms of social life (family, community religion, nation, etc.).

Individualism and its “target-specific” nature

Individualism as a way of experiencing and understanding reality has long been an essential component of Western civilization. It did not appear suddenly, of course, but resulted from a combination of many complex religious,

⁵⁶ According to Marxists, in communism, there will be no state, statutory laws, or any political power because the historical process after the period of class struggles will create a perfect man who will not need such institutions; rather, he will free himself from them to realize his new “true nature.” In the social order based on the human being understood in this way the difference between the good of the individual and the good of other people will be lost, the difference between individuals will disappear. It will be *de facto* a non-community because it will not have one fundamental goal that connects all. No wonder then, that there will be no law because there will be neither a subject (the source of law in the form of public authority), nor the need for its existence for the common good, nor material reasons that justify its existence, nor the personal life of a human being, where it would be promulgated. Cf. R. Ficek, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijan...*, op. cit., pp. 122–124.

⁵⁷ Cf. M. Ziolkowski, „*Uniwersalne wartości*”..., op. cit., pp. 228–230.

social, economic, and political factors. In the 20th century, individualism came under criticism, among others, from personalism and other related theological-philosophical trends. The individualization of the human person in Western societies is a kind of self-propelling mechanism that, with successive and higher levels of individualization of culture, is gaining momentum. Many sociologists – starting with Émile Durkheim and Max Weber – displayed the formation of individuality as a describable social process.

Analyzing individualism in the context of personalism, Henry de Lubac states that the contemporary debate on these issues takes place at the level of the metaphysical sense and mystery of the human person.

The evil of our time consists primarily of some degradation, or even dusting down to dust, of the fundamental uniqueness of every human being. This evil manifests itself much more in the metaphysical order than in the moral order. We must oppose such disintegration, which is sometimes the planned goal of atheistic ideologies, not so much with sterile polemics as with a certain “recapitulation” of the intact secret of the person.⁵⁸

The main reason for this is that this extremely individualistic view of man does not fully take into account the social dimension of the human person (man understood as a *persona socialis*). Moreover, extreme individualism – inscribed in the assumptions of extreme capitalism – is criticized for amorality concerning socio-economic life, recognizing the man as a self-centered and anti-social being and making his freedom an absolute value. This trend puts the individual in opposition to society. Therefore, it considers the conflict between the individual and authority inevitable and identifies the contemporary culture and society with the state legal system.

For the social doctrine of the Church, it is also difficult to accept the interpretation of the natural law, especially the right to property equated with

⁵⁸ H. de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned His Writings*, San Francisco 1993, pp. 171–172. Many modern critics of liberal concepts have emphasized that the capitalist economic system is fundamentally incompatible with current economic programs and the “planetary” ecosystem. In their opinion, the world economy is based on limited material resources. Nevertheless, the capitalist economic model is founded on a paradigm of “infinite” economic growth. Therefore, if the laws of nature cannot be changed, the approach to fundamental issues related to human functioning in the complex political and economic system of the modern world should be thoroughly revised. In practice, this means debunking the top priority “myths” about understanding the human person (cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 55).

securing an individual's absolute freedom of possession. In this context, it is almost impossible to exercise the right to use goods and services under their universal purpose (common good). As a result, it opens the way to a selfish lust for profit and possession. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a narrow group of people (oligarchy) inevitably leads to many severe problems of a socio-political nature and consequently to a sharp conflict between capital and labor. Therefore, legal regulations are necessary to protect workers' rights, such as fair wages, co-management, profit, and co-ownership.⁵⁹

The modern understanding of individualism most often refers to an "individually" organized society or an "individualistically" shaped individual. An individualistic society is considered in opposition to the principles of an organized society. Thus, the "individualistic" human being is assigned autonomy in making decisions and formulating evaluation criteria. In this sense, individuals are no longer oriented towards norms and values defined by tradition but more and more relate to their aspirations and beliefs. In effect, there is a great variety of attitudes, lifestyles, and ways of acting.⁶⁰

The individualism inscribed in the system of classical capitalism tends to devalue the human person only to the dimension of a kind of product: the produce of labor. It distorts and misrepresents the theological meaning of economic activity understood as a service to meet the needs of people and communities. Extreme methodological individualism opposes the principle of solidarity. It may also lead to a depreciation of the community dimension of involvement in sociopolitical life. 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 subsidiarity.

Individualism is also a concept in theology. In a positive sense, it is a category that justifies the dignity of the human person. In a negative connotation, however, it is a manifestation of the failure to take into account the social dimension of man in Christian spirituality, pastoral work, and moral theology. In a theological sense, individualism is a characteristic sign of Christian personalism emphasizing the value of a person. It has its source in discovering the qualities of every person as a created and redeemed being expressed in the

⁵⁹ Cf. W. Piwowarski, Z. Skwierczyński, *Indywidualizm w naukach społecznych* [*Individualism in Social Sciences*], [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka* [*Catholic Encyclopaedia*], vol. 7, Lublin 1997, col. 180.

⁶⁰ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 109–114.

vocation of every human being to a supernatural goal (to holiness). Christianity is “individual” because it emphasizes the unique character and value of each human person. In some currents of spirituality, this character was also a motive explaining the focus on individual salvation and the need to avoid all occasions for sin. This attitude, though, sometimes led to individualist asceticism, focused on achieving personal perfection.⁶¹

Nowadays, also in theology, there is a tendency to both overcome and deepen individualism understood in personalistic categories. To diminish individualism is to emphasize the social dimension of salvation, which must encompass all humanity. Individualism emphasizes the autonomy of a person and accentuates individuation and individualization in the formation of personal identity. It sometimes turns into anthropocentrism and subjectivism, which strongly highlight the autonomy of conscience and the role of individual freedom not constrained by moral norms. This attitude is postulated by cultural psychoanalysis for which the development of personality is not the goal of referring to invariable natural abilities of the human person.⁶²

Contemporary individualism manifests itself in the tendency to define the essence and tasks of the Christian faith in terms of ideology, contrary to the traditional understanding of religious orthodoxy. It postulates the right to an independent choice of the scope of religious truths. The individual faith of the doctrinal-ecclesiastical unit should be opposed to religion, which is understood as institutionalized denominations. Modern individualism exploits concepts of individually organized society or an individualistically shaped individual.⁶³

⁶¹ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Prymat osoby nad rzeczą. Z okazji 30 rocznicy powstania Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej KUL 7.03.1976* [*The Primacy of Person over Thing: On the 30th Anniversary of the Faculty of Christian Philosophy of the Catholic University of Lublin 7.03.1976*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 717. The most extreme manifestation of individualism was the depreciation of the world treated as the source of sin. This attitude was also fostered by getting to know the social nature of the Church. With this attitude, everything was subordinated to the formation of individual piety. Individualism meant that the pastoral care ignored the communal character of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. They were treated as an opportunity for private prayer, for which the sacraments created good circumstances. Cf. W. Piwowarski, Z. Skwierczyński, *Indywidualizm...*, op. cit., col. 181.

⁶² Cf. W. Piwowarski, Z. Skwierczyński, *Indywidualizm...*, op. cit., col. 182.

⁶³ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Spółczesność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona...*, op. cit., pp. 59–62; Z. Boksański, *Indywidualizm a zmiana społeczna. Polacy wobec nowoczesności. Raport z badań* [*Individualism and Social Change: Poles and Modernity. Report on Research*], Warszawa 2007, p. 7.

An individualistic society is considered in opposition to the principles of the organization of society, whereas the individualistic individual is assigned autonomy in making decisions and formulating evaluation criteria. It means that individuals are no longer guided by norms and values defined by tradition; rather, they are driven by their aspirations, beliefs and a considerable variety of attitudes, lifestyles, and ways of acting.

Thus understood, individualism weakens the sensitivity to God and man, leading inevitably to practical materialism that favors the spread of moral permissiveness, utilitarianism, and hedonism. The values associated with “being” are replaced with those associated with “having.” The only goal that is taken into account is material well-being. The so-called quality of life is most often or exclusively interpreted in terms of economic efficiency, disorderly consumerism, attractions, and pleasures derived from physical life. Deeper relational, spiritual, and religious dimensions of existence are forgotten.

In such a climate, suffering, which though always weighing heavily on human life can become a stimulus for personal growth, is “censored,” rejected as useless, and even fought as an occurrence of evil to be avoided at all times and under all circumstances. When it cannot be overcome, and when even hope for future prosperity disappears, a person tends to believe that life has lost all meaning and is increasingly tempted to exercise the right to put an end to it. For modern man life becomes just a “thing,” which he considers as his exclusive property, entirely subjected to his rule and manipulation.⁶⁴

In traditional individualistic systems, man – as is the case in collectivist Marxism – is merely a better-organized substance: he exists through and thanks to it. Human existence is confined to matter, to biological and sensual life. Hence, the anthropology of individualistic concepts will face the challenge of building a new vision of human dignity. Similarly to collectivism, it will narrow this dignity down to having, disposing, and using. The dignity of the human person will be understood in utilitarian terms. Not everyone will have it, and

⁶⁴ In the same cultural context, the body is not seen as a typical personal reality, a sign, and a place of relationship with others, with God, and with the world. It is reduced to a purely material dimension: it is merely an assembly of organs, functions, and energies that can be used only by means of the criteria of pleasure and efficiency. As a consequence, sexuality is also deprived of a personal dimension and is treated instrumentally. Instead of being a sign, place, and language of love, that is, the gift of self and acceptance of another human being with all their wealth, it becomes more and more an opportunity and a tool of the self-affirming I and selfish fulfillment of one's desires and drives. Cf. R. Ficek, *(Post-)Modernity...*, op. cit., pp. 50–56.

those who do not have it will be doomed to extinction. Their death, then, as is the case in Marxist ideology, is treated as a natural thing, a historical necessity.

As a result, when faced with a life that is born and a life that dies, man is no longer able to ask himself the question of the most authentic meaning of his existence, accepting in a genuinely free manner these crucial moments of his "being." He is only interested in "action" and therefore tries to use all the technological achievements to program and control birth as well as death, extending his mastery over them. These authentic experiences that should be lived then become things that man claims to possess or reject.

For that reason, authentic freedom is an immense gift but – at the same time – a considerable task. From the individualistic point of view, however, any objective moral criterion – external to the individual – would mean the destruction of the autonomous personality because it is related to the limitation and control of human actions. Besides, it would undermine the full sovereignty of an individual who aims with his whole being towards complete and unlimited freedom, i.e., the absence of any cause or dependence. However, it is the essence of the autonomy that individualism needs. In this sense, individualism will always face a significant problem explaining the existence and execution of legal as well as moral principles. In other words, individualism will deny such regulations with the proviso that they are malicious in their nature. Extreme individualism, therefore, seems to be anti-social anthropology atomizing everything and antagonizing everyone to everyone. However, this antagonism has direct sources other than the class rivalry of collectivism. In this case, the struggle is for the benefit, for measurable goods that lead to power and domination.

Personalism as the integral-humanist concept of man

In individualism and collectivism, Christian personalism attempts to expose these errors that threaten the integral concept of a human being. Only such social systems are ethically justified, which create the right conditions for the full development of the human person, and not those that distort and deform them. Personalism does not directly propose a social system but shows how to search for or improve the existing forms of social, economic, state, and cultural life.⁶⁵

As the name suggests, personalism positions the human person at the center of discussions about the social system. A person is understood in the creative-salvation perspective as *imago Dei* (an image of God), who has a transcendent

⁶⁵ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku...*, op. cit., pp. 779–780.

destiny. He realizes himself in natural communities: the family, various professional, social, economic, homeland, and state groups. He is endowed with freedom, but at the same time, he is a social being, realizing himself in a community of other persons.⁶⁶

From the 19th to the 20th centuries, however, a discourse on the concept of a personal God emerged on a broader philosophical and theological forum. Affirming the claim that God is the only Being that can be called a Person, Cardinal Wyszyński connected in his personalism the normative concept of being human with God (*Soli Deo*).⁶⁷ The Christian tradition, as well as the reference to realistic personalist philosophy, reveal that this is not subjective idealism that reduces reality to human thought. According to Wyszyński, it is God's transcendence that gives God's creation His irreducibility. Also, the natural law – understood as a meaningful order of reality in relation to the subject – is merely constituted but not created by human subjects. God, as the Supreme Person, guarantees both significant order and irreducible reality.⁶⁸

In the personalistic concept of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, man is a complex being and understood as a “double” of the physical and spiritual element. The material and spiritual elements are so closely related that they cannot be fully separated without destroying human existence.⁶⁹ It is the spiritual element that

⁶⁶ According to Wyszyński: “The natural dignity of the human person culminates in the person of God-Man Jesus Christ. Without Christ, man cannot fully understand himself. He cannot understand who he is, what his proper dignity is, nor how to recognize his vocation and final destiny” (S. Wyszyński, *Chrystusa nie można wyłączyć z dziejów człowieka* (23.11.1980) [*Christ Cannot Be Excluded from the History of Man* (23.11.1980)], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kościół w służbie Narodu* [*The Church at the Service of the Nation*], Poznań–Warszawa 1981, p. 241).

⁶⁷ A bishop's motto present in the coat of arms of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. Cf. J.R. Stone, *The Routledge Dictionary of Latin Quotations: the Illiterate's Guide to Latin Maxims, Mottoes, Proverbs and Sayings*, London 2005, p. 207.

⁶⁸ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Prymat człowieka na globie. Do prawników. Warszawa 28.12.1969* [*The Primacy of Man on the Globe: To Lawyers. Warsaw 28.12.1969*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...*, op. cit., p. 43.

⁶⁹ Analyzing the physical-spiritual dimension of man, Cardinal Wyszyński is convinced that human uniqueness is expressed already at this level: “Through the body, the human person joins the world around him. Owing to this, man is a part of that world, lives, and acts in it. He is subject to its laws but also occupies a unique position in it. He is its master: he organizes, conquers, processes, and uses it for his life and development. (...) The body, as a material element, is – as a result – a kind of bridge connecting the reality of the temporal world with the supernatural realm” (S. Wyszyński, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek, Warszawa 19.10.1980* [*The Most Important Value in the World is Man, Warsaw 19.10.1980*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kościół w służbie...*, op. cit., pp. 88–89).

determines the unity of the human being and defines man as a human being. On the spiritual level, man realizes his own personal identity, unifying all of man's "I's." In this way, man is himself, a being separate from others like him: he is a person. It means that he is consciously active and free.⁷⁰ The concept of a person, therefore, means self-existence in being a substantial whole of the physical and spiritual nature, as well as freedom and responsibility. Then, man-person understood in this way transcends the entire reality that surrounds him, belongs to himself, has himself, and has a non-transferable responsibility for himself. Belonging to himself, a human person cannot/should not be used by anyone. No one can represent him, and he cannot even be considered "a possible object of use." A man as a person is responsible for himself.⁷¹

Therefore, man is a personal being of unique value. This is connected with the truth, which has an axiological dimension, defined by the term personal dignity. One can speak of dignity only in relation to man. This concept signifies and contains ethically evaluative content and ethical assessment. It expresses both the qualification of human acts and their moral evaluation. Man is the subject of his own action, and the ethical value of his action is precisely the unique value of man.⁷²

According to Cardinal Wyszyński, the justification of the dignity of a person does not only take place at the innate level. It also has a supernatural dimension. Two references can be adduced in this dimension. The first is the fact of creation. The value of a person is determined by his origin from God, his likeness to him, the "image of God."⁷³ The second completes the first by the fact of the Incarnation and Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. The truths are essential components of a person's total value: God's sonship of man resulting from the fact of redemption. From these truths, there are several concrete conclusions. Man has a transcendent self-worth, which no one

⁷⁰ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Zadania i środki oddziaływania Kościoła w Polsce w zakresie kształtowania kultury społeczno-katolickiej*, Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15.01.1971 [*Tasks and Means of Influencing the Church in Poland in the Formation of Socio-Catholic Culture, Warsaw, St Anne's Church, 15.01.1971*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia...*, op. cit. (Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 36), pp. 59–60.

⁷¹ "Beyond the human being – emphasizes the Cardinal – there is no personality, no rationality, and no freedom" (S. Wyszyński, *Spoleczność przyrodzona...*, op. cit., p. 61). „As an autonomous subject of rational nature, man becomes the perfect being through the entirety of his nature. Thus, (...) the human person is the first and fundamental value of the whole social order" (S. Wyszyński, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek...*, op. cit., pp. 90–91).

⁷² Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek...*, op. cit., s. 89.

⁷³ S. Wyszyński, *Chrystusa nie można wyłączyć...*, op. cit., p. 241.

can deprive him of. This dignity cannot be relinquished. It results from the equality of all people in their humanity.⁷⁴

As Wyszyński pointed out, man is “the image of God” in the light of God’s plan. Through the work of the Redemption of Christ, he was adopted by God. In this context, it is possible to fully discover the unique value of a person, defined by the notion of self-worth. This is the basis for thinking about man and his ethical evaluation as well as its treatment in the practice of life by oneself and other people. It also operates as a fundamental truth of Christian anthropology.⁷⁵ In the personalistic language of Cardinal Wyszyński, “the whole truth about man” demands that it be examined not only as of the value of a person in the natural sphere, but also in the supernatural realm. Only such truth reveals fully human dignity.⁷⁶

Human self-worth is also evidenced by the goodness that a man has committed rationally and freely – the good that is the determinant of the common good. Man, as a rational being, builds a more just humanity. This is, then, his sacred duty and moral imperative.⁷⁷

Man’s inclination to coexist with his neighbors – writes Wyszyński – is comparable to that of God the Father to coexist with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God wanted to form a nature for a man. So that it was one in himself, but one that strives to live with others.⁷⁸

Apart from natural values that testify to his exceptional dignity, man also has spiritual and supernatural worth. Therefore, the only man is a “person” made in the Creator’s image and likeness among all creatures on earth. He alone in the visible world is the creature that God wanted for himself. It is a man who has been called to participate in the very life of God. This participation is a personal meeting. Man cannot find himself, assert who he is, other than by

⁷⁴ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., p. 319; S. Wyszyński, *O katolickiej woli życia...*, op. cit., p. 34.

⁷⁵ “Made in the image and likeness of God, man only in God has rest. Hence the ultimate goal of man is connecting with God in eternal happiness. We strive for it by filling God’s commandments and self sanctification” (S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., p. 50).

⁷⁶ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., p. 319.

⁷⁷ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Uświęcenie doczesności. Do duchowieństwa Warszawy 3.08.1962* [*Sanctification of Temporality. To the Clergy of Warsaw 3.08.1962*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 189.

⁷⁸ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., p. 55.

seeking God throughout his life. By discovering God, a man is also uncovering himself. Man must continuously find himself because he is the image of God.⁷⁹

Man cannot discover himself, however, except in God, in his prototype. A man exists sensibly in the world only as the image and likeness of God. In God, the truth about man, his mystery, and final calling is fully revealed. It manifests itself in every human being, regardless of qualifications, level of intelligence, sensitivity, and physical ableness.⁸⁰

Christian personalism presupposes the transcendence of man. This transcendence results from the personal character of the human being and is revealed in the functioning of his mental faculties: intellect and will. The mental cognition of a man, through its activism, selectivity, non-material and universal profile, goes beyond the categories of matter. It indicates the transcendence of man as the owner of the intellect.⁸¹ The second sector of the dynamic transcendence of human being is the phenomenon of freedom manifested in the fact of self-determination. Through the act of freedom, expressed in free decision, man fulfills himself as a man and thus as a subject rational from within.⁸² Thanks to freedom, man shapes his personality, inner "face," sets goals, chooses means, and decides about his own life. Even though he is included in the system of biological and social determinants, he transcends the world around him in acts of free choice.

Thanks to his freedom, he can be "active" even at death, making "the final choice." Another manifestation of human transcendence is the sphere of higher values: cognitive, moral, aesthetic, religious, which constitute the broadly understood spiritual culture of the human person. Respecting these values is

⁷⁹ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *W sprawie katolickiego wychowania młodzieży. Gniezno 5.10.1950* [*On the Catholic Education of Youth. Gniezno 5.10.1950*], [in:] *Listy Pastorskie Episkopatu Polski 1945–1974*, Paris 1975, p. 173.

⁸⁰ As Cardinal Wyszyński pointed out: "All communities must be created on a human scale. All of them must have the rights and obligations of a human person as a starting point so that people will feel good in them, just like in well-tailored clothing. Hence, it is impossible to build social life structures differently, just only by taking into account the human person's faculties and capacities. Whenever social institutions or any forms of social life conflict with the rights and obligations and with the inner character and nature of the human person, they always become anguish and torment" (S. Wyszyński, *Pacem in terris...*, op. cit., p. 124).

⁸¹ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *W obronie życia...*, op. cit., p. 118; S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość...*, op. cit., p. 52.

⁸² Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Wolamy o „nowych ludzi plemię”* [*We Cry Out for "a Tribe of New People"*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 287

a prerequisite for genuine humanism.⁸³ In Cardinal Wyszyński's theory of values, however, the idea of love is central.⁸⁴ The Primate of Poland's personalism is closely related to existential Thomism, while the modern post-Cartesian philosophy is treated with a distance. Little wonder, therefore, that the structure of the human person is explained mainly with the help of semantics borrowed from the theory of being, hereditarily derived from the world of things. The ontological language in the description of man is justified, but only the personalistic-axiological language fully highlights his subjectivity and specificity.⁸⁵

The personalistic vision of man presented by Primate Wyszyński emphasizes the preeminence of the human person in the entire reality of the temporal world. It is related to respect for his dignity and freedom. It also means the dominance of the supernatural sphere over matter and the balance between objective and subjective order. The personalistic concept of man presented by Primate Wyszyński emphasizes the priority of the human person in the whole reality of the temporal world.

Christ is asserting the high dignity of man. When He was accused of making himself God, he said: "You are Gods. Also, you are shocked that I have called yourselves the Son of God" (cf. J 10:34). In today's age of destructive behemoths, we must remind people: "you are gods."⁸⁶

⁸³ "To understand man means to discover in him strange faculties which, despite distortions and co-occurring disorder, want justice for himself and others. They even desire it in the face of God. (...) However, when one discovers the desire for truth, freedom, and justice in man, one does not know him wholly yet. It is only the mysterious threshold of humanity. Whoever thinks that the three powers are capable of exhausting the essence of humanity is wrong. In man, there is another wonderful force of body and spirit that carries him on the wings of social pursuit of one another: it is the power of love. (...) It takes so much space in human nature that the powers of truth, freedom, and justice are only the threshold; it is a closed-door if there is no love", S. Wyszyński, *Kamienie węgielne budowane na górach świętych. Na Jasnej Górze po powrocie z uwięzienia (2.II.1956)* [*Cornerstones Built on Holy Mountains. In the Jasna Góra Monastery after Return from Imprisonment (2.II.1956)*], [in:] S. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁸⁴ Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek...*, op. cit., p. 87.

⁸⁵ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life...*, op. cit., pp. 25–27.

⁸⁶ S. Wyszyński, *Wiecznie oporny...*, op. cit., p. 249; the quote from the Gospel as paraphrased by Card. Wyszyński.

Conclusions

Cardinal Wyszyński's consideration on the social teaching of the Church was rooted in an anthropological and ethical points of view. Virtually the entire legacy of the Primate's scholarly and pastoral activity is inscribed in the tradition of the Church's centuries-long reflection on socio-political matters. The fundamental error of the social systems created in the 20th century is anthropological and is expressed in a distorted vision of man.

Collectivism (communism or various socialist systems) and individualism (extreme capitalism, liberalism) in confrontation with each other emphasized the incompleteness of the anthropological vision of man. In this context, some of human faculties were reduced, ignored, or even ultimately rejected. Praxeological personalism in the approach of Cardinal Wyszyński tries to expose these errors because only such systems of social life are ethically justified which create proper conditions for the full development of the human person, and not those that distort or disfigure them. Cardinal Wyszyński's personalism does not directly propose any particular social system. It shows how to search for or improve the existing sociopolitical, economic, or state life forms.

Co-relational personalism puts a human person bestowed with the dignity of a "child of God" at the center of the discussion. The human person understood in the creative and salvific perspective as *imago Dei* has his transcendent destiny. It realizes himself in natural communities such as the family, various professional, social and economic groups, , and finally, the homeland, nation and state. Man is endowed with freedom, but at the same time, he is a social being (*persona socialis*), realizing himself in the community of persons.

The main problem of "incomplete systems" of social life (collectivism or individualism) is the anthropological error that considers an individual human being a common element and part of the social organism. The good of the individual is completely subordinated to the good of social structures. In "incomplete systems" the individual's good can be realized without considering his/her independent choice. A person is identified with a specific set of social relations. For "incomplete systems" the human being understood as an independent subject of moral decisions entering into relations with the world and creating the "integral-humanist" social order seems to be irrelevant.

Collectivist and individualist anthropologies, which perceive social life structures in terms of competing social classes or individuals, must take up the fight against the Western traditional social culture, which displays man as a personal being, living and developing through the community. From the perspective of Cardinal Wyszyński, social order is a kind of arrangement in

which man is a sovereign; it is a social structure in which a subject is a human person, not a class, stratum, social group, or individual who is at constant war with others. Personalism views the good of man – man recognized as the sovereign of social life – as the proper goal and sense of the entire social structure and all social activities.

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RYSZARD FICEK (REV. PHD) – Sanctae Theologiae Doctor, priest of the diocese of Rockville Center/NY, the moral theologian and political scientist, a former lecturer of the Jordan University College in Morogoro/Tanzania, specializing in moral theology, church history and international relations.