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COLLECTIVISM, INDIVIDUALISM,
AND CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI'S
PERSONALISTIC CONCEPT OF MAN

1. INTRODUCTION

As early as 1996, Samuel Phillips Huntington, in his famous book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, predicted that major post-Cold War world conflicts would run along the “cultural demarcation lines” separating modern civilizations. He also suggested that the difference between the individualistic cultures of the Western world and the collectivist “non-Western” cultures would be a significant source of division and possible conflict.¹ Globally, according to Harry Charalambos Triandis, about 70 percent of the world’s population are considered themselves as “collectivists.” Moreover, many of these groups do not agree with the individualism of Western civilizations.²

With the end of the Cold War, contact between the two “hostile” socio-cultural groups intensified as the former communist countries began to open their borders and shifted their political and economic systems from totalitarian command-and-control economies allegedly favoring collectivism to market economies favoring individualism. Moreover, the rapidly advancing globalization processes, making the world ever smaller—due to unprecedented technological developments

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¹ Cf. S.P. HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 312–17.

² Cf. H.C. TRIANDIS, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 13–5.

in mass communication and transport—have facilitated the interaction between individualists and collectivists. In this way, the risk level of various types of conflicts, both local and global, has increased.

In personalistic philosophy, the matter's essence is rooted in a correctly interpreted integral vision of the human person. Therefore, the solution to contemporary problems in today's world is related to promoting the "man's issues" understood in personalist terms. However, an essential aspect of this dimension is to emphasize his personal dignity—both on the natural and supernatural level—by revealing the unquestionable importance he has in the entire social, cultural, economic, and political life, where the human person is the principle, subject, and goal of all social devices.³ A specific and unique way of being, characteristic only for a human being, determines his functioning in the social reality and determines his proper position in the entire ontic structure. "Although the man in his actions and efforts to master the earth is limited, [...] nevertheless, one should remember that he has primacy over the created world."⁴ "Ultimately, he was shaped in his entire being by God the Creator Himself, who placed in his nature a mark of His greatness. This greatness does not come from human bestowal but is established by the creative act of God's love. Therefore, every human person is related to others in God Himself."⁵

Thus, the contemporary world functioning in the "post-Cold War" period requires a reinterpretation and redefinition of the interests of individuality and collectivism: two opposing socio-cultural, political, and economic frameworks recognized as the primary source of global conflict in the past as well as in the future. Along with the rapid globalization and the change of the political paradigm of the former "socialist" states, the interaction between the two socio-cultural notions is increasing—hence the greater possibility of a world conflict. Therefore, a proper understanding of individualism and collectivism is needed. The above concepts have been used many times as basic principles organizing the functioning of the structures of both the socio-cultural and political-economic life of the country. Today, however, individualistic models and collectivist concepts are also used in building a strategy for the functioning of the state, both locally and globally.

³ Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 25.

⁴ Cf. K. WOJTYŁA, "Podmiotowość i 'to co nie redukowane' w człowieku," *Ethos* 1, no 2–3 (1988): 27.

⁵ S. WYSZYŃSKI, "O katolickiej woli życia. List pasterski na Wielkanoc 1947," in STEFAN KARDYNAŁ WYSZYŃSKI PRYMAS POLSKI, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946-1981* (Warszawa: ODiSS, 1990), 34–6.

2. COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM: DIFFERENCES IN SIMILARITIES

The Magisterium of the Church is critical of contemporary ideological concepts promoting either collectivism (both in the form of communism and all kinds of socialist systems) or extreme individualism (e.g., the original form of liberal capitalism).⁶ There are even opinions that a variety of “conspiracy against the man” has emerged in modern culture. As noted, it is accompanied by the expansion of the anti-solidarity culture, in many cases taking the form of an authentic “culture of death.” It is spreading due to strong cultural, economic, and political tendencies expressing a specific concept of society in which “success” is the most crucial criterion.⁷

Considering the whole situation from this point of view, we can speak of a “war of the strong against the powerless”: a life that in extreme conditions demands more kindness, love, and care is considered useless or treated as an unbearable burden, and consequently is rejected on different ways. A person who, with his illness, disability, or only by his presence, threatens the well-being or life habits of more privileged people, instead of being protected, is sometimes

⁶ The Catholic Church has long led a reflection 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*. However, this last encyclical is, in a way, a summary of the Church’s centuries-old reflection on social matters.

⁷ 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 socio-political systems. Also, today, she is trying to do so based on the fundamental principles of Christian ethics. Only in this way can the Catholic Church fulfill 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. Therefore, 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 socio-political regime. His criticism concerned the anthropological and moral dimension of socio-political life primarily. However, the Primate was aware that if there was an appropriate moral order, then—necessarily—critical elements of the state’s political system would change. He has repeatedly spoken of a “social disposition” that would favor just socio-political transformation. The social disposition—in his opinion—should be based on the canvas of the Christian values, which aims to change the human heart. As a result, 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),” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 889–91; S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Nasze dezyderaty. Do profesorów katolickiej nauki społecznej (Jasna Góra, 22.01.1963),” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 196; S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Problem pracy górników w Polsce. List do księdza biskupa Herberta Bednorza 2.02.1978,” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 810–1.

perceived as an enemy that should be eliminated. It creates even a kind of “conspiracy against life,” which draws not only people into their individual, family, and social relationships, but it reaches far more broadly and acquires a global dimension, violating and destroying relations between nations and states.⁸

The main reason for this is the rejection by contemporary collectivism and individualism of the natural law’s idea in defining man, the integral concept of the human person, and the specific socio-political order that they shape. In this sense, the departure from the Christian vision of the human person and the natural law causes that collectivism and liberal capitalist ideology drive modern societies towards various forms of materialist dictatorship, consumerism, and economism.⁹ Nevertheless, the emphasis on the idea of social solidarity, or the attitude of “being means more than having” revived Christian protest against many extreme collectivist concepts as well as liberal individualism.¹⁰

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.”¹¹ However, it was a “knowledge”

⁸ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, no. 12.

⁹ 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. Thus, he opposes the concepts of legal positivism, treating human rights as certain conventions or determinations of political power. The conviction accompanied this approach to the issue of rights and obligations that it was necessary to focus on matters directly related to the socio-economic situation in Poland. According to Primate, before the interest in issues of respect for human rights on an international scale, there should be a commitment to make the society in Poland aware of their human rights with full knowledge of their content and, therefore, to enable their full and free use, which of course obligated the state authority in a specific way (cf. H. WAŚKIEWICZ, “Prawa człowieka w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego,” *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 10 (1982): 3–12).

¹⁰ “Today, as the Cardinal Wyszyński states, after years of various hardships and efforts, we see that it is not enough to ‘save’ only the economy and production because new situations are emerging, displaying new tasks. Modern development no longer follows the question line: what do you have, what do you have, and what do you lack? Instead, we ask: who are you? What is your value? What do you bring to the family, work, social, economic, and religious life? A new problem emerges—not so much of one system or another, but of a human being. The point is that a man, to whom the organization of economic life and production technology helps to master the world, should not be enslaved by the conditions of dependent labor” (“Duch Ewangelii w organizacji życia społeczno-zawodowego i publicznego w Polsce. Do wiernych w archikatedrze warszawskiej 6.01.1978,” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 802).

¹¹ Cf. S. WYSZYŃSKI, *Inteligencja w przedniej straży komunizmu* (Katowice 1939); S. WYSZYŃSKI, *Katolicki program walki z komunizmem* (Włocławek 1937); S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Socjalistyczna własność wspólna w ocenie ‘Rerum novarum,’” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 28(1931): 470–86; S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Pius XI o walce z komunizmem,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 39 (1937): 466–78.

that denies God and man's identity, from which flows the renunciation of ownership, freedom, marriage, family, faith, and truth. In the opinion of representatives promoting the then "collectivist" concepts, religion is only an illusion, and law, as a postulate of reason, flows only from the judgment of the majority.¹²

Of course, the social teaching of the Church is very affirmative about "healthy" competition based on free-market competition within the framework of appropriate legal regulations. The many achievements of the capitalist system, especially in the so-called "developing countries." Nevertheless, the Magisterium of the Church has never ceased to criticize the utilitarianism and materialism of contemporary socialist and capitalist societies. Thus, 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 socio-political order.¹³

In this context, it should not be forgotten that it is also a battle to preserve the "truth" about the Christian religion (the Catholic Church), the man, and the richness of human life forms. Because it is Christianity that created and strengthened the personal understanding of man present in the West. Hence, all the postulates of secularism or slogans of a radicalized form of separation of the Christian religion from public life and culture itself, not to mention spreading the ideology of atheism or the doctrine of religious indifferentism, harm not only Christianity itself and the religious life born in it, but also in a 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 person. In this sense, they are also undercutting the spiritual roots of European culture that has lived and developed for centuries in the context of Revelation and Christian tradition, as well as Greek teaching and Roman law.

¹² 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: Routledge, 2010), 23–61.

¹³ Cf. B. LAURENT, "Catholicism and Liberalism: Two Ideologies in Confrontation," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 810–6.

3. ANTHROPOLOGICAL ERROR

In his reflection on the criticism of “incomplete systems” of social life, Cardinal Wyszyński is, of course, based on the experience of the Church. Thus, referring to the popes’ teachings, the Primate states that the fundamental error of both the concepts promoting collectivism and liberal individualism is an anthropological issue consisting of a misunderstanding of the fundamental ontological structures that define the man.¹⁴ In his opinion, therefore, the essential subject of the personalistic 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. “Apart from man, there is no personality, no rationality, and no freedom.”¹⁵

When asked where the erroneous understanding of human nature and the exclusion of society’s subjectivity come from, both in Marxist materialism and in extreme liberalism, Cardinal Wyszyński replies that the first source of this is materialism, atheism, and religious indifferentism, leading to the secularization of society. 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 the essential dimensions of human life, preventing man from fully realizing his personal needs and goals.¹⁶

Therefore, an essential dimension of these considerations is the analysis of collectivism (especially concerning Marxist ideology) and individualistic concepts (mainly traditional liberal capitalism), which today constitute a new vision of man and society. Moreover, they undermine both the classical and conventional ideas of a human being (reductionist understood ontology) and question the values on which the modern concept of social life is based (deceitful axiology). According to Cardinal Wyszyński, the main problem affecting the above systems lies in the so-called “anthropological error,” which does not allow for forming an integral vision of man reflecting the full truth about himself.¹⁷

¹⁴ Cf. CA 13.

¹⁵ S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona. II Konferencja Akademicka, Warszawa, kościół św. Anny 16.02.1957,” in *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane*, vol. 2, 61.

¹⁶ “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 governed by a commodity, a material, and not as a human person, having higher tasks, reaching beyond the dimension of earthly temporal, family, national or political life” (“Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku. Podczas bierzmowania młodzieży akademickiej w Warszawie 19.05.1977,” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 779–80).

¹⁷ 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

Contemporary philosophical systems referring to the Hegelian and Marxist traditions have held that knowing the truth (in other words, “real” knowledge) presupposes actions leading to its realization. However, theory and practice are only two sides of the same dialectical process. Moreover, they cover the whole of reality.¹⁸ Accompanying this is the belief that history and society can be studied in a “scientific” way by deriving laws about the future course of history and the desired shape of the social order. The ultimate goal and the fundamental task set by followers of such a theory are not to understand reality, especially social reality, but to change it.¹⁹

Opposition to the concepts promoting collectivism—especially in the Marxist version—appears in the works of leading Polish political intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hence, the entire teaching of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński also refers to them. In this context, the ideology of communism was marked by an “anthropological error,” resulting from a completely wrong approach to the human being. It was a vision that can be described as humiliating, not elevating man, reducing a human being to his physical dimension by diminishing or even rejecting his spiritual dimension.

The communist doctrine—which was based on the “collectivist” idea—was a mental trend against the spiritualist and intellectual conception of man, combating his spirituality, appealing to human drives and passions, and distrusting reason, which demands freedom of thought. In this sense, Communist materialism interrupted the last development line and caused the diminution, declassification, and depersonification of man. In communism, man occupies a subordinate position.²⁰

philosophical concepts, Marxism does not consistently refer to one expressive 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. Therefore, 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: An Applied Analysis of the Theological Anthropology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Marszałek, 2020), 152–3.

¹⁸ This conviction marked the Hegelian thesis that what is real is real and what is real is true. The problem that is associated with the characterized ontological and epistemological position at the same time is that with the idiom of absolute knowledge comes the idea of absolute, total power (power) and out-and-out control serving to realize or maintain the “true vision” of reality. This theory also presupposes a unified goal for the whole of society and, as a result, leads to the rejection of another plan, which is the search for truth, since this is already given in the form of an ideology, and thus an artificial one instead of a spontaneous social order. Cf. D. PIETRZYK-REEVES, “Błąd antropologiczny komunizmu i odwrót od polityki,” in *Totalitaryzm a zachodnia tradycja*, ed. M. Kuniński (Kraków: OMPKA, 20016), 102–3.

¹⁹ Cf. PIETRZYK-REEVES, “Błąd antropologiczny komunizmu i odwrót od polityki,” 102.

²⁰ Cf. BŁOCH, *Marxism and Anthropology*, 63–72.

Then, the core of the anthropological error of communism is based on this erroneous 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 from the existing ones. This difference was summarized above all in the postulated ideal of social unity, which was Marx's greatest dream, connected with the socialist hope for the perfect satisfaction of all the needs expected in the materialist reality of the communist state. The greatest tragedy of the communist man was seen in the slavery of thought, which was a manifestation of that unity. Thus, in the death of individuality, thanks to which only man's spiritual sphere can develop. The freedom of thought was no longer needed because it was the ideology (and on its behalf) that decided what was right and what was not, what was truth, goodness, beauty. In other words, it was a utopian belief that one knows, or at least some people know, what a real man is and what his essence is.²¹

No wonder, then, that the above ideas laid the foundations for modern totalitarian systems (communism or Nazi Nazism). Interpreting the totalitarianism phenomenon, though, Hannah Arendt noted that in a totalitarian state, the model "citizen" is nothing more than a "Pavlov's dog," a human being reduced to the most elementary reactions.²² In the communist system, hence, people were to lose not only their property but also their intellectual certainty, in particular concerning the public sphere, ethical categories, legal stability as well as the belief that politics served the common good, and God is the fundamental source of the human life's meaning.²³

4. COLLECTIVISM: TREACHEROUS ILLUSION

More than 30 years after the fall of communism in the Soviet version, the concept of "collectivism" understood in communitarian terms is now experiencing a kind of renaissance, despite—or perhaps precisely because—contemporary societies are dominated by the culture of individualism. In general, though, "collectivism" is understood as a specific set of principles and norms organizing relations between an individual and society, value systems, attitudes, behavior

²¹ Cf. BLOCH, *Marxism and Anthropology*, 81–93.

²² Cf. H. ARENDT, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, vol. 1, trans. A. Grinberg (Warsaw: Świat Książki, 1993), 456.

²³ Cf. B. SZLACHTA, "Wstęp," in *Antykomunizm polski. Tradycje intelektualne (wybór tekstów źródłowych)*, ed. B. Szlachta (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2000), X–XIX.

patterns, types of mentality, and specific life orientations.²⁴ In this context, new forms of collectivist existence may arise. Moreover, the concept of collective-community is also evolving and changing, which can be used to explain many cultural and social phenomena. In sociology, however, there are generally classical approaches to community and newer ways of operationalizing this conceptual category. Significantly, the community as a phenomenon changes itself together with the changes in society.

Deliberations on the “collective” are rooted in liberal-conservative and religious thought. So they always contain an element of criticism of a free-market society, 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 community point of view, however, assumes that the individual emerges only in the process of interaction with others (socialization).

Religion defends the existence of the community dimension of social life through its rituals, direct shaping, and influencing social feelings through moral norms, the system of orders, and relating a man to God. Thus, the notion that the appearance and disappearance of a community hides a mystery, which is sacred, is not an isolated view.²⁵ Nevertheless, in its many versions and variants, Marxism and neo-Marxism contributed to the shaping of the collectivist vision of man, perhaps most strongly in contemporary culture. It carried an idea of a man understood as an “emanate” of the collective, a non-sovereign “emanate,” the specificity of which is revealed only by relating him to a community organized into antagonizing social groups called “social classes.”

However, according to Marxists, modern neo-Marxists (e.g., the Frankfurt School),²⁶ or libertine socialists,²⁷ the above “emanate” does not have an autonomous purpose of life. As it were, this goal is given to him/her by an “organized

²⁴ Nevertheless, the discourse of individualism is constructed by the thesis about the growing importance of the individual, who widens the circle of his autonomous decisions and actions. Apart from individual autonomy, in the narrative of individualism, emotional independence, privacy, personal initiative, awareness of one’s “I,” one’s own individuality and originality, i.e., standing out from the background, are also important. However, such an approach does not exhaust the concept of individualism in culture, as it defines a great many different meanings, and their reading largely depends on the researcher’s provenance and his or her scientific affiliation. Cf. FICEK, *Christians in Socio-Political Life*, 124–9.

²⁵ Cf. M. MIKOŁAJEWSKA, *Zjawisko wspólnoty* (New Haven, CT: Lintons, 1999), 235–8.

²⁶ Cf. R. DIEDERICHS, *Die dritte industrielle Revolution und die Krise des Kapitalismus. Zusammenbruchstheorien in der neomarxistischen Diskussion* (Marburg: Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004).

²⁷ Cf. Ch. MASQUELIER, *Critical Theory and Libertarian Socialism: Realizing the Political Potential of Critical Social Theory* (New York–London: Bloombury, 2014).

community.” Therefore, he/she also does not possess inbred dignity, nor is he/she a sovereign being. Along with this, the above “emanate” is deprived of what we associate with legal subjectivity and the ability to self-determine itself. Together with others, he/she builds “social masses” together with the structures and layers emerging in it. Therefore, a man is understood here as the result of the game of social relations and the fruit of labor, which is a particular “environment” of the collective’s life.²⁸

Moreover, this approach to man is accompanied by materialistic ontology and utilitarian ethics. Therefore, as the Primate Wyszyński pointed out very accurately: “The Communist myth introduced into its realm an elite of work, heroes of hardship, and pioneers of production. It announced them as Giants of the future, the creators of a new culture, morality, and religion. It is probably the most bizarre type of elite: a bunch of ‘peons’ ruling bravely over a hammer, tractor, or machine, but unable to control their own soul.”²⁹

Work and the life that takes place in the collective are considered anthropogenic factors. Therefore, a man is simply a function of his community over here. Consequently, he should agree with his status of being and make himself aware that, as a collective product, he should not only owe it gratitude but, above all,

²⁸ When analyzing the collectivist Marxist ideology, Wyszyński emphasized: “Man has no personal value in their eyes. Not only is it not the center of the world, it is simply nothing. It 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: we 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, there is slavery of citizens to the collective. Second, man is denied the freedom to believe in and worship God. For in man, the eternal element and other destinies other than temporal ones are not recognized. 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. He 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 of a man. 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. And no longer can man aim to pursue happiness in God. Man must follow the goals that the state will show him. He must be thoroughly socialized—both in soul and in the body. He is obliged to make any sacrifice, to fulfill all the orders of the community. Finally, fourthly, a new goal is imposed 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” (*Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1993), 46–7).

²⁹ *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 93.

obedience without limits. These approaches are accompanied by a materialistic ontology, proclaiming the omnipresent determinism, often perceived through biological sciences' prism and the regularities appearing in them.

Hence, a man appears over here as an emanate 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, seeing in him a dependent element believing that his happiness is positioned in the absolute unification and amalgamation with the collective.

The materialist-biologist conception of man understood as a specimen of the species and adopted by Marxism postulated the shaping of the social order through the dictatorship of the ruling class (the dictatorship of the proletariat). The above dictate—and *de facto* the tyranny of the ruling class—has become the essential category within which all Communist statutory law will be defined. *Sensu stricte*, it is a dictate of the ruling class. Nevertheless, it is not regarded as an ordinance (of a specific human person!) directed towards the common good but an imperative that safeguards the interests of the ruling class.³⁰

However, it is primarily about economic and property interests, as they are the highest in the hierarchy of goods. Their size and quality determine the actual strength and right to exercise the state's power. The fundamental determinants of Marxist anthropology are, therefore, materialism and utilitarianism. Above all, it expresses the negation of some transcendent goodness concerning the natural world: the goal of human life. Though, this goal does not exist for the

³⁰ 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. Moreover, Marxism and its ideology want this elimination. It is the ideological base for annihilating class society. The 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 a class consciousness that begins to play an integrating role. However, the above 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. Though, each class fights other classes in three ways, as it were: 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: Springer, 2017), 65–183; G. GILL, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

man-individual, understood in terms of an accidental being. The fundamental purpose of human life is, then, the realization of the good of the collective. According to Marxism, the individual-man exists for the collective through the collective and thanks to the collective. It cannot “be next to” and “outside” the collective because the most significant “sin” of Marxist ideology is the violation of a specific “collectivist natural order.”

Since it has everything, the collective also has the right to everything because—as collectivists say—the basis of power is the state of possession. Though the principle is adopted here, the scope, quality, and quantity of possession and control determine the area and the real possibility of exercising power. It is also worth noting that this type of “collectivism” perceived the foundation of social life primarily in material resources and the ability to dispose of physical force (direct coercion), which is always associated with them.³¹

However, a particular dimension of the collectivist anthropology of Marxism, which founds the “communist” social order, will appear when we turn our attention to the category of the so-called social class widely used by Marxists. 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, and ethnic. Nevertheless, the social classes and the vision of social life in terms of social class is a design of modern times, reflecting the contemporary approach to human social life.³²

³¹ Do not forget that the 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, those that required liquidation, because their duration presupposes the existence of a past social order. Here another thesis of collectivism manifests itself, which is also shared by individualism. It is the belief that everything changes. Moreover, that change is something permanent and inevitable, and ultimately, despite perturbations, it leads to progress, i.e., development, which will be much more perfect state than before.

³² 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. However, it is social classes and the vision of social life in terms of class that is the work of modern times and the modern approach to human social life. In this context, Marxism-Leninism, based on dialectical and historical materialism, 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. Cf. P. SKRZYDLEWSKI, “Kolektywizm, indywidualizm a osobowa wizja człowieka”, in *Spór o osobę w świetle klasycznej koncepcji człowieka*, ed. P.S. Mazur (Kraków: WAM, 2012), 133–6.

In this aspect, it is impossible to overestimate Marxism, of which many theses will be reproduced by those disciplines where collectivism itself will be assimilated. *De facto*, the entire phraseology of Marxism, directly and indirectly, relates to collectivist anthropology, as expressed in social classes' theory.³³ In other words, collectivist anthropology concretized in the ideology of competing social classes is also the foundation of the Marxist vision of politics, law, state, economy, and finally, it is essential for understanding history and the end of history, which is to be a collectivist vision of classless social life.

According to Marxists, the elimination of class antagonism, freeing man from the fundamental evil of class inequalities, can only be achieved in a revolutionary way by eliminating a class that owns the means of production. It can only be ensured by the peasant-working class, aware of its historical mission and its interests, through its dictatorship, by any means, including terror, rape, and violence. The effect of this type of action is to create a single community of equal and free people, free from all degeneration and exploitation, including private property, religion, and family—it means factors, according to Marx, leading to the alienation of man. It will be achieved by humanity after the capitalist form of social life would be abolished, and the socialist order, that is, community with state means of production, is introduced.³⁴

Collectivist Marxist anthropology will, therefore, remove from politics the classically understood “common good” recognized as “human good” in favor of utilitarian class interest. As the vanguard of the “new progressive world,” it will also replace a policy oriented towards realizing “human good” in favor of the sovereign Communist power—that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

³³ It is about such ideological elements of Marxist phraseology 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.

³⁴ According to Marxists, in communism, there will be no longer any state, statutory laws, or any political power because the historical process after the period of class struggles was “born”—it created a perfect man who not only does not need them but must free himself from them, to realize his new “true nature.” The social order based on the human being understood in this way—it is an unruly reality, where the difference between the good of the individual and the good of other people is lost, where the difference between individuals disappears, it is *de facto* non-community reality because it does 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.

Thus understood “politics”—ultimately, through the destruction of all social classes—has the ambition to build a kind of “Communist paradise” on Earth, where everyone will be equal (universal egalitarianism understood in Marxist terms), and there will be no barriers to freedom for all.

Specifically, the collectivist party vanguard’s actions will embody the “good of all” (?), thus the good of the individual. The above “visions” were adopted not only by Marxists but also by the resonant current of modern neo-Marxism and all kinds of leftist anarchism, which in its activity aims at “the liberation of humanity” by the destruction of the existing Christian culture as well as traditional forms of social life.

5. INDIVIDUALISM: EXCRUCIATING COMPEL FOR SELF-FULFILMENT

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 it had resulted from a combination of many complex religious, social, economic, and political factors. In the 20th century, individualism became the subject of criticism, among others, on 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 the issues of 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.”³⁵

³⁵ H. DE LUBAC, *At the Service of the Church. Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned His Writings* (San Francisco: Communio Books, 1993), 171–2. 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

Therefore, Catholic social teaching rejects both the anthropological assumptions of individualism and its practical application forms. The proposed concept of man does not take into account his social structure and functions. He is particularly criticized for amoralism concerning socio-economic life, recognizing the man as an egoistic and anti-social being, and making his freedom absolute. This trend puts the individual in opposition to society. It considers the conflict between the individual and the power inevitable, as well as identifies the contemporary culture and society with the state legal system.

For the social doctrine of the Church, it is also unacceptable to interpret the natural law of property, equated with securing an individual's absolute freedom of possession. Consequently, it makes it impossible to exercise the right to use goods and services under their universal purpose. The legal system unilaterally exposes the rights of individuals without emphasizing the social dimension of human rights. This, in turn, opens the way to a selfish lust for profit and possession. It makes it possible to concentrate wealth in a narrow group of people. Such a situation must lead to a conflict between capital and labor by introducing the employee's rights to, for example, fair wages, co-management, profit, co-ownership.³⁶

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

Nevertheless, 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 labor process's produce. In this sense, it distorts and misrepresents the theological meaning of economic activity understood as a service to meet the needs of people and communities. Additionally, extreme methodological individualism directly opposes the principle of solidarity. It may also lead to a depreciation of the community dimension of involvement in socio-political life.

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).

³⁶ Cf. W. PIWOWARSKI, and Z. SKWIERCZYŃSKI, "Indywidualizm w naukach społecznych", in *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 7 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1997), col. 180.

In practice, large corporations often seek to marginalize—and consequently—liquidate local economic activity. Admittedly, this may not be an essential feature of capitalism. Nevertheless, efforts to monopolize the market pose a severe threat to local economic initiatives, as well as the principle of 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. Moreover, 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 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, which focused on achieving personal perfection. Responsibilities to mortality were an opportunity to earn individual merit.³⁷

Therefore, 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 include all humanity. Moreover, individualism is fostered by currents emphasizing the autonomy of a person, emphasizing the roles of individuation and individualization considered as part of 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 equipment of the human person.³⁸

³⁷ Cf. S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Prymat osoby nad rzeczą, Z okazji 30 rocznicy powstania Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej KUL 7.03.1976”, in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 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 occasions for private prayer for which the sacraments were the occasion. Cf. PIWOWARSKI, and SKWIERCZYŃSKI, *Indywidualizm w naukach społecznych*, col. 181.

³⁸ PIWOWARSKI, and SKWIERCZYŃSKI, *Indywidualizm w naukach społecznych*, col. 182.

A manifestation of contemporary individualism is also the frequent tendency to define the essence and tasks of the Christian faith in terms of ideology, contrary to the traditional understanding of religious orthodoxy. The right to an independent choice of the scope of religious truths is postulated. The individual faith of the doctrinal-ecclesiastical unit should be opposed to religion, which is institutionalized denominations. The modern understanding of individualism most often refers to an “individually” organized society or an “individualist” shaped individual.³⁹

An individualistic society is considered in opposition to the principles of the organization of society. In turn, the “individualistic” individual is assigned autonomy in making decisions and formulating evaluation criteria. It is emphasized here that individuals are no longer oriented towards norms and values defined by tradition, but more and more refer to their aspirations and beliefs, as well as a considerable variety of attitudes, lifestyles, and ways of acting.

Thus understood, individualism is directly related to the weakening of sensitivity to God and man, leading inevitably to practical materialism that favors the spread of moral permissiveness, utilitarianism, and hedonism. In this way, the values associated with “be” are replaced with those associated with “have.” The only goal that is taken into account is your own 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. But, the deeper relational, spiritual, and religious dimensions of existence are forgotten.

In such a climate, suffering, which always weighs heavily on human life, can also become a stimulus for personal growth, is “censored,” rejected as useless, and even fought as an 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 take a right to put an end to it. In other words, life becomes for the modern man just a “thing,” which he considers as his exclusive property, entirely subjected to his rule and manipulation.⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. Z. BOKSZAŃSKI, *Indywidualizm a zmiana społeczna. Polacy wobec nowoczesności. Raport z badań* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2007), 7.

⁴⁰ 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 using only 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 self-affirmation “I” and selfish fulfillment of one’s desires and drives.

However, it should be noted that in traditional individualistic systems, man is merely a better-organized substance: he exists through it and thanks to it. In other words, human existence is exhausted in the matter, in biological and sensual life. Hence, the anthropology of individualistic concepts will face the challenge of building a new vision of human dignity. Nevertheless, as with collectivism, it will narrow this dignity down to having, disposing, and using. In other words, it will be the “dignity of the human person” understood in utilitarian terms. Not everyone will have it, and those who do not have it, in a way, are 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 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 technology achievements to program and control birth and death, extending his reign over them. These authentic experiences that should be “lived” then become things that the man claims to “possess” or “reject” them.

According to this position, the strong—that means genuinely free—guide themselves rather than directed. Hence, the existence of an objective criterion, external to the individual, would have to mean the annihilation of the sovereign individual himself because there would be a limit and a measure for actions, and this would undermine the full sovereignty of an individual who aims with his whole being towards complete freedom, i.e., the absence of any cause or dependence. It is the essence of the autonomy that individualism needs. It requires being the source of the norms-laws of its action and only norms that are “genuinely mine.” Adopting norms-laws that do not come from one another is treated individually as an abandonment of one’s freedom. Therefore, true humanity is an attack on one’s nature. Why? Because each individual is individual and unique. As a result, there are as many standards as there are individuals who create them.

Based on individualistic anthropology, therefore, there will always be a significant problem with explaining the existence and functioning of human laws and principles. In fact, individualism will deny such rights if it will agree to them only conditionally, with the proviso that they are malicious in their nature. Thus, it is seen that extreme individualism is anti-social anthropology, atomizing everything and antagonizing everyone to everyone. Although this antagonism has direct sources other than the class antagonism of collectivism, however, as it is in collectivism, the struggle is for the benefit, for measurable goods that give real dominion.

6. HUMAN PERSON AS AN *IMAGO DEI*: PERSONALISTIC CONCEPT OF MAN

Thus, in both individualism and collectivism, Christian personalism attempts to expose these errors that threaten the integral concept of a human being. Therefore, only such social systems are ethically justified, which create the right conditions for the human person's full development, not those that distort and distort them. In this sense, personalism does not directly propose a social system but displays how to search for or improve the existing forms of social, economic, state, and cultural life.⁴¹

As the name suggests, personalism positions the human person at the center of discussions about the social system. In this context, a person is understood in the creative-salvation perspective as *imago Dei* (an image of God), who has a transcendent 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.⁴²

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, however, a discourse on the concept of a personal God became active 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*).⁴³ The grounding in the Christian tradition, as well as the reference to realistic philosophy and the specificity of the personalistic discourse, reveal that this is not a subjective idealism that reduces reality to human thought. According to Wyszyński, it is God's transcendence that gives God's creation His irreducibility. While the meaningful order of reality is in relation to the subject, it is merely constituted but not created by human subjects. God, as the Supreme Person, guarantees both meaningful order and the irreducible reality.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Cf. S. WYSZYŃSKI, "Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku," 779–80; S. JAROCKI, "Kultura gospodarcza," *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 62, vol. 75 (1970): 240–7.

⁴² 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" ("Chrystusa nie można wyłączyć z dziejów człowieka (23.11.1980)," in *Kościół w służbie Narodu*, 241).

⁴³ 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 Illiterati's Guide to Latin Maxims, Mottoes, Proverbs and Sayings* (Routledge, London, 2005), 207.

⁴⁴ Cf. S. WYSZYŃSKI, "Prymat człowieka na globie. Do prawników. Warszawa 28.12.1969," in STEFAN KARDYNAŁ WYSZYŃSKI PRYMAS POLSKI, *Idzie nowych ludzi plemię* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2001), 43.

In the personalistic concept of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, man is a complex being and understood as a “double” of the physical and spiritual element. However, the material and spiritual elements are so closely related in man that they cannot be fully divided without destroying human existence.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is the spiritual element that determines the unity of the human being and defines man as a human being. On the spiritual level, the man realizes his own personal identity, unifying all of man’s “I.” In this way, man is himself, a being separate from others like him—he is a person. In turn, it means that he is consciously active and free.⁴⁶

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. It means that a person cannot be appropriated by anyone else, neither by any other person nor by any institution. Belonging to himself, a human person cannot be used by anyone, no one can represent him, and he cannot even be considered “a possible object of use.” In other words, a man as a person is responsible for himself.⁴⁷

Therefore, man is a personal being of unique value. It 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 an ethically evaluative content, as well as their ethical evaluation. 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.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ 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” (“Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek, Warszawa 19.10.1980,” in *Kościół w służbie Narodu* (Rzym: Ośrodek “Corda Cordi”, 1981), 88–9).

⁴⁶ S. WYSZYŃSKI, “Zadania i środki oddziaływania Kościoła w Polsce w zakresie kształtowania kultury społeczno-katolickiej, Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15.01.1971,” in *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane*, vol. 36, 59–60.

⁴⁷ “Beyond the human being—emphasizes the Cardinal—there is no personality, no rationality, and no freedom” (“Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona,” 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” (“Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek,” 90–1).

⁴⁸ “Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek,” 87.

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 distinguished in this factor. The first is the fact of creation. Therefore, the value of a person is determined by his origin from God, his likeness to him, the “image of God.”⁴⁹ The second, as it were, completes the first by the fact of the Incarnation and Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. Therefore, the truths are essential components of a person’s full value: God’s sonship of man resulting from the fact of redemption. From these truths, there are several concrete conclusions. Man has a transcendent dignity, which no one can deprive him of. This dignity cannot be relinquished. It results from the equality of all people in their human dignity.⁵⁰

As Wyszyński pointed out, in the light of God’s plan, man is “the image of God.” Through the work of the Redemption of Christ, he was made adopted by God. In this context, it is possible to fully discover a person’s unique value, defined by the notion of dignity. It is the basis for thinking about man and his ethical evaluation and its treatment in the practice of life by oneself and other people. It also functions as a fundamental truth of Christian anthropology.⁵¹ Thus, in the personalistic language of Cardinal Wyszyński, “the whole truth about man” demands that it examines not only the value of a person in the natural sphere but also in the supernatural realm. Only such truth reveals fully human dignity.⁵²

Human dignity 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 more just humanity. This is, then, his sacred duty and moral imperative.⁵³ “Such is man’s tendency to coexist with his neighbors—writes Wyszyński—as in God the Father to coexist with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God wanted nature formed for a man so that it was one in itself, but one that strives to live with others.”⁵⁴

In man, apart from natural values that testify to his exceptional dignity, there are also spiritual and supernatural values. Among the creatures on earth, the only man is a person made in the image and likeness of the Creator. He alone in

⁴⁹ “Chrystusa nie można wyłączyć z dziejów człowieka,” 241.

⁵⁰ Cf. WYSZYŃSKI, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 319; WYSZYŃSKI, “O katolickiej woli życia,” 34.

⁵¹ “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” (WYSZYŃSKI, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 50).

⁵² WYSZYŃSKI, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 319.

⁵³ “Uświęcenie doczesności. Do duchowieństwa Warszawy 3.08.1962,” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 189.

⁵⁴ *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 55.

the visible world is the creature 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, confirm who he is, other than by seeking God throughout his life. By discovering God, a man is also uncovering himself. Man must continuously discover himself because he is the image of God.⁵⁵

Man cannot discover himself, however, except in God, in his prototype. Moreover, a man exists sensibly in the world only as of the image and likeness of God. In God, the truth about man, his mystery, and final calling is fully revealed. It manifests in every human being due to humanity itself, regardless of qualifications, level of intelligence, sensitivity, and physical fitness.⁵⁶

In this context, 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. Through its activism, selectivity, non-material, and universal profile, the mental cognition of a man goes beyond the categories of matter. Thus, it indicates the transcendence of man as the owner of the intellect.⁵⁷ The second sector of the dynamic transcendence of human beings is the phenomenon of freedom manifested in self-determination. Through the act of freedom, manifested in free decision, man fulfills himself as a man, and thus as a subject rational from within.⁵⁸ Thanks to freedom, man shapes his personality, inner “face,” sets goals, and 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.

Moreover, 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

⁵⁵ “W sprawie katolickiego wychowania młodzieży. Gniezno 5.10.1950,” in *Listy pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946-1974* (Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1975), 173.

⁵⁶ As Cardinal Wyszyński pointed out: “All communities must be created on ‘human’ measures. All of them must have the rights and obligations of a human person as a starting point, so that people would feel good in them, just like in well-tailored clothing. Hence, it is impossible to build social life structures differently, just only by the measure of the human person’s faculties and capacities. Whenever social institutions or any forms of social life conflict with the rights and obligations as well as with the inner character and nature of the human person, they always become an anguish and torment” (“Pacem in terris”. Konferencja II, Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 27.01.1964,” in *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane*, vol. 16, 124).

⁵⁷ Cf. S. WYSZYŃSKI, “W obronie życia nie narodzonych, Warsaw 1952,” in *Listy pasterskie Prymasa Polski i Episkopatu 1975–1981* (Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1982), 118; WYSZYŃSKI, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 52.

⁵⁸ “Wołamy o ‘nowych ludzi plemię,’” in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 287.

understood spiritual culture of the human person. Respecting these values is a prerequisite for genuine humanism.⁵⁹ In Cardinal Wyszyński's theory of values, however, the idea of love is central.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, the theory of personalism of the Primate of Poland 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, genetically derived from the world of things. The ontological language in the description of the man is justified, but only the personalistic-axiological language fully highlights his subjectivity and specificity.⁶¹

As a result, the personalistic vision of man presented by Primate Wyszyński emphasizes the preeminence of the human person in the entire reality of the temporal world. However, 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. In other words, the personalistic concept of man presented by Primate Wyszyński emphasizes the priority of the human person in the whole reality of the temporal world. However, it is related to respect for his dignity and freedom. It also means the preeminence of the supernatural sphere over the matter as well as the balance between objective and subjective order. "Christ is asserting the high dignity of man. When He was accused of making himself God, he said: 'You are Gods. You are also shocked that I have called yourselves the Son of God' (see J. 10, 34). In today's age of destructive behemoths, we must remind people: 'you are gods.'"⁶²

⁵⁹ "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 yet wholly. 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 and the closed-door – where there is no love" (S. WYSZYŃSKI, "Kamienie węgielne budowane na górach świętych. Na Jasnej Górze po powrocie z uwięzienia (2.11.1956)," in *Nauczanie społeczne*, 64).

⁶⁰ Cf. WYSZYŃSKI, *Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek*, 87.

⁶¹ Cf. FICEK, *Christians in Socio-Political Life*, 25–7.

⁶² S. WYSZYŃSKI, "Wiecznie oporny: człowiek Boży. Do aktorów i pracowników pióra, Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15.05.1977," in *Listy pasterskie*, 249.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The tragedy of the autonomization of all spheres of “earthly reality,” and, therefore, the alienation and even degeneration of many dimensions of social life, politics, economy, and culture caused by anthropological errors, is also taking place before our eyes. It consists mainly of the fact that the areas that are supposed to be naturally related to the realization of human goods have degenerated in many ways. Due to their “independence” from the nature of man and natural order—and thus also from the good of man understood often as a “common good”—they began to function in an axiologically autonomous space: outside the realm of good and evil.

In place of the truth, which should be the norm and foundation for the functioning of the complex sphere of “earthly reality,” the so-called “incomplete anthropologies” inscribed in the distorted ideologies usurp the right to form the areas of human life mentioned here from within, setting new, often outrageous goals for them (e.g., abortion, euthanasia). In other words, these areas have become somewhat alienated and autonomous. A manifestation of this autonomization and alienation is a series of processes in which man—as an instrument of culture, politics, and law—becomes a means, often used against his will, nature, and inherent dignity. A vivid proof of this situation is abortion, euthanasia, eugenics, the functioning forms of slavery, and many others—that is, everything that creates a civilization that degrades man to an object-tool in the hands of the “demiurges” of the modern civilization of death.

From the perspective of personalism as well as a realistic way of studying and understanding the world, the above facts are unacceptable in a situation where departing from the good of man in politics and law, and even their overt anti-humanist attitude is perceived as a manifestation of development and civilization success. It is, however, the result of a mistakenly accepted concept of man and the world, which seems to deform all dimensions of human life.

Both modern collectivist anthropology and individualist anthropology, influenced by the visions of the human person and the social order that flow from them, stand in contradiction with the notion of the social order emerging from the personalistic concept represented by Cardinal Wyszyński. In this context, the Primate’s teaching emphasized the subjectivity of man and his priority in social life, thus presenting the vision of the social order as something indirectly and directly related to man and his good. Moreover, personalistic anthropology reveals human social structures as circles of human life, including the family, local kinship, and state and national community.

Consequently, collectivist and individualist anthropologies, which perceive the structures of social life in terms of competing social classes or individuals, must take up the fight against the traditional social culture of the West, which displays man as a personal being, naturally living and developing through the community. Christian personalism, accentuating the vision of man as a personal being, makes a man see in man the subject (sovereign) of social life and set the good of a man as the goal and, at the same time, the model cause of social order. This subject, endowed with natural rights and great dignity, cannot be reducible to any function he fulfills in social life or any social class or group in which he lives and works.

In other words, from the perspective of the personalistic vision of man represented by Cardinal Wyszyński, social order is a kind of arrangement in which man is 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. In personalism, therefore, the good of a man as the sovereign of social life becomes the proper goal and sense of both the social structure and all social activities. The approach to the social order appropriate for personalism has its explanation and justification in the vision of human existence, which in a nutshell, is related to the affirmation of man in his personal way of being and acting.

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COLLECTIVISM, INDIVIDUALISM, AND CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI'S PERSONALISTIC CONCEPT OF MAN

Summary

The article debates the issues of collectivism and individualism in the context of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's personalistic vision of man. The praxeological approach to Wyszyński's personalism inscribes the Christian social teaching in post-war Poland's specific socio-political realities. In this context, a critical analysis of the concept of the human person functioning in the dimension of various ideologies is essential. For that reason, the above article will explain the specificity of the collectivist and individualistic ideology. It allows us to understand better the danger of distorting social life's vision concerning the Western world's modern civilization. In this sense, a personalistic idea of human life shows that contemporary social life models, if they are to be shaped "a human measure," must be based on systems promoting "pro-human" values, inscribed in an authentically humanistic vision of man and citizen.

Keywords: collectivism; individualism; personalism; Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński; anthropological error; "common good."

KOLEKTYWIZM, INDYWIDUALIZM I KARDYNAŁA STEFANA WYSZYŃSKIEGO PERSONALISTYCZNA WIZJA CZŁOWIEKA

Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia kwestię kolektywizmu i indywidualizmu w kontekście personalistycznej wizji człowieka w ujęciu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego. Prakseologiczne ujęcie personalizmu Wyszyńskiego wpisuje chrześcijańską naukę społeczną w konkretne realia społeczno-polityczne powojennej rzeczywistości Polski. W tym kontekście krytyczna analiza koncepcji osoby ludzkiej funkcjonującej w wymiarze powyższych ideologii ma istotne znaczenie. Niniejszy artykuł wyjaśnia zatem specyfikę skrajnych koncepcji człowieka wpisanych w ideologię kolektywizmu i indywidualizmu. Pozwala to lepiej pojąć, na czym polega niebezpieczeństwo wypaczenia wizji życia społecznego w odniesieniu współczesnej cywilizacji świata zachodniego. W tym sensie personalistyczna wizja życia ludzkiego ukazuje, że współczesne modele życia społecznego, jeżeli mają być kształtowane na „miarę człowieka”, muszą opierać się na systemach promujących wartości pro-ludzkie, wpisane w autentycznie humanistyczną wizję człowieka i obywatela.

Słowa kluczowe: kolektywizm; indywidualizm; personalizm; Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński; błąd antropologiczny; dobro wspólne.