USE OF THESES

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Norbert A. Zmijewski
Synopsis

In this thesis I examine first the attitudes of the Catholic groups toward Marxist ideology and the policy of the Party and secondly the attempts of Marxists to overcome a crisis of their philosophy by discussing the Catholic ideas. In the last chapter I discuss the philosophies of Karol Wojtyla and Leszek Kolakowski - the two outstanding philosophical outcomes of the Catholic-Marxists dialogue. The arguments discussed in this thesis fall into two groups: those contributing to the process by which Catholicism developed into a philosophy of opposition and those illustrating the disintegration of Catholic and Marxist social doctrines. I argue that the nature of the dialogue significantly influenced political and intellectual life in Poland.
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For a thousand years, many Poles believe, or long believed, the Polish state, Polish independence and the Polish sense of identity have been inextricably intertwined with Catholicism and the international ties and alliances that this made possible. Being Catholic (by culture if not by strict orthodoxy belief) has been an important, though never an essential part of being a Pole. The romantic Polish nationalism elevated by Adam Mickiewicz, as A. Walicki has shown, rested on a profoundly religious, messianic conception of Poland's martyrdom and her destiny among nations - she was the sacrifice that would bring redemption, she was the elect among nations. This view of things declined sharply in influence after 1863, but the popular strength of Catholicism as the religion of most Poles remained.

Marxists and many socialists and 'progressives' - even in pre-war Poland - had a different picture. For them, Catholicism (and religion more generally) were part of an old and bad world, based on the economic exploitation, the political suppression and the ideological obfuscation of the masses, promoting resignation, dependence and superstition. A Polish People's Republic - or even a genuine Polish democracy - would be a secular state, in which secular, scientific opinion would triumph (ultimately by persuasion, or immediately through appropriate state action) over medievalism, unscientific error and sheer superstition.

The conflict over Catholicism within the Polish intelligentsia was sharpened in the inter-war period by strong anti-intellectual trends in the Polish church of the period. It saw its base as lying in the village and not in the city, in the peasantry and the military
caste, in the romantic symbols of Poland's national past; it was conservative, sentimental, and often blinkered. Its opponents, in pre-war Poland, were not only Marxists, but large portions of the open-minded intelligentsia. Some approved the dominant line of the hierarchy from within the church, organising groups that worked for a more liberal Catholicism, and often becoming sympathetic to Marxism in the process. Others, largely of a democratic socialist persuasion, combined criticism of the church with criticism of the authoritarian-military regimes of Pilsudski and his successors.

The conflicts, confrontations and interactions between Catholicism and Marxism in the Polish People's Republic that was actually formed and soon taken over by Marxist Communists after the Second World War are thus part of a complex picture. For some Poles, even now, Catholicism is Polish and rooted in the sentiment of the people below; Marxism is Russian-dominated and Russian-imposed, a symbol of Poland's powerlessness to change an external geo-political configuration of forces that rob her of any real independence. For other, and most of those studied here, the problem is not as simple as this: there is a wider tension and confrontation between Catholicism in its traditional varieties and beliefs and 'modernity' - both as secular and as involving important intellectual progress in philosophical analysis, moral perception, etc. This was already evident before the war. The relation between Catholicism and politics, between theology and the 'real' world leads to a reappraisal, or deeper understanding, of Catholic philosophy itself.

The chapters that follow and the thesis they constitute are primarily philosophical, or at least intellectual and theoretical, in approach. They are interested in the interaction of ideas studied for their own sake, as having independent value and cogency,
not in the overtly political dimensions and significance of Marxism and Catholicism in Poland. They assume as a fact, pleasing to neither party, that Marxism had to reach some accommodation with Catholicism in Poland, and that Catholicism could not ignore or extirpate Marxism. As this thesis seeks to show, there was not only debate, but some interaction. In that debate, paradoxically, the Marxists often began to appear as conservative, old-fashioned, dogmatic, while some of the Catholics took the stage as defenders of modern ideal, modern philosophy, modern conceptions of science, against dated nineteenth-century views. They, not the Marxists, constituted the link with the great logical and analytical achievements of pre-war Polish philosophy.

The structure of this thesis, therefore, is not dominated by political events, by simple 'confrontations' between religion and the Party, or by successive crises in church-state relations. It concentrates rather on the effect that Marxism and Catholicism had on each other, on the appearance of new ideas as Marxists and Catholics strove to answer each other. It studies the intellectual aspects and development of a dialogue, in the course of which participants come to change their ideas, or to adopt new emphases. This dialogue, of course, took its departure from a historical ideological base, which is not discussed in detail. Polish Marxism and pre-war Catholicism are not discussed in detail and are characterised only where necessary. Neither do Stefan Wyszynski and other members of the hierarchy, directly executing church policy, constitute a main focus. The policies of Church and Party created a background against which lay intellectuals were working on the reconciliation or accommodation of Catholic social ideas with the Marxist state.
The main force of this work is the intellectuals and groups playing a significant role in Polish ideological discourse from 1945 to 1980. In this thesis, the notion of 'Catholic-Marxist dialogue' is understood in a much broader sense than a simple exchange of opinions between the participants, as for example in the Paulus Gesellschaft established by Erich Kellner. Factual confrontation and exchanges of opinion often happened indirectly over momentous issues. The ideology of groups was directly connected to the practice of co-existence, which determined any intellectual dispute. Additionally, though Marxists produced a number of works critical of religion or the policy of the Church, Catholics were rarely allowed to respond in the state press or even in their own. In the 1970s, when Marxists opened their press to Catholics and made great efforts to attract them to discussions, they were not successful.

The material in this thesis, then, is organised according to the appearance of new Catholic and Marxist ideas. Primacy is given to the Catholic perception of Marxism for three reasons. First because Marxist ideology and the Party, supported by the Soviet Union, were newcomers, whereas Catholicism had a well-established position. Second, the Catholic approach to Marxism was much better defined, whereas Marxists tended to accept or to reject co-operation, seeing it as a political manoeuvre. Third, the literature on Marxist ideology in Poland is quite accessible, while there is no work on Catholic ideology.

In the first chapter I discuss the encounter of neo-Thomism with Dialectical Materialism. The second and third chapters study
how the notion of 'political realism', of Znak and Pax, should be understood. The fourth chapter focusses on the development of political realism into 'ideological realism' which led to the famous dialogue with opposition groups. The fifth chapter is devoted to an analysis of new Marxist ideas in the 1970s. The final chapter concentrates on Wojtyla's and Kolakowski's ideas, explaining some of the philosophical problems of Marxist-Catholic dialogue.

The thesis deals with the period up to 1980 and goes beyond that only when required for coherent argument. The events of August in that year concluded a chapter of recent Polish history and created different political and social parameters for Marxist-Catholic coexistence.

The main purpose of this work is a study of the bilateral influence of Marxism and Catholicism on attempts to accommodate moral and social philosophy or to criticise the methods, principles, solutions and social functions of the other side. I argue that over a period of thirty years both doctrines have undergone significant mutations caused by the necessity of co-existence and by an assimilation of each other's philosophical ideas. Simplifying the problem, it may be said that Marxist-Catholic dialogue contributed to, if it did not cause, the evolution of both doctrines and simultaneously led to a modification of their social, moral and original philosophical position.

Catholic and Marxist ideas are reconstructed from journalism and essays. The method of reconstruction is based on the constant bringing together of philosophical analysis and history, on a
combination of diachronical and synchronical interpretations. It is hoped that this study of Catholic and Marxist ideas in Poland, a country traditionally Catholic but making a significant contribution to Marxist tradition, will have value for a further understanding of the difficult relationship between the two.

A Ph.D. student is rightly expected to write his own thesis. Yet he incurs many debts. Professor Eugene Kamenka and Dr Andrzej Walicki, who supervised this thesis, gave me the opportunity of learning much. Whether I have done so, others will judge. Many others have been generous with time and materials. Mrs Elizabeth Short has striven, over a number of years, to help me de-Polonise my English. In the spelling of Polish names and words, at least, I have adopted the nearest English orthography.

Norbert Zmijewski

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