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The Polish Current of Criticism of Fascism in the Years 1918–1939. Bibliography of Sources

Polski nurt krytyki faszyzmu w latach 1918–1939. Bibliografia źródeł

Abstract: The aim of the article is to show the existence of a Polish current of scientific – mainly political, but also co-occurring with philosophical, theological and pedagogical – criticism of fascism and the selection of its sources. It was not as deep and unequivocal as the criticism of Bolshevism and Nazism. For fascism maintained a semblance of conformity with Christianity in religious, moral and social terms. In addition to journalistic articles most often treating fascism as a barrier against Bolshevism, scientific analyses were published. This was done by Rev. Jan Piwowarczyk, Rev. Stefan Wyszynski, Rev. Józef Pastuszka, Rev. Henryk Weryński, Adam Romer, Adolf Kliszewicz and others.

Keywords: Rev. Jan Piwowarczyk, Rev. Stefan Wyszynski, Rev. Józef Pastuszka, Rev. Henryk Weryński, Adam Romer, Adolf Kliszewicz, Polish current of criticism of fascism.

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Introduction

Surprisingly often the concept of fascism appears in mass culture today in a completely incorrect understanding, separated from its sources and historically verified meanings. Sometimes it is incorrectly related to conservative, right-wing or even Catholic aspects of culture. The small number of publications based on source texts from the conservative and nationalist right facilitate this type of “reversal” of meanings. As a result, the rightly negative qualification of the ideology of fascism is accompanied by incorrect or even not entirely adequate use of this term. Therefore, the aim of the article is to reconstruct the image of fascism as an educational ideology in the magazines of Polish Catholic and national circles in the years 1918–1939.

Criticism of fascism in Poland

The criticism of fascism in Poland was not as broad, deep and unequivocal as that of Bolshevism and Nazism. The motive of the double threat to independence and national identity did not work here, as fascism retained the appearance of consent to Christianity. Despite this, critical analyses of fascism were published in Poland alongside journalistic articles in the press, sometimes treating fascism as a barrier against Bolshevism. Critical views of fascism from a Catholic perspective can be found in the texts of doctors and professors including Father Jan Piwowarczyk, Father Stefan Wyszyński, Father Józef Pastuszko, Father Henryk Weryński, Adam Romer, Adolf Kliszewicz, Stefan Kozicki, Kazimierz Sośnicki and others.

What was fascism in the critical analyses of Poles? The approach to its essence shows that it was defined as a synthesis of socialist and nationalist ideas, which was created in Italy, leading to the omnipotence of the state, and the absorption and subordination of the human individual to the whole nation as a collective entity. It aimed at transforming the psyche of the Italian nation in such a way that the state could over time “coincide with society”. It’s a disguised Caesarism – as opposed to the ancient one – they wrote. It was noted that under the banner of the cult of the nation, as the highest good the Italian imperialism is concealed, which perhaps dreams of resur-

recting the empire¹. Kliszewicz's analyses start with a question about the possibility of treating fascism as a barrier against Bolshevism, and they reach the thesis that fascism is precisely the preparation of the ground – of a single man and the whole nation – for the coming of Bolshevism². It is characterised by the undermining of freedom rights and increased police supervision. Freedom and property are as if regulated, they are something given “to an individual by the State without any guarantee of permanence, given because the individual, having these rights, is more useful to the State.”³ Fascism questions democracy, and the nationalisation of various manifestations of life combines with the expansion of administration, thus creating a ruling caste.

Two issues need to be clarified in the context of the criticism of fascism: 1) the state of relations between Catholicism (Pius XI) and fascism – it was known to the astonishment of the press at the time that the Holy See in 1929 signed the *Lateran Agreements* with Benito Mussolini; and 2) the spreading of the view in the daily (also Catholic) press that since fascism is anti-communist, it should be supported.

On the first issue, Piwowarczyk interprets the *Lateran Agreements* not as a compromise with fascism, but as a political agreement between the Vatican and the Italian government giving sovereignty to the Vatican State. And the doctrine of fascism for the Church itself has no different value than any theory of the political system. He also recalls that in his encyclical *Ubi arcano Dei* (1922) Pius XI condemned both the Marxist principle of “class struggle” and the fascist principle of “the struggle of nations”, considering them to be erroneous foundations of social life⁴. On the second issue, the superficiality of this interpretation was emphasized and the characteristics of fascism, contrary to the Catholic religion, were pointed out:

1 A. Kliszewicz, *Faszyzm i jego ideologia*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 176 (1927) p. 139–147.

2 Ibid., p. 153–155.

3 A. Romer, *Mussolini i faszyzm*, „Prąd” 18(130), p. 14–17; J. Pastuszka, *Filozofia współczesna*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1934.

4 J. Piwowarczyk, *Faszyzm*, „Prąd”, 5–6 (1929) p. 347.

- The concept of the state taken from Hegel – cannot be accepted, [...] because it rejects the principle of God's law as the highest standard of morality, including the state;
- State omnipotence – includes religion, does not recognise the supranational character of the Church;
- Enrico Corradini's theory on the "struggle of nations";
- a worldview that wants to be something like a religion [in 1927 a text for children *Il Catechismo del Balilla* was written, imitating the Catholic catechism, in which we read, among other things, "I believe in the spirit of Mussolini, our father of holy fascism"⁵.

The reason for the misconceptions about the proximity of Catholicism and fascism was seen in its deceptive, anti-socialist and anti-communist slogans. They were encouraged by their ignorance of fascism in Poland: here it was known as a political programme that had crushed the socialists which, after the Bolsheviks had attacked Poland (1920), naturally aroused sympathy. There was no knowledge of fascism as an ideology and worldview⁶.

But it was different in the right-wing educated groups. Among other things, the main reason for the difficulties in assessing and perceiving fascism in Poland was discovered here – the ubiquitous appearance. It was seen in the fascist educational ideology and, above all, in social life: fascism left the Church free to teach and a lot of relative freedom. Mussolini, with his left-wing preferences, did so "because he saw his national interest in it, he understood [...] that religion can provide a solid foundation for morality and generosity."⁷ Giovanni Gentile's 1922–24 reform of Italian education was assessed as a laic project, hiding its true face. In fact, Jan Kuchta wrote, this minister created a philosophical theory of the secular school containing the condemnation of dogmatic Christianity. The Fascist government made the school a subordinate instrument. On the basis of an analysis of the Italian writings *Nuovi Doveri* and *L'Educazione Nazionale* (edited by Gentile), Jan

5 Ibid., p. 346–347.

6 Ibid., p. 344; S. Wyszynski, *Faszyzm a Kościół*, „Prąd”, 19 (1930) p. 145–167.

7 A. Niesiołowski, *Perspektywy totalizmu*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 215(1937), p. 209.

Kuchta claimed that Catholicism and other Christian denominations are considered to be overcome in them⁸. [...].

The reasons for the reign of fascism were reconstructed, pointing to a crisis of authority: fascism came to the fore by force of the elections of young people who wanted to take decisive action [...]; it was “supported” by the reaction of society to the effects of the war – a weak economy and a lack of political reforms. However – Romer wrote – fascism with the package of changes offered by Mussolini was a reaction against a liberal-democratic state; it was not a reform of the state because it broke with its principles; it was a revolutionary movement⁹.

Analyses and comments on Italian fascism have appeared in many Polish magazines. In its September issue (1932), the editors of *Prąd* were critical of Louis Picard's article in the Brussels magazine *Revue des Catholique des Idées et des Faits* (No. 48). Admittedly, he wrote that fascism is opposed to what is good from a Christian perspective – the conscious and responsible creativity of a free man – but he further argued that when other political means fail, dictatorship can be allowed as a lesser evil protecting against Bolshevism. The editors of *Prąd* rejected this thesis¹⁰. In the light of the more radical criticism of Nazism and Bolshevism in Poland than in Western countries, the assessment of fascism was similar. If the Brussels newspaper was an “image” of the Catholic West, then the magazine *Prąd* was an “image” of the Polish Catholic intelligentsia – it did not agree to a lesser evil.

The Polish current of criticism of fascism in the years 1918–1939

The articles listed below do not always have the author's name. Polish authors were basically not threatened by Italian fascism, so it is difficult to indicate clear causes. The thing can be considered a typical phenomenon for that era.

- 8 J. Kuchta, *Nowe kierunki i dążenia współczesnej katolickiej pedagogiki (Na tle obrazu chaosu we współczesnym wychowaniu)*, Lwów 1939, p. 34.
- 9 A. Romer, *Mussolini i faszyzm*, „*Prąd*” 18(1930), p. 12–13.
- 10 *Metoda czy wypadek?*, „*Prąd*”, 23(1932), p. 97.

Here is a selection of Polish source texts criticizing fascism before 1939:

- B., *Mussolini <ukoronowany>*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 19 (1939).
- Czuma I., *Filozoficzne punkty styeczne zachodu i bolszewizmu*, Lublin 1930.
- Czuma I., *Korporacyjna budowa społeczeństwa*, „Prąd”, 17 (1929) pp. 225–246.
- Deryng A., *Faszyzm a ustrój Włoch faszystowskich*, „Prąd”, 32 (1937) pp. 73–92.
- E. G., *Katolicyzm a faszyzm*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 33 (1934) pp. 174–177.
- Frycz K. S., *Złe źródła faszyzmu i hitleryzmu*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 18 (1939) pp. 265–266.
- J. K., *Współczesne prądy w wychowaniu*, „Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny”, 1–2 (1938).
- Jabłonowski W., *Italiaja współczesna*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 21 (1932) pp. 291–293.
- Jabłonowski W., *Italiaja żyjąca*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 19 (1937) pp. 292–294.
- Kleczyński M., *Stolica św. a faszyzm. Koniec zatargu*, „Prąd”, 21 (1931) pp. 133–142.
- Kliszewicz A., *Faszyzm i jego ideologia*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 176 (1927) pp. 129–154; pp. 275–285.
- Koniński K. L., *Logika swastyki*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 197 (1933) pp. 304–326.
- Kosibowicz E., *Ideowe źródła współczesnego bezbożnictwa*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 215 (1937) pp. 111–125.
- Kozicki S., *Do przyjaciół Włochów*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 27 (1939) pp. 402–403.
- Kuchta J., *Nowe kierunki i dążenia współczesnej katolickiej pedagogiki [Na tle obrazu chaosu we współczesnym wychowaniu]*, Lwów, 1939.
- Lewicki J., *Włoska reforma wychowawcza*, „Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny”, 1 (1930) pp. 51–77; 2(1930), pp. 133–168.
- Loret M., *Od risorgimenta do faszyzmu*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 7 (1932) pp. 87–89; 8 (1932) p.102–104.
- Manteuffel M., *Korporacjonizm i jego praktyczne ujęcie*, „Prąd”, 17 (1929) no. 16, pp. 268–302.
- Metoda czy wypadek?* „Prąd” 23(1932) pp. 96–97.
- Meysztowicz W., *Ustawodawstwo państwa włoskiego dotyczące małżeństwa*, „Prąd”, 35 (1938) pp. 328–338.
- Michalski K. pr., *Gasnące blaski*, Kraków 1934.
- Michalski K. pr., *Nieznanemu Bogu*, Kraków 1936.
- Niebudek S., *Faszystowskie wychowanie młodzieży*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 45 (1937) pp. 694–696.
- Niebudek S., *Z kraju czarnych koszul*, Częstochowa 1937.
- Niesiołowski A., *Katolicyzm a totalizm*, Poznań 1938.

- Niesiołowski A., *Perspektywy totalizmu*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 215 (1937) pp. 204–214.
- Pastuszka J. pr., *Filozofia współczesna*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1934.
- Piwowarczyk J. pr., *Faszyzm i katolicyzm*, „Prąd”, 7–8 (1926) pp. 369–374.
- Piwowarczyk J. pr., *Faszyzm*, „Prąd”, 5–6 (1929) pp. 343–347.
- Roma aeterna. Roma antica*, „Prąd”, 1 (1926) pp. 19–22.
- Romer A., *Mussolini i faszyzm*, „Prąd”, 18 (1930) pp. 12–30.
- Rostworowski J. pr., *Nacjonalizm, jego uwarunkowania i etyczne granice*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 157 (1923) pp. 97–116.
- Sośnicki K., *Kierunek polityczny państwa a organizacja szkolnictwa*, „Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny”, 3–4 (1934) pp. 201–220.
- Sośnicki K., *Najogólniejsze idee wychowawcze a kierunek polityczny państwa*, „Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny”, 1 (1935) pp. 1–24.
- Stecka M. pr., *Państwowość a narodowość w pracach włoskich pisarzy politycznych*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 42 (1932) pp. 608–609.
- Świrski I. pr., *Eugenika a moralność*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 32 (1933) pp. 433–450.
- Taczanowski Cz., *Parla il Duce (rozważania po mowie Mussoliniego w sprawie Anschlussu)*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 20 (1938) pp. 308–309; 21 (1938) pp. 324–325.
- Tochowicz P. pr., *Zasady wychowawcze nacjonalizmu i politycyzmu*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 39 (1937), pp. 151–159, pp. 250–263.
- Urban J. pr., *Antonio Menotti Corvi: Ustrój faszystowski w Italji*, „Przegląd Współczesny”, sierpień-wrzesień (1930) 373–375.
- Urban J. pr., *Antonio Menotti Corvi: Ustrój faszystowski w Italji*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 188 (1930) pp. 229–230.
- Urban J. pr., *Przenikanie bezbożnictwa do umysłowości polskiej*, „Przegląd Powszechny”, 210 (1936) pp. 12–28.
- Urban J. pr., *Ustrój faszystowskiej Italji*, „Przegląd Współczesny”, 1930, p. 229.
- Weryński H. pr., *Kościół katolicki wobec przemian fizjonomii Europy*, „Ruch Katolicki”, 4 (1934) pp. 9–14.
- Wyszyński S. pr., *Faszyzm a Kościół*, „Prąd”, 19 (1930) pp. 145–167.
- Wyszyński S. pr., *Katolicy włoscy i polscy wobec swych uniwersytetów katolickich*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 20 (1932) pp. 377–381.
- Wyszyński S. pr., *Zasady i poczynania społeczno-apostolskiej działalności kard. Rerrari*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 25 (1930) pp. 24–37.
- Z., *Porażka Włoch*, „Myśl Narodowa”, 13 (1939) pp. 203–204.

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest pokazanie istnienia polskiego nurtu naukowej – głównie politologicznej, lecz współwystępującej także z filozoficzną, teologiczną i pedagogiczną – krytyki faszyzmu oraz wyboru jej źródeł. Nie była ona tak głęboka i jednoznaczna, jak krytyka bolszewizmu i nazizmu. Faszyzm bowiem zachowywał pozory zgodności z chrześcijaństwem w wymiarze religijnym, moralnym, społecznym. Obok artykułów publicystycznych traktujących najczęściej faszyzm jako zaporę przeciw bolszewizmowi, publikowano analizy naukowe. Czynili to ks. Jana Piwowarczyk, ks. Stefan Wyszyński, ks. Józef Pastuszka, ks. Henryk Weryński, Adam Romer, Adolf Kliszewicz i inni.

Faszyzm oceniono jako przygotowaniem gruntu – pojedynczego człowieka i całego narodu – na nadejście bolszewizmu. Dostrzegano w nim podważanie praw wolnościowych i wzmożenie policyjnego nadzoru w państwie. Reglamentowanie wolności i kwestionowanie demokracji widziano łącznie z rozbud, ową administracji jako kasty rządzącej.

Słowa kluczowe: ks. Jana Piwowarczyk, ks. Stefan Wyszyński, ks. Józef Pastuszka, ks. Henryk Weryński, Adam Romer, Adolf Kliszewicz, polski nurt krytyki faszyzmu.