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To Tame and Pacify: Political Aims of the Philosophy of Peace in Post-war Poland

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The paper seeks to clarify the political goals of promoting the “philosophy of peace” in post-war Poland under communist rule in order to assess its credibility for the present.

PROBLEM AND RESEARCH METHODS: Contemporary academic textbooks devoted to the “philosophy of security” reproduce the interpretative patterns found in scientific analyzes of the “philosophy of peace” from the communist era. By proclaiming the unconditional priority of security for contemporary man, they provide no justification for this thesis. Using the contextualization method, what they consider universal is verified here by confronting the circumstances of the era in which it arose.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The paper reminds the most important conditions of Polish statehood subordinated to an external superpower after World War II. It discusses the possible social roles of scholars within the system of political repression. In this context, it analyzes the intellectual biography of the most important classic, to whom contemporary authors in the field of the philosophy of security refer.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The analysis proves the explicitly profiled social role of the classic within the system of state subordination and lack of national sovereignty.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The reproduction of interpretative patterns taken for granted from similar works

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should therefore be considered scientifically unreliable in the conditions of political and scientific freedom.

KEYWORDS:

philosophy of peace, philosophy of security,
political commissar/politruk, propaganda discourse,
scholar vs. repressive state

INTRODUCTION

The notion of the philosophy of peace in this text will refer to the collection of contents published by the authors who are professional scholars and who, during the time of communist Poland after WW2, developed the thought on the fundamental significance of peace for human life and fulfillment. These people shaped a new generation of authors who in present, post-communist times, publish academic manuals concerning the philosophy of security (Pokruszyński, 2013; Rosa, 1995; Rosa, 2009; Świniarski & Chojnacki, 2004). The notion of the “philosophy of security” is preferred by them as more comprehensive and more adequately responding to the challenges of the contemporary world (Świniarski, 1997, p. 7). These authors unanimously and unconditionally acknowledge security as the most important need of modern man (Pokruszyński, 2013, pp. 13, 17; Pokruszyński & Piwowarski, 2014, pp. 12, 16, 20, 34; Świniarski, 1997, p. 55). The notions of the “philosophy of peace” and the “philosophy of security” will be treated synonymously here as contemporary authors on the philosophy of security, expressing tribute to their masters (Świniarski, 1997, p. 7), remain the only group of authors in Poland who develop the issue of the abovementioned philosophy of security. A research question which accompanies this analysis concerns the adequacy of the inspiration by the “philosophy of peace” developed under the communist regime, in the conditions of contemporary, independent statehood and challenges which face its citizens.

A starting point of the analysis is the assumption that the ethos of the scholar, academic researcher, educator of students, always remains the same. It relies on the constant endeavor towards the truth regardless of changing political systems and other external

conditioning. A working hypothesis, which logically results from the premise, would state that a good, proven intellectual tradition must be nurtured and another pillar of intellectual reflection always remaining in accordance with the values of truth and good should be built on its foundation. This hypothesis is confirmed by the interpretations according to which research on peace and security developed previously in a different ideological-institutional context may be certainly compared to the values which are shared by a vast mass of the citizens of a democratic state. Moreover, they state that “these are universal values such as: truth, freedom, love, justice, solidarity, human dignity and the rights of a man which were strongly emphasized by the Polish Pope John Paul II” (Kunikowski, 2007, p. 17). If the words cited in *Tabula gratulatoria* in honor of one of the most prominent contemporary authors in the field of the philosophy of security were true, then it would mean a considerable convergence of a creative and pedagogical effort, developed both before and after the fall of the Communism in Poland, the effort which would certainly deserve to be compared to the teaching of the leader of universal Church, traditionally treating the appeals of peace as an integral element of his own mission in the world (Kuzniar, 2005, p. 198).

While following the guidelines given in acknowledgements in the publications, our analysis will be focused on the achievements of the author undoubtedly recognized as the most important master of the contemporary authors of the philosophy of peace and security. For some of them, he played a role of a head of staff and a personal mentor. The analysis will be preceded by a short introduction of a geopolitical context of post-war Poland

CONTEXT OF POST-WAR POLAND

On the basis of agreements between the leaders of the victorious powers in World War II, Polish territory was given over to the influence zone of the Soviet Union. The Western Allies allowed the Soviet aggressor from 1939 to keep the then annexed lands of eastern Poland within the USSR. The territories occupied in 1939 by the second, defeated German aggressor were allowed to reconstruct as a state entity dependent on the Kremlin. This operation caused the greatest

astonishment among Polish communists, faithful to Stalinist directives both during the period of existence of interwar independent Poland and during the war. The aim of their actions and sacrifices was to connect the entire area of the former Polish state to the community of Soviet nations. Vanda Vasilevskaya, leader of Polish communists much respected by Stalin, proud holder of Soviet citizenship since 1939, after the end of the war remained a resident of the annexed zone¹.

In the western, post-German zone, extended to the Oder-Neiße line, the Soviet authorities started to build new state structures. According to a progressive strategy, practiced in Russia after 1917, the sphere of information and propaganda became a priority for the new authorities. The Polish communist state was cut off by an informational iron curtain from its civilization matrix in Europe. The chief authorities reported directly to the Kremlin². Polish soldiers fighting on many fronts of WW2, especially those coming from the lands annexed by the USSR, had a closed return path to their homeland. The few daredevils who decided to return became the object of repression, torture and accusations of collaboration with "German fascism". Similar accusations were made against activists of the Polish Underground State, the world's largest administrative, cultural and political organization functioning underground during the war.

From the point of view of the average citizen of Eastern Europe, what was officially called "liberation" meant falling from one occupation to another. Similarly to the German occupiers from the times of war, the post-war communist authorities had problems with convincing the distrustful local population. The new authority suffered

1 Vanda Vasilevskaya (Wasilewska, 1905-1964) was called the „midwife“ of post-war communist Poland, although after the war she remained in the zone annexed to the Soviet Union. She married Oleksandr Korniyuchuk, a political commissar responsible for the sovietization of the annexed Polish lands. She also served as a political commissar in the Red Army, in the rank of colonel. She represented the USSR at international peace congresses. She lived in Lviv (Lwów), the most important city lost by Poland, and was buried in Kiev, currently: Ukraine (Niemic, 2011).

2 Files in the Central Archives of the Polish Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw were ordered by Cyrillic alphabet until the end of communist Poland. This is the best proof of who was their main recipient. After 1989, some of these archives, containing sensitive data of Polish citizens, were evacuated to Moscow, where they rest to this day (Nawrocki & al., 2013).

from a lack of personnel. Members of the national elite who survived the war repressions and exterminations³, even if they expressed the will to work for their homeland regardless of its changed political colors, were subject to ideological surveillance, verifications and accusations similar to those made against anyone who had any idea of the world functioning freely outside the borders of the “communist world paradise”⁴. The communists formed their own power elite consisting of random people, entangled in common crimes, coming from the quickly promoted social margin, accepting the colonial character of the new political order (Gella, 1998, p. 157).

In order to win the local people over, the new authority referred to the past Polish statehood and national traditions close to the heart of the Pole. However, it did so in a selective way, creating voluntary hybrids depending on the current challenges of ideological struggle. In legal terms, the hybrid of the new system consisted of elements of the pre-war Polish legal order, references to the first of the two pre-war constitutions (with the rejection of the second), all of which interpreted voluntarily in accordance with the decrees of the new authority issued while still in warfare conditions. The decrees issued on an ongoing basis revealed

the true face of the apparatus of power and its creators, who were probably guided by the Lenin principle: *there is no democracy for the enemies of democracy*. It was a blatant compromise of legislation,

says professor of legal sciences. And he adds:

The possibility of imprisoning people in forced labor camps without a court ruling [... signified] a clear violation of the principle of

3 Both the German and Soviet occupants established the liquidation of the Polish intelligentsia as a priority for occupation. The methods used by both sides were similar, and the results – as long as mutual cooperation lasted, i.e. until 1941 – were agreed and unified.

4 This is the title of the book by Adam Krzyżanowski, a Polish economist, describing the shaping of the ideology of the Soviet state, in particular its façade nature in relation to the changing challenges of current policy. Krzyżanowski, coeval of the authors of the Russian communist experiment, wrote his text after WW2 and left it in the manuscript. As a book, it was published after half a century, in independent Poland (Krzyżanowski, 2008).

*nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege.*⁵ [...] Terror and fear were becoming extremely important factors in the actions of the *people's power*. (Lutrzykowski, 2013, pp. 164-165).

The professional special services of the Soviet supervisor of Poland introduced a set of epistemological traps previously unknown or unimaginable in their intensity. These traps include:

- taking advantage of no formal state of war between Soviet Russia and the Republic of Poland since the entry of Soviet troops into Polish soil in 1939;
- the consent of the leaders of the Allied powers to the territorial changes made by Stalin in Eastern Europe before being attacked by Hitler in 1941, in the course of warfare;
- inviting representatives of the legal Polish authorities and the Home Army, revealing their authority towards the encroaching Red Army, for allied talks – only to dull their vigilance, arrest them and permanently eliminate them; this phenomenon was accompanied by the practice of breaking the officer's word of honor by Red Army representatives, unknown to European military culture, and the criminal treatment of veterans, unknown even under the Nazi occupation (Gella, 1998, p. 10);
- the primacy of propaganda over information, introduced within a closed and isolated area controlled by law enforcement agencies established under the authority of the occupying army;
- the inability to appeal to any external authority, justified by the ideological premise of the victory of the best regime in human history (Miłosz, 1953);
- complete closure of the epistemological system through: rejection of the metaphysical absolute (God), universalistic ethics, universalism of international law, the principles of science (about which we are further afield) and the dialectic interpretation of history, according to which truth, rightness and focus of actions are authoritatively defined (albeit in a way that varies according to the circumstances) by the communist Party (Morin, 1983).

⁵ Latin: *there is no crime without legal justification, there is no penalty without legal justification*. This principle announced in the Justinian Code remains a legacy of Roman law and applies everywhere within Western civilization. "Totalitarian legal systems are based on the reverse principle – what is not allowed, is prohibited" (Lutrzykowski, 2013, p. 164).

The so-called thaw that occurred after 1956 in the countries of the Eastern Bloc meant a departure from the most brutal and repressive practices of the communist regime. It did not, however, mean the resignation of the new power from the position of an ideological hegemon and authoritarian supervisor of social relations in the conquered countries of Eastern Europe. "We will never give up power once acquired." – was the famous slogan of the communist leader who after 1956 took the helm of power over Poland (W. Gomułka. In Góra & Kocharński, 1984, p. 110)⁶.

POSSIBLE ROLE OF THE SCHOLAR IN A REPRESSIVE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Communism created a closed and self-referential system. Within the framework of such a system, it is difficult to talk about social roles in a creative and dramatic sense, analyzed for example in the works of Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1959). The closed system is rather subject to analyses of the structural-functionalist type, carried out according to Talcott Parsons' assumptions (Parsons, 1971). Writing these words, I would like to stress that in the relation between the scholar and the communist power, one can calmly ignore the scientist's own aspirations – definitely dominant in shaping his career path within the open system – and focus on the utilitarian needs of the political power organizing the scientific base for its own activity.

In the war-ravaged territory and in the face of the extermination of the Polish intelligentsia by both war occupants, the authorities of communist Poland began to create educational institutions that would enable them to acquire management potential at an accelerated pace. Party schools such as the Central Party School in Łódź⁷ and the Party

6 Władysław Gomułka uttered this sentence in 1945, directing it to representatives of the legal Polish government in exile. The communist leader continued as follows: "We will destroy all unscrupulous reactionary bandits. You can still shout that the blood of the Polish nation is shed, that the NKVD rules Poland, but that will not turn us away." (In Góra & Kocharński, 1984, p. 110).

7 Warsaw, destroyed in 90% during WW2, was not suitable for taking over the function of the administrative center of the country during the first post-war months. This function was performed by the city of Łódź.

School at the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party became a new form of higher education (although it stood for "higher" only by name). The staff for the new system was also provided by the Teodor Duracz Central Law School and the Officer's Law School. After several months of training, mainly in the field of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the graduates, who mostly had several classes in the primary school, received the title of Master and were promoted to managerial positions in public administration bodies, the media shaping public opinion and courts issuing death sentences to opponents of the new regime (Miedziński, 2017, pp. 45-53). Science lost its inherent autonomy, becoming part of the system of "national economy". Scientific advancement as measured by academic degrees and titles was replaced by an administrative career defined by the levels of university positions. "The people of science have been replaced by the people of the system" (Hübner, 2013, p. 621).

A scholar could take one of three attitudes under these conditions:

- a dissident,
- a conformist,
- a propagandist.

One could become a dissident without any special effort. It was enough to present views that did not correspond to the current line of the communist party, or to be accused of representing such even despite loud denials from the interested party itself. This means that apart from the authentic scientists-dissidents of the communist system, who today are considered to be *crème de la crème* of the Polish scientific world, the dissidents also became those who criticized the current administrators of the system for not quite radical extermination of the old order. Usually it is from the latter circles that the later oppositionists, "democratizing" post-communist Poland, will come.

Conformism under the communist regime meant the reliable execution of administrative orders, the selection of research topics with as little touch on current political issues as possible and a safe escape into privacy. Distinguishing the *post factum* category of science conformists, we will get to know them by their faithful participation in ritualistic acts of paying tribute to the policies of the ruling authorities, but not among the leaders of such initiatives.

Finally, the propagandists were those scholars who sold their ethos of faithfulness to the truth to serve as a propaganda tube for power

ideology. According to Professor Hübner, in the most critical Stalinist period of the power struggle, the communists, having an ideological re-education to choose from and a frontal fight against the recognized scientific elite of the prerevolutionary period, were choosing the strategy of a frontal fight by dividing and breaking up the scientific community (Hübner, 2013, pp. 611-612). In the later period of the People's Republic of Poland, when "power once acquired" seemed to be no longer threatened and the system closed, it was possible to resort to less confrontational methods, focusing actually on reserving a career path for scholars properly formatted ideologically.

The Master of contemporary authors publishing on the philosophy of peace and security undoubtedly belongs to the latter category. His scientific career began quite peculiarly because four years before the defence of his master's degree at the University of Warsaw he was employed as an assistant at the Feliks Dzierżyński Military Political Academy in Warsaw. He was 23 years old at the time, and his earlier fate between 1944 and 1953 remains unknown. While since the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the special services gained the status of an operational center of the communist system, the higher schools of political propaganda (and military schools in particular) can be compared to the motherly womb of the system, giving birth to a cadre of ideological supervisors of the conquered nation. Originating from the tradition of front political officers from the times of warfare, in the 1950s the Academy, still managed by a genuine Red Army officer,⁸ was rather not a place friendly to dissidents or even systemic conformists. When preparing the cadre of political officers, directed to the front line of ideological struggle, it had to maintain the highest degree of ideological vigilance, and its lecturers (or rather functionaries) had to represent the impeccable silhouette of the defender of the system.

The ideological silhouette of Joseph Borgosz – as this is the name of the master of contemporary authors on the philosophy of peace and security – is extremely clear in this respect. His entire professional life

8 Rector-commandant of the Military Political Academy accepting our Master to work in 1953 was Colonel Michał Stankiewicz (1904-1983), Polish-speaking political commissar of the Red Army. After Stalin's death he was dismissed to the Soviet Union, where he spent the rest of his life.

and all levels of his career – from university assistant to full professor – are connected with an institution educating specialists in political propaganda, the Feliks Dzierżyński Military Political Academy, and last only two years shorter than the school itself.⁹ Since his student years he was a member of the communist party (PUWP). He survived all purges and crises in the party, not leaving its ranks until the party herself was dissolved in 1990. In his period of scientific independence, which in Polish conditions is determined by the academic degree of *habilitated doctor*, he therefore belonged to the group of the highest ranked senior officers of the army, taking part in the “corps of political and educational officers” (Dekret, 1948, Article 5.2.c), commonly known as *politruks*. His official task during all the years of his professional work under the communist regime was to educate similar political commissars.

Joseph Borgosz (1928-1997) specialized in the history of philosophy, especially in classical philosophy. His scientific interests also included a number of contemporary issues. It so interestingly happens that the scope of these matters perfectly coincides with the range of ideological threats that hostile ideological currents may have posed to the propagators of Communism in Poland:

1. coming from outside – countercultural slogans of the New Left, gaining popularity in the Western world (Borgosz, 1971; Borgosz, 1972);
2. ethical and social slogans of the Catholic Church, i.e. the most numerous and ideologically most dangerous opponent of the new system, threatening from within the country (Borgosz, 1962; Borgosz, 1965).

Borgosz has published numerous brochures documenting his involvement in refuting arguments of the Catholic social teaching, addressed, among others, to conscripts who underwent a forced course of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination during their compulsory military service (Borgosz & al., 1985). The intellectual basis for this indoctrination was provided by the author we discuss, in the company of other leading political commissars of the People’s Republic of Poland,

9 The dissolution of the institution in 1990 forced Borgosz to find another place of employment for the last three pre-retirement years. He started teaching at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Academy of Jan Długosz in Częstochowa.

including Colonel Professor Mieczysław Michalik, long-time rector-commander of the Military Political Academy. The brochures were published by the Board of Propaganda and Agitation of the Main Political Board of the Polish Army, i.e. the highest national military center of ideological influence, focused on the domestic recipient.

THE SCIENTIFIC VALUE OF PROPAGANDA

There is a fundamental contradiction between science – grown from the motives of a lack of knowledge of the world and a desire to know the truth about it – and propaganda – developed in order to induce persuasive influence on the recipient in terms of pre-known content. The primary objective of the propaganda developed in the communist state was to maintain “power once acquired”. The content was subject to manipulation, forms of influence were being updated, and the goal was not of truthful (universalist), but of political (casual) character.

For casual purpose, our master of the philosophy of peace did not hesitate to use an open lie. In 1983, during the martial law in Poland, Grzegorz Przemyski, son of a well-known Warsaw oppositionist, arrested by the militia, died as a result of injuries sustained at the headquarters. Colonel Professor Borgosz chaired an expert team preparing disinformational guidelines for shaping public opinion during the trial of Przemyski’s killers. He advised to “pass the blame on the boy’s colleagues, his mother, the paramedics” of the ambulance service, and the shouts of pain issued by a high school graduate during the torture at the police station to be interpreted as “karate shouts” issued by an individual who is “under the influence of alcohol and drugs” (Łazarewicz, 2016, pp. 58-59). The expertise of Borgosz’s team was prepared at the request of the highest authorities of the communist party and submitted to the dictator of martial law, General Jaruzelski (Pleskot, 2014, p. 193).

In another place, I made substantive criticism of the thesis that peace is the most important goal of man, fundamental for the post-communist philosophy of peace (Góra, 2020). The thesis of post-communist authors confuses means with goals and treats extraordinary states as a permanently desired state. At this point, however, we should add the conclusion from the above context analysis.

Extracting peaceful or even pacifist elements from the treasury of political thought by Borgosz, the historian of philosophy (Borgosz, 1989, pp. 137-140), was accompanied by emphasizing – in accordance with the canon of Marxist analysis – dialectic, confrontational nature of intellectual activity, or – as the title of one of his monographs proclaimed – “ideological struggle in contemporary philosophy” (Borgosz, 1977).

The formal operation carried out by the post-communist authors, consisting in clearing their own discourse of the ideological ornaments typical of Marxist jargon, applied to the content of their message risks sterilizing it from all meaning. It is not possible to select the elements of that discourse and forget about the context and especially the political demand for which it was created at the time. It is not fair to reproduce selected fragments of the discourse created at that time without taking into account its utilitarian, propaganda nature. This discourse was created for the needs of laymen who did not participate in the exercise of power and were subjected to the system introduced on bayonets of a foreign army. This discourse was to act as a sedative – to tame and pacify, to take away the will to fight, to prove the inevitability of social processes initiated by revolutionary authorities. This discourse was to interpret the past philosophy, not to learn about it impartially. A discourse that pacified the moods of social pits – conscripted soldiers, public opinion agitated by the atrocities of the military junta during martial law, etc. – was an integral complement to the surveillance, repressive, and social-engineering activities practiced by the “power” on “society”. The discourse addressed to political officers, future supervisors of the system (Borgosz, 1978) organized their knowledge according to the guidelines of the political decision-making center (Ministerstwo, 1968). One should not forget about the information monopoly imposed by the communist authorities. It was expressed in nationwide preventive censorship, as well as in the inability to verify the theses published by court propagandists, who had the privilege of accessing foreign sources of knowledge and printed briefings: *For internal use*.

CONCLUSIONS

Monographs on the philosophy of peace/security published in contemporary, post-communist Poland repeat, and often even duplicate, the content formulated during the communist times by the political commissars in military uniforms. The thesis of these contemporary publications – emphasized from the first pages of the text – boils down to identifying peace and security as the highest values of contemporary man. I have had the opportunity to criticize the substantive shallowness of this thesis in a separate publication. Here, on the other hand, I would like to draw attention to the unreliability of the operation consisting in transferring the propaganda discourse, created on the political commission of the repressive state system, into the framework of the scientific narrative of the times of freedom, which should be characterized by objectivity and the pursuit of truth. Depriving propaganda discourse of its ideological ornamentation is not enough to make it an argument motivated by learning the truth. Moreover, attempts to identify the messages that duplicate the old propaganda discourse with the highest values contained in the teaching of religious authorities close to the contemporary audience (Wojtyła, 1983) look like using old disinformation skills to spread cognitive confusion still today.

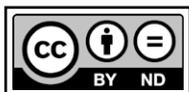
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