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Civil society in the face of oppression and enslavement by ideologies, politics and power

ABSTRACT: The article contains information about the historical changes in the meaning of the following concepts: politics, power and human rights. The aim of the deliberations is to show the negative changes in the art of politics and its real form – power, and the effects on the fate of the individual and the collective. The article presents the political mechanisms which aim to assert dominance and power over the individual and society, and not maintain the public welfare – which was the original goal of the mechanism. The conclusion of the deliberations includes the postulate of building a civil society as the only way to limit the ominous intentions of politics and power.

KEYWORDS: Politics, power, degeneration of politics and political power, human rights, civil society.

It is not easy to answer the question of whether and where the boundaries of affiliation to various areas of social and individual life lie in the exclusive competence and interests of political power. It depends on the ambiguity of meaning of the very concept of politics. From the type and character of the political system, which may be liberal and not defend its prerogatives of power rigidly. Finally, it depends on the historically and culturally variable content of human and civil rights. In a seemingly democratic country, such as the Republic of Poland, human and civil rights should be the only criterion judging the scope of civil entitlements and the limits of interference by the authorities to regulate all matters that belong to the canon of freedom and the prerogatives of the citizen, and not voluntary political decisions established by the political authorities. It is therefore bizarre to think that there are areas of affairs, types of decisions, areas of life for which competence is guaranteed

to politicians and excluded from the judgment and influence of the ordinary citizen. As an important argument in favor of such an understanding of civil liberties, and at the same time a particular curiosity caused by the author of the statement, I would like to mention the opinion of a well-known professor of sociology, who expressed the formulated above statement in the following way: „It is possible to imagine that citizens will elect new authorities every four years, but they will not be able to make a real difference because they will be completely manipulated and devoid of initiative. If democracy is to be alive and respond to real social needs, society must be free and active, even if the current government does not approve” (author: professor dr hab. Piotr Gliński – professor of the University of Warsaw). Mr. Piotr Gliński, in the role of Minister of Culture and National Heritage and Deputy Prime Minister, has expressed more thoughts on the matter. They are diametrically different from those mentioned above and boil down to a real taking away of local government decisions theater management and their repertoire, drastic dissertations with local governments on the museum management and the content of their ideological and historical messages, and similar behavior that shows a metamorphosis of man in terms of fundamental issues of freedom and civil rights, even with the title of professor – after taking up a political office. From my personal practice – taking up a political position in 90% of cases results in a loss of reason and sometimes decency. The case of Prime Minister Gliński is fully confirmed by this rule.

Conceptual findings

Let us now return to the theoretical arrangements for politics and power. It is impossible to present a systematic look on the formation of the theory of politics and power, because it is a problem as wide as the sea and also – extremely nuanced. For our use, let us first look at one of the oldest definitions of politics, a classical definition by the great Aristotle (4th century BC). „Politics is the art of governing the state, the aim of which is common good”. Art, i.e. not domination, oppression, brute power, but intellectual and organizational skill, with an emotional factor. The aim – the common good! Non-specific interests, selfish voluntarism, division, stratification, manipulation of people. Stagyrite’s considerations suggest that the source of politics are: laws of nature, „supernatural” forces, from which a specific political order originates, including universal equality or inequalities of „participation”, inequalities of „access”, privileges, stratifications... Such a description of political reality is a testimony to a sober attitude towards reality. We must remember that in

Aristotle's time slavery was a „natural state” and a slave a „speaking working tool”. The basic sense of the definition is contained in the definition of politics as: Art of governing, whose main goal is common good.

This truth remained truthful through most of the Christian Middle Ages, even though in practical politics it became more and more of an unattainable virtue. This era of struggle for domination, territories, primacy – excluded morality from political thought. Politics has increasingly become an art of pragmatic pursuit of goals in which the category of the common good no longer appears. The new scientific definition of politics is linked to the name of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). According to this Italian thinker, man is inherently evil and is mostly driven by greed. Nevertheless, he can be socially shaped if we get to know the art of influencing people. The main instrument of right influence is the ability to instill fear. Thus, fear is the main instrument of power and a solid basis for building order in society. The ruler does not have to be loved by his subjects, it is enough that he instills fear. For the love of the people easily passes away, while fear is a permanent element of collective consciousness. This is the source of the main power and its goal, which is the effective achievement of goals. Morality towards effectiveness is a completely secondary virtue of power and ruler.

„If the good of the state requires cruelty, the ruler should have no scruples; except for the one rule of the art of political action: acts harmful to the subjects should be carried out relatively quickly, while all actions aimed at the good of the people should be extended over a longer period’ (Machiavelli 1987, p. 29). Such thoughts were included, among others, in Machiavelli's fundamental „handbook” for rulers titled „The Prince”. This work went down in history as the new Gospel of new politics that never again tried to whitewash and ennoble politics as the god-fearing service of noble people, although most often the hypocrisy of politicians knows no boundaries, and Orwellian speech is their everyday language. A ruler who, once political stability has been achieved, strives to build a strong state, which is a basic political goal, can establish a dictatorship, which then should be turned into a republic: a form of government that ensures the country's stability and, with the appropriate art of governance, also the sustainability of power. These Machiavellian recommendations are relevant to the practices of today's Polish government. The most important goal in politics is the *raison d'état*. In order to achieve it, all available means can be used, including, for example, deceit and cruelty. The ruthlessness of the proceedings justified the conviction expressed in the historic saying „the end justifies the means”.

According to Machiavelli, politics is the art of effective action, which must be separated from morality – politics is about effectiveness and not about doing good deeds and, as prof. Stanisław Filipowicz stated in his work: *Historia myśli polityczno-prawnej* (The history of political and legal thought): „In order to conduct effective politics, a statesman must also use means and methods that are contrary to moral principles. Governance should be based on creating the conviction that the actions of the ruler are in fact good” (Filipowicz 2007, p. 117). I cannot assess whether the opinions of prof. St. Filipowicz are his opinions or descriptions only.

The ruler should keep the appearances of graciousness, righteousness, humanity, and strength, terror should be combined with trickery and treason. It is desirable that the subjects respect and love their ruler, and ultimately at least be afraid of him! Machiavellian philosophy has become a permanent base for a modern way of understanding and practicing politics. Can a mentor, or a teacher, consider such a philosophy as a basis for his behavior and be guided by it in both public and private life? Does politics based on such convictions have the right to dictate the behavior of citizens and deprive them of their right to express their moral rights in relation to immoral policy? The saddest thing about this question is that the citizens express such doubts extremely rarely.

Since one of the main foundations of politics is manipulation and mystification, the modern definition of politics is free from Machiavellian blindness and generally sounds like this: Politics is about overcoming conflicts of interest between groups and seeking a relative settlement between interdependent groups and their conflicting interests by means of persuasion, manipulation, coercion, violence, but also negotiations, compromises and the internalization and dissemination of a common system of values. The contemporary shape of society, which is extremely diverse, excludes collective consensus. Common order and ‘social peace’ are achieved by force, legal regulation or more or less explicit violence. An illustration of such a policy (reconciling the conflicting interests of interdependent groups) is visible in, for example, the remuneration system, which assumes that the remuneration of one group at the expense of another group can be divided by a hundred, two hundred or three hundred index. It is not my imagination; it is the reality of our everyday relations, even in our Polish conditions. These wage inequalities, regulated by formal agreements established by the authorities, have already been a subject of discussion in the UN and stigmatized as an irrational mechanism for wasting resources and deepening social disparities, resulting in grotesque wealth and unimaginable poverty, and often leading to social tragedies for which these prove powerless: „persuasion, manipulation,

negotiation and other means of overcoming the interests of interdependent groups” (Krapiec 2007, p. 344).

The above definition is based on Max Weber’s social concepts (1864–1920) which painted politics clearly as: the exercise of power, i.e. domination, rule of one group over another, forcing actions consistent with the intentions of violent power holders. Violence has been recognized as an „ultima ratio” in all internal and external disputes, and has now also been extended to include on the relations of nation states with international organizations such as the European Union, the European Court of Justice, etc.

Thus, granting a special privilege to politics and politicians, consisting in the right to set standards of social correctness, not to mention moral standards for individuals, groups, institutions and social organizations, is a kind of abuse in rational thinking and action appears to be paradoxically grotesque. It is like the classic fairy tale where the care of a flock of sheep was entrusted to a wolf.

In order to understand the definition mentioned above, one can compare it to examples of its practical application. In Poland, the above definition fits well with the phenomenon of so-called junk contracts, forced self-employment, the phenomenon of reprivatization; both the so-called Bierut Decree and the current practice of regaining „ownership”. Another example is the dispute in the Ryanair airline company, which unfolds before our very eyes. Similar examples from the whole world can be quoted indefinitely. Not to mention the countries of Africa, South America, commonly identified regimes or countries of uncontrolled corruption. Everything that happens there happens under specific political course. Growing social inequalities; the fruit of a specific social policy, since half a century have already taken on grotesque proportions (owners of 1/3 of the world’s wealth could ride on one passenger bus of about 65 people, and one and a half billion people live in extreme poverty) And this is the result of „regulation”, „relative settlement ... between the conflicting interests of interdependent groups”. Therefore, it is not possible to describe precisely what politics is, because every authoritarian regime, various systems of managing state affairs conditioned by tradition, demography, national relations, economic potential make politics an individualized, indefinite system of management, whose only common features boil down to the existence of contradictions of interests and the use of compromises, limited negotiation and coercion. And in such circumstances, citizens are required to respect some degree of state autonomy, completely reserved to the exclusive prerogatives of the authorities and excluded from the judgment of the social community to which it is subjected to, to a greater or lesser extent! This may be in line with politics, but it is certainly not in line with reason and universal human rights.

Human rights!

Their origins can be traced back to the edicts of the Emperor Ashoka (304–232 BC), of the Maurya dynasty, who ruled between 273–232 BC in the kingdom of Magadha, in the territory of today's India. The Emperor ordered to carve out inscriptions on stone pillars praising peace, tolerance, pacifist ideas and the duties the authority towards the people and instructed to place them on the territory of the Magadha kingdom. This is one of the first verbalizations of human rights in the history of our civilization. Despite this noble undertaking, in his youth, the Emperor Ashoka violently suppressed the revolts of the province, and after taking over ordered the murder all of his half-brothers, potential candidates for the crown. He effectively protected his crown and the interests of the dynasty with violence. His successor, however, was murdered by an army leader who founded a new dynasty. Therefore, power has always been invariable in its ruthlessness and cruelty. Today there are other, less bloody methods of eliminating political enemies, although there is no lack of similar practices today (J. Ceausescu, Muamar Gaddafi, Imre Nagi, and hundreds of similar cases).

Human rights and politics are, in fact, two different worlds which, contrary to all the expressed opinions, do not fit together. Human rights can be considered a register of the most important human values. How, therefore, if it is synonymous with values, can they be in close relation to politics, which abandoned morality and values. The history of human rights is a never-ending process of reincarnation of values and their implementation into the world ruled by politics. Making human rights a shield for individuals and groups exposed to potential dangers due to e.g. religious, national, racial or other differences, resulting in a possible existential or emotional threat. Politics is a centuries-long exercise in the ability to steer people, groups and processes to achieve not the common good (historical incidents), but to achieve selfish, individual or group, benefits or other goals.

The relative equilibrium between the authorities and the subjects prevailed on community – a fundamental category of the human species. The original understanding of community derives from the biological forms of existence of all species, including man, which arise in a specific „own” territory, with dominant, strong feelings of closeness, emotional bond, collective identity, group autonomy, strengthened by the conviction of an extensive network of biological kinship, the approved control of a group over the rules of collective life, the common possessions and approved rules of subjection to „power”.

derived from blood ties, traditions, the rule of seniority, or other factors determined by cultural tradition, religion, magic, or other premises.

Despite the seemingly archaic understanding of the community, having a similar, semantic meaning in many languages; *communio* (Latin), *community* (English), *la communaute* (French), *Gemeinschaft* (German). The community as a phenomenon is almost an exemplification of values and has survived the original forms of social existence of human communities and, with minor transformations, has become a permanent component of the emotional culture of the modern man and the society! A civil society is being formed today, based on the archetype of the community. Most forms of community life were created by religions. Despite significant differences in formation, this modern form of community has two basic elements of its ancestor: locality and strong emotional ties. Therefore, no authoritarian rule tolerates civil society. They are too autonomous, independent of political power. They have their goals set outside, and even against official politics – they do not tolerate control. Civic communities are developing successfully in the Scandinavian countries, built there by the widespread presence of people's universities, a particular form of adult education. For century and a half, they have developed a diverse form of cooperative activity – a specific form of community based on economic premise. The political authorities of the Scandinavian countries are determined to support civil society. Our recent history shows the determination the Polish authorities fought with against various forms of civic activity; first the rigorous control of the communist state, then the passive indifference of governments after the transformation, and now the selective policy of the authoritarian Kaczyński government, which shows conditional consent to e.g. football hooligans „kibole”, „nationalists”; and unconditionally cuts women's or LGBT movements short.

The community is favored by territorial conditions, local historical traditions, the stability of the social structure and other circumstances under which members of a particular community, in their internal convictions, are dominated by the sum of feelings „inwards”, over the competitive sum of ties „outwards”.

The constitutive features of the community, thanks to which this form of collective exists and bears the features of the everlasting social charm, are:

- a) durability, not transience;
- b) spirituality, emotional relations, selflessness;
- c) a sense of „life-long” belonging stemming from of existence itself (not by choice or designation) and a strong awareness of „us” and the „other” (*oikophilia* v. *xenophobia*);

- d) common tradition, identification with the past and future of the group, internal „educational” activity with the aim of maintaining the community;
- e) unconditional membership, one can only belong to one „spiritual group. e.g. sports fans, religious communities, „local little homelands” (Cynarzewska-Wlazlik 2014, p. 1002).

These properties make the community difficult to control externally. The community is not inclined to accept the rules of life other than its own. Sometimes its beliefs and preferences are different, and even contradictory to the belief system and structures of the state, which strives to gain – usually total control over every form of collective life. This is the intention and practice of every authoritarian power. Such are the intentions of the current ruling party, which has probably called itself Law and Justice out of spite.

In order to understand the whole complicated structure and ideology of this phenomenon and such behaviors, i.e. political power and its relations with various forms of social life, we must devote a moment's attention to the issues of power.

Authority!

It is one of the oldest notions in human history. A fascinating question arises – is the need for power an attribute of human nature or a necessary mechanism for the development of civilization and social progress? I doubt that on the basis of social sciences one can exhaustingly answer this question. In turn the connotation of this idea stubbornly suggests content that is rather sinister, not friendly. The notion of power is closer to hostility, evil and crime than to care, protection and security. It is not without reason that medieval theology decided that all power comes from the devil (“*Omnes potestas ex diaboli*”). The evangelical story of temptation of Jesus was the premise for this reasoning, and the idea of spiritual power, which was established at the beginning of Christianity, which avoided splendors and behaviors typical for secular power. In the well-known reflections and dissertations of the learned men of the turn of antiquity and the Middle Ages, from St. Augustin, through the „fringe” Boethius, to the great „Angelic Doctor” – st. Thomas Aquinas – their main topics were fundamental Trinitarian issues and reflections on the nature of man. It was one of the first doctors of the church – the Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius – who in the treatise „*On the Person and Two Natures*” created a definition of a person which remained unchained for a thousand years: „*Persona est rationalis naturae individua substance*’

(a person is an individual substance of an intelligent nature). This definition was accompanied by a broad exposition of the qualities and properties resulting from the substantiality and rationality of man. Its main attributes were dignity and freedom resulting both from the act of creation and from the properties of the person. „By nature, all people are equally free” (Nature omnes homines aequales in libertate facit),” writes Aquinas, ultimately breaking, through Christianity, with the social doctrine which divided into free people and „speaking tools of work”, i.e. slaves (Bartyzel, 2014, p. 760).

The author of the definition of a person, Boethius, expanding on it, writes that the substantial person has value and dignity, because only the person is a whole, because it is a substance, and e.g. a society or the state is only a net of relations. „Man has dignity regardless of everything, simply because he is human, because according to the Book of Genesis, God has chosen him” scholastically explains the modern writer, Chantal Delsol (Delsol 2003, s. 12–13).

I refer to these great debates held not only by scholars, from late Antiquity to almost the present day; (here one asks to recall the content and meaning of the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant, derived from the understanding of the essence human being created by Boethius almost a thousand years ago: „Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.” „Handle so dass du die Menschheit sowohl in deiner Person, als in der Person eines jeder andern, jeder Zeit zugleich als Zweck, niemals bloss als Mittel brauchest” (Kant 1984, p. 62), because modernity has brought us, on the one hand, the unimaginable defiance of the dignity of the human being, on the other hand, it has introduced extremely numerous and varied forms of enslavement from power, matter and living conditions. Freedom has become an illusion and dignity a political rhetoric.

At the same time, the Polish Constitution of 2 April 1997, in art. 30 states: The inherent and inalienable dignity of the person shall constitute a source of freedoms and rights of persons and citizens. It shall be inviolable. The respect and protection thereof shall be the obligation of public authorities. (Journal of Laws No. 78, item 483 as amended). The content of this article is almost a literal expression of the content of philosophical debates from the Middle Ages to modernity. Meanwhile, the public authorities have these recommendations in deep contempt, violating the message thousands of ways. A member of the ruling party called the representatives of the opposition – „opposition cattle”! The leader of the ruling party explicitly divides the society in to the better and the worse kind during important events; declares that the

opposition are „scoundrels” and „treacherous mugs” – all in the Parliament. Another member of the ruling party obscenely and insultingly stuck the middle finger in response to his political opponents! Hate speech is a constant element of social dialog.

The properties the „power” has are perplexing, that it takes reasoning away from some people or the sense of decency and strives to take away dignity and freedom from others – in the literal sense and also in practice. The aforementioned Boethius, one of the first doctors of the church, a great thinker bordering between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is credited with the historic bon mot: „Omnes malum ex potestas” (all evil comes from the authorities/the authority gives birth to all evil). Such opinions were common among Christian thinkers proclaiming and practicing moral rigor. Here are some examples: st. Ambrosius (approx. 339–397) – „if I have two robes – one was taken away from the needy”. Blessed Caesar of Heisterbach – „every rich man is either a thief or a son of a thief. Kant’s categorical imperative Nietzsche’s origins of evil and many others.

As I mentioned, the devilish nature of the earthly/secular power derives from the evangelical story of Satan’s temptation of Jesus – who promised power over all earthly kingdoms to Christ, if he paid tribute to Satan, or recognized his supreme power. Jesus not only rejected temptation, but also defined the nature and origin of his authority; his power comes from God and has a spiritual nature.

This truth about the nature of power, although excluding its origin, was denied after the settlement of the investment dispute, which has been ongoing since the 9th century, between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII in Cannos, where the emperor, after a three days of humiliating penance, on 22 January 1077 recognized the primacy of the Pope and for several centuries, together with the whole Christendom at that time, gave himself into the coronation fee of the papacy. Nota bene, the settlement in Cannos did not divert Henry IV from the further struggle against the papacy, which was a symbolic confirmation of the universal characteristic of power: the irremovable desire for domination and exclusivity. Besides, even after the adoption of the principle: *omnes potestas ex divinae*” (all power comes from the god) it was difficult to notice any qualitative change in the nature and practice of the then rulers. The Middle Ages is one of the darker pages of human history and humanism. It was a period of the crusades, inquisition, burnings of heretics and „witches”, of ruthless wars over territory. Thus, regardless of the origin of power, divine or satanic – its exercise is not service, nor public good (J. Locke), but the realization of the worst instincts of man. It entails activities

filled with egoism, cynicism, domination of personal or particular interests over collective well-being. Opposing views are credited with naivety and pious wishfulness.

In political science theories, the intensification and creation of internal and international conflicts in order to gain full control over an intimidated and divided society is considered pathological and a degeneration of power. The current authorities in Poland since 2015, the Law and Justice party, ideally meets the requirements of the above definition. Thus, power in Poland is characterized by such a pathology. This is not the only characteristic of the pathology of Polish power. Another form of pathology of power is its exercise by an authoritarian party. It should be added that formation of the leader's authoritarian parties affects to a greater or lesser extent the whole of Europe and a significant part of the modern world. The previous Polish government also led the state as a leader's party, although not so ostentatiously. This style of governing has a long tradition in Poland. Both the First Polish Republic government and the Second Polish Republic's Sanation the communist period and almost all governments after the transformation, perhaps with the exception of the government of the Prime Minister Mazowiecki, perfectly illustrate Max Weber's definition that the authority is the freedom to exercise one's will within the framework of a given social relationship, regardless of opposition and the basis of the freedom. There is neither a positive emotion factor nor a public good purpose in this definition – which are the two basic components of Aristotle's definition.

Max Weber's definition is the foundation on which the features and properties of authoritarian power emerge. This is how Umberto Eco describes the properties and features of one of the most sinister types of political power, namely fascism. I will quote a few of the 14 main features of fascism as described by U. Eco in his essay: *Ur-fascism*, published in 1995 in the New York Review of Books.

1. The main feature of fascism is the cult of tradition. A cursory glance at the teachings of each fascist movement is enough to find that it consists mainly of traditionalist thinkers. Nazi gnosis was fueled by traditionalism, syncretism and occult elements. [...]
3. The cult of action for the sake of action: The action is beautiful in itself, it must be taken with or without reflecting on it. Thinking is a form of auto-castration.
4. Disagreement is betrayal: No syncretic thought can withstand the pressure of critical analysis. Modern science praises critical thinking as a way to expand knowledge. Meanwhile, for fascists, criticism is betrayal.

5. Fear of diversity: Fascism demands unity from people. The first goal of the growing fascist movement is to call against any intruders. Fascism is racist by definition.
6. It appeals to social frustration: One of the most characteristic features of fascism throughout history was the appeal to frustration of the middle class, which suffered from the economic crisis or the feeling of political humiliation and fear of danger.
7. Obsession over conspiracies: The followers must feel oppressed. The easiest way to rationalize this plot is to refer to xenophobia. [...]
9. Pacifism is conspiring with the enemy: For fascists there is no struggle for life, but rather life itself serves only the struggle. [...] The final victory will bring the Golden Age. [...]
12. Machismo and militarization: The difficult games of war and heroism causes the fascists to focus their attention on sex matters. *Machismo* presupposes contempt for women, intolerance and condemnation of non-standard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality.
13. Selective populism: In our future, television or Internet populism will emerge, in which the emotional reaction of a selected group of citizens can be presented and accepted as the voice of the nation. This allows fascists to reject the rotten parliamentary democracy.
14. Fascism uses newspeak: All fascist textbooks used poor vocabulary and elementary syntax to limit the use of complex and critical reasoning. We must be ready to identify new types of newspeak. [...] (Eco 1995).

How many of these ideas, features and characteristics can we find in the contemporary reality of countries which readily define their systems as liberal democracies? Sometimes, some governments use other, peculiar terms; e.g. the Russian government describes its system as a sovereign democracy. It is difficult to say what it means, perhaps only to the extent that President Putin is the sovereign of the state. In U. Eco's typology we will we will undoubtedly find numerous similarities to the practices of our Polish authorities.

Another form of the definition of power can be found in Timothy Snyder's fascinating essay „On tyranny”. This is a new lesson in civil education: how to protect your freedom and the autonomy of the civil society from tyranny. Snyder's lessons can be read as a way to save freedom and democracy from any authority that leaves no illusion that it is a service, and wants the good of the community, or that it guarantees the preservation of democracy. The emergence of open dictatorships around the world is becoming increasingly rare. Even criminal regimes, such as the government of the Syrian criminal Bashar al Assad, supported by Russia, and several other spectacular regimes

in South America and Asia have built up their practices with skillful, PR propaganda, using sophisticated sociotechnical tricks. The poetics of Orwell's novel, in which, for example, the loss of dignity of the state and nation is called „getting up off your knees”, the demolition of the legal system and the annulment of the division of power is called reform and restoration of justice, has returned to common use. That is why we, Poles, find the lessons of survival formulated in Snyder's work: „On Tyranny. Twenty lessons from the 20th century”. Here is some of them: L. 1 – do not be obey in advance, L. 2 – defend an institution, L. 3 – hinder the one-party state, L. 6 – watch out for the paramilitaries L. 10 – believe in truth, L. 13 – practice politics in the physical sense, L. 15 – support the good cause, L. 17 – listen to dangerous words, L. 20 – be as courageous as you can (Snyder 2017, *passim*).

Snyder explains why he raises an alarm to defend against tyranny, which is nominally marginal, but in fact constitutes a real threat. „We are no wiser than Europeans who saw democracy succumbing to fascism, Nazism or communism in the 20th century. We have one advantage over them – we can learn from their experiences. Now is the right time to do so!” (page 12) He wrote it in 2016! I would like to add that, contrary to appearances, these quotes were not about Poland. The same applies to Hungary, Russia, Romania, China and dozens of other countries where crawling tyrants camouflaged by sociotechnical rhetoric are born.

Sources and mechanisms of power!

The contemporary list of sources of power is very diverse and is arranged in a certain rational order, from seemingly rational and humane to blatantly forceful behavior. Therefore, source of power can be: knowledge, tradition, charisma, promises and rewards, forms of coercion, blatant violence. A particular source of power lies in the specific procedures hidden behind formal legal regulations. State and political authority, power exercised by a special apparatus, separated from the general population (e.g. by belonging to a nationality group, political party, religion, or any other „power elite” created in any other way) which is based on the threat of physical violence in the forms legally permitted (established by the elite) and having a monopoly on the establishment of these elites and the relevant regulations of law. Therefore, e.g. constitutional freedom of assembly is „instrumented” by numerous law enforcement departments, whose behavior is regulated by many, secret, internal regulations, and which may at any time question the aforementioned freedom, and opposition to them, even by a preschooler or a baby, results in accusations

of violation of personal integrity of a government official which can result in a harsh penalty. Thus, one of the fundamental rights of citizens becomes a pretense, an excuse for a true civil freedom. The power elite explains that all this is *lege artis*, in accordance with the law established by the power elite, who received a mandate for such regulation from a 'sovereign' through democratic elections.

The authority has three main functions: 1. Structure-establishment – aiming to create a mechanisms of access to power, 2. integration – aiming to coordinate and regulate the access to „values”, to participation in the subjective creation of the integration system, cooperation, strengthening of state structures through their availability, and 3. distribution – aiming to fairly distribute the tangible and intangible assets between entities.

All three functions may be „civic”, serving the general public, or instrumental, excluding, creating conflicts and a sense of injustice. In such cases, they coincide with various forms of power pathologies; in particular: forced centralization, i.e. the appropriation of power for certain central bodies or political groups at the expense of self-government authorities and civil society. Alienation is another form pathology of power. It can be well illustrated by the practices of today's Polish Parliament, in which, for example, members of the opposition are given 30 seconds to submit a motion, raise an issue, apply lawmaking procedures without public consultation, etc. Our Polish government was affected by the pathology of oligarchization of power, i.e. the transfer of legislative, managerial and all other power decisions to a narrow group of party officials, or even to a single decision center. These pathological patterns were common in the communist system.

No authority in history has completely eliminated corruption, in various forms. Except that in Polish politics, corruption, although common, is not too drastic. A more troublesome form presents itself in the corruption related phenomenon of nepotism. The form of party nepotism is, in our conditions, a common occurrence and is permanently installed in the system of power. The rebirth of the party system, especially in Europe conditioned by the drastic experiences of fascist and communist systems, which treated single-party systems with sacred devotion, may appear astonishing. All the more so as these are usually leader's parties, which are directly based on the fallen totalitarian systems.

Another variant of nepotism and corruption is clientelism, i.e. basing power and its effectiveness on deals and political interdependencies. A special circumstance of the Polish clientelism is the recognition of the basic article of political faith – the unquestionable and unique position of ruling party's

leader, who is the be-all and end-all of all significant political, social and even ideological decisions. Copying the models of the communist system, where the final instance was always the party leader, the first secretary of the Central Committee is mindboggling.

Polish public life is affected by one frequent political pathology – brutalization. It often involves forcing citizens to obey imposed and illegally established administrative and ritual regulations. Also, surveillance of the opposition, harassment with fabricated accusations, interrogations, illegal police operations, under the guise of invented allegations, taking away universally recognized civil rights. Unfortunately, the common practice of various authorities was to force the police, and once the Citizen's Militia, to „belong” to the „legal order” of the political dependence of the currently ruling formation. This gives rise to frequent illegal actions of police authorities towards participants of various manifestations of public life; tolerance towards groups accepting of authorities and their manifestations, e.g. football hooligans (kibole), marches of „nationalists” with elements of fascist symbolic and slogans of racial and religious hatred. At the same time, legal demonstrations that are inconsistent with the ideological orientation of the current government are repressed. Such events are inspired and accepted by the highest political authorities, e.g. the situation surrounding the death of B. Blida. The results of using the police as an instrument result in internal pathologies, which can be observed in the use of illicit methods which led to the death of detainees. Such use of political power towards the bodies of the so-called legal order shows the underlying intention that they should blindly obey their superiors. How tragic are the consequences of such a thoughtless use of political power as to make the police illegally dependent on those in power, as shown by the so-called transformation, when blind, dependent militia shot at demonstrators, killing participants of legal protests. The authorities should remember, and the police have it imprinted in their consciousness, that illegal orders must not be executed.

It today's Poland, we are dealing with a system, which slightly resembles its authoritarian counterparts, threatening to gradually restrict civil rights and to bring about regulations and practices that are characteristic of oppressive, totalitarian systems, obviously imitating the communist system, which we deemed farewell more than a quarter of a century ago. It is fascinating, trying to understand the causes and circumstances of the transformation of the recently regained liberal democracy into a clear political formation aiming, through the so-called Christian-national democracy, at the nationalist form of the single-party dictatorship regime.

The main, and probably the only, barrier to such development and transformation of the political system in Poland is civil society. The situation is unusual and full of uncertainty. On the one hand, there is the determination and brutal practices of the single-party rule of Law and Justice to eliminate the features of the rule of law and of democratic society from life and social awareness. It is remarkable that only 25 years after the collapse of the communist system, with all its sinister „instrumentation”, it is being reborn in the atmosphere of Orwellian hypocrisy, for the time being in moderate forms of oppression, but with the clear intention of developing and consolidating the „new proletariat”, i.e. functionaries of the ruling party, who exercise power with the conviction of having all historical and moral claims and with considerable support from the society it „bought” using the mistakes and incompetence of its political opponents. And what is important – with the stern support of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the memory of transgressions of the communist regime is becoming more and more fragile and social passivity is not understood very well. However, there is a huge potential capital of the civil society, e.g. in the form of nearly 90,000 of NGS – non-governmental social organizations. There are large groups of social resistance ready to oppose the politics of the Law and Justice party with determination.

However, the ruling party is incredibly determined to achieve its set goals, which might not bode well. And no protests, international condemnations and ostracism can stop it. This is also characteristic of leaders who consider themselves chosen by history, destiny, god, ... And who will not give in to any persuasion or hindrance. It is also in this stubborn aspiration to rule that the true nature of power is expressed, one of the archetypes of feeling and striving to own it. That is why such leaders do not see the alternative. The loss of power is the loss of sense of existence. Thousands of historical accounts prove this regularity, and in our recent memory, the fate of N. Ceausescu, M. Kaddafi, A. Assad, who knows that he will either win with the help of the Russians, by murdering, also with chemical weapons, thousands of his fellow citizens, including children, or he will hang from the gallows.

Civil society!

Civil society is the hope of the majority of the communities whose states aim towards authoritarian rule. The very definition of civil society puts it in opposition to the political power of the state. Civil society is characterized by activity and self-organization, and by the ability to identify and achieve its objectives without impulse and, most often, without the support of the state

authorities. It may be added here that the support of the authorities is often conditioned by compliance with ideological and sometimes also organizational state bodies. Civil society is therefore a social entity which blends traits of communities and associations. It took emotional ties between the members from the community, a significant level of identification with a certain system of values and a sense of belonging. From the association, its awareness of the purpose of existence, structure and organization, pragmatics of action, and the conviction that its existence serves the public good.

Paweł Stefan Załęski, an expert on civil society issues, places its origin in the writings of Aristotle, in which it appears under the name of civilian society. Under this name the phenomenon of a civil society appears in the writings of other philosophers of antiquity and also in the philosophy of Enlightenment and Modernity. (Cicero, T. Hobbes, J. Locke, A. Smith, J. J. Rousseau – in „The Social Contract”, G.W.F. Hegel, A. de Tocqueville, H. Kołłątaj, W. Skrzetuski, H. Stroynowski).

Civil society as a specific postulate, a normative form of the desired shape of collective life was formed in the English Enlightenment, in the writings of T. Hobbes, J. Locke, and D. Hume. But the full form of the concept of the desired forms of social life was given in the writings of Antoni Gramsci, at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to him, the social system consisted of three elements: the economy managed by the bourgeoisie, the state – used by the bourgeoisie as a tool of violence, and a civil society whose field of action was: society, politics, culture, and which should be an obstacle to the domination of the bourgeoisie. The global crisis triggered by totalitarian, fascist and communist systems invalidated the idea of civil society for some time. And it was only in the 70' in the 20th century that this idea was revived in Europe, with the final fall of the communist regimes and the search for new forms of life in a democracy that was not crooked by the varieties and remnants of various forms of authoritarianism, such as Putin's sovereign democracy. Civil society at the end of the 20th century acquires unambiguously valuable features and the desired form of collective life in Western civilization societies.

In our country, civil society appears to be the only thing that can save us from the return of the Polish variety of Putin's „sovereign democracy”. There are many factors that indicate that the lack of social resistance against the determination of the political ruling class in Poland will inevitably lead to the emergence of a new form of national-religious totalitarianism, with undisguised, sinister mechanisms of political power control.

Poland is particularly troubled by unfortunate history which makes it difficult to build a sense of community, which is a founding idea for a civil

society. The unfortunate division of the nation into nobility, citizens and peasants caused particular damage in Poland through the selfishness of the state nobility, the unprecedented oppression of the peasantry, the persistence of social divisions and their cultivation even after regaining independence. The loss of state due to the fault of the nobility, introduced new divisions into the collective consciousness, and did not become an impulse create a sense of community of all Poles. The confrontational behavior of the churches and the desire to dominate of the Catholic Church, with the simultaneous exclusion of any individuality, were not conducive to the building of the community. The reborn Poland began to organize the new state by trying to establish separate education systems for the privileged and for the „common people who cannot cope with the intellectual effort of modern education”. It was only the resistance of educational movements and the influential people’s movement that broke the two-way education project of Count Tarnowski. Then came the pathetic rule of the army colonels, a sanation that further nurtured national and religious animosities. Even the occupying forces remained tragically divided between the general resistance movement and the NSZ (National Armed Forces), which, under the conditions of threat to the existence of the state, paid more attention to communist-leaning resistance movement than to the fight against the Germans. It is a historical peculiarity and a continuation of the tragic divisions of the Polish community – the sanctification of those traitors who during the occupation stood „with weapons at their feet” and took up the fight against the left-wing resistance movement, and at the end of the war withdrew to the West, sometimes collaborating with the German occupier. It is a tragic misunderstanding to surround the so-called cursed soldiers, some of whom have „lost themselves”, in the tragic realities of the post-war chaos, the beginning of communist repressions, when some of them have the blood of innocent women and children on their hands. In my immediate vicinity, a forest unit, of the so called „cursed soldiers”, pulled a mother with two children (12 and 16 years old) out of the house at night and killed them in a nearby ditch by shooting them in the back of their heads, all because the husband joined the security forces. In the dramatic history of Poland, the post-war period is one of the cruelest episodes for both the country and its people. The liberation by the new occupant introduced fear, uncertainty and the threat of repression into the Polish consciousness. In times like these, some members of the resistance lost their way; some fled to the „regained lands” where they could live almost anonymously, some were repressed, sentenced to prison, many were sentenced to death in urgent trials, some had the blood of innocent women and children on their hands. All these tragic cases are known

to me from experience, from the fate of my closest family, neighbors, friends... Building the myth of the so-called „cursed soldiers” today is an abuse of historical truth, it is a manipulative propaganda of occurrences which should be the subject of historical research and narration, and not a political fuel that creates resentment and animosities. This part of the ruling party’s historical policy, carried out by the so-called Institute of National Remembrance, created on the basis of the Orwellian Ministry of Truth, is one of the most symptomatic features of the system, which is included in the list of features of the fascist system described by Umberto Eco, and in Timothy Snyder’s lessons on tyranny.

Could one have expected a spontaneous national consensus – the main foundation of a civil society – in a society so experienced by history? Yes – a great, wonderful and unique „Solidarity” movement appeared and, with the support of the historical figure of John Paul II, it united the torn to pieces Poland for a while. What happened to this unity is visible today, in the state governed by Law and Justice, not in Poland, but in the party state of Law and Justice, whose name is an epithet for some Poles, a manifestation of mutual hostility and contempt, and for others it is a „good change”, a Poland rebuilt from ruins. What happened to the „Solidarity” movement, which made Poland famous all over the world, was the beginning of moral transformations of a large part of Europe and the world. Nowadays the official Solidarity is an extension of the ruling party, former activists of the first solidarity are sometimes repressed, a peaceful transformation, the „Magdalenka agreement”, a bloodless revolution, a world-wide phenomenon is given the title of national treason, and its effect – according to the President of the Republic of Poland – is a disease of the state and the nation, which consumes us to this day and will be cured when the government of the so-called good change will achieve complete victory. This tone and this argument is well known from communist propaganda, when the working class, on the journey towards universal happiness has to overcome the hostile forces of imperialism, which are guilty of all deficiencies, cards for sugar and cold cuts and empty shelves in shops.

Manipulating social consciousness, ordinary lies, creating illusions – these are universal mechanisms of any authority, which sometimes appears legal, but never retreats from wickedness, if it is to maintain control over the state of social emotions and its own privileges, sometimes harsh, sometimes lucrative. And the type of political system does not matter. Democratic systems of authority are becoming increasingly rare. Systems with genuine civic movements are even more rare. The fingers of one hand are enough to

count such examples. The country of great and stable democracy – The United States of America would need several „Trumps” to become an authoritarian state of oppression. This is the power of modern techniques of persuasion and influence. Therefore, the only hope for the preservation of the traditional democratic order, a unity which does not exclude, that is universal, stable and maintains humanitarian, individual, and societally friendly standards is the creation of a civil society at all costs.

Building a community cannot be conducted by the state, especially the party state, regardless of the name of the leader’s party. Currently only such parties exist in Poland.

The second condition for unity to exist is the responsibility of politicians. The times and conditions in which a politician was forced to resort to respect the Machiavellian principle „the end justifies the means” are long gone. All the more so because this goal was never a common good, but a particular interest.

Finally, the third condition for the creation of unity, the foundation of a civil society, is the existence, adoption and universal internalization of a universal system of values. One could see the builder of this condition in Christianity, whose Decalogue is partly convergent with, universal humanitarian values. Unfortunately, the close relationship between the church and the political authorities invalidates this role.

Such a role can and should be played by education, broadly understood, i.e. schooling from kindergarten to university; and teachers, from kindergarten teacher to university rector. For decades, rankings of professional prestige have considered the school as an institution of special trust, and school and academic teachers at the top positions in the scale of social respect. Recently firefighters were ranked first place in this prominent ranking – which proves how highly valued the sense of security is, and helpfulness the firefighter is identified with. It should be added that at the other end of this prestige and social respect ladder one will find those who govern the state and the nation, namely politicians, MPs, ministers, ...

Unlawful usurpation!

Now let us move on to our possibilities and responsibilities. I have not found in any of the definitions of politics, in any political or historical studies or contemporary statements that there are political spheres, problems of the state, government, international relations that are excluded from interest, judgment, comments, and any other interference from non-political persons, i.e. ordinary citizens. Quite the opposite – in numerous opinions and comments

from political scientists, the virtue of interest and participation of a wide range of citizens is discussed. Beginning from Aristotle's definition, who gives politics the characteristics of organizational art and beneficial activity, in no historical epoch is there a trace of scientific thought prohibiting or restricting members of society who do not have professional ties to politics from being interested in politics. It was only when contemporary communist regimes set strict boundaries for interference and interest in politics for people from outside of politics, i.e. the „working people of towns and villages”. In 1968 I participated in the famous academic community rally, in the courtyard of the University of Warsaw. The „worker activists” who came there for „educational” purposes held banners saying: „Students to study, scholars to books, writers to pens!” It was similar at the rally at the Warsaw University of Technology. Such messages swept through the whole Poland, conquered the press and intrusive propaganda. The authorities have made it clear whose politics is, and that ordinary citizens should know their place. In truth, this practice has always been used in politics in open or somewhat camouflaged forms, although the appearances of „socialization” of politics have appeared in absolute monarchies, in the form of various forms of councils, advisors, and in case of constitutional monarchies quite openly, these have been completely transparent. However, these were only appearances, and the goal was to scrupulously limit the influence of the common voice on political decisions. Contemporary totalitarian systems not only prohibit the „mixing” of the common man into politics, but also ban any opinions about politics, with the exception of manifestations of support. This is how the cultures of the East were shaped, among others. Therefore, when the greatest criminal of history, Stalin, deliberately starved Ukraine, 10 million people were died of starvation in the total silence of Ukraine, Russia and the rest of the world. Russia proposing to put Stalin on a pedestal was an unbelievable moral and intellectual transgression. Today, it is difficult to determine who the author of the project was, and what forces were behind this moral phenomenon of the 20th century.

Silence

Silence is one of the great categories of culture, emotions and human fate. It bears its semantic and social baggage of various meanings, functions and roles. It is a permanent element of the most accurate aphorisms, philosophical reflections, ways of expressing opinions and attitudes in interpersonal relations. It is commonly believed that silence is regarded as consent, agreement, lack of objections... Is silence, for a social pedagogue, an appropriate position towards

the government's policy towards children with disabilities? It is in the process of „perfecting” the reform that children with various forms of disability, who benefited from individual teaching at school, are removed from school. Is it possible to do more harm to a child than sentence them to social isolation? Is silence towards this „political” indecency is only indifference or perhaps approval? This is one of the great issues to consider in the margins of our recent dispute over political interference in the context of the election of the Ombudsman for Children. This is one of the examples showing the presence of a moral and educational factor in every phenomenon to which someone arbitrarily gives political importance!

Dean of the Faculty of The Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) with all his grace discourages the social body, i.e. the Pedagogical Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, from getting involved in the election of the Ombudsman for Children because he deemed it political activity. On 23.08 of the current year, another candidate for the Children's Ombudsman position from the Law and Justice party said: „Placing children under legal protection to shield them from the threat of parental despotism is a form of progress towards paidocracy. This is why social awareness campaigns about child abuse by guardians started to appear in numbers (...) and the ban on physical punishment for disobedience was introduced” (daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23.08.2018, p. 2.).

Is the recommendation of prof. Filipowicz also related to this view? Is there a body more competent than the Legal Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, which has the competence to express judgments in the field of education and upbringing? Why do ecologists, including scientific institutes, dare to harshly criticize Minister Szyszka for devastating of the national treasure – the Białowieża Forest? After all, it is a decision of the Minister, a politician!

Let us continue with this reasoning. It is difficult to find a more political decision than school system reform. As a result of said reform, several generations of young Poles will receive a year less compulsory education than most of their predecessors and other young Europeans. (the length of compulsory general education has been shortened from 9 to 8 years). The difference of one year in primary education during a child's rapid development period is an unimaginable loss. I will not hesitate to call this reform a cultural crime. Is being silent about this „political decision” appropriate on the part of the educators? This is a rhetorical question!

Now, something different. The previous retirement regulations have been reinstated. The increase in working time, as in most European countries, is the

result of aging population and increased life expectancy. The decision of our government, which was strictly political, nota bene dictated by the rules of cross-party struggle, carries enormous social risks. Let us look at the effects. Economists have already calculated that in twenty to thirty years, half of the pensioners will become extremely poor. They are at risk of extreme poverty, which will not be amended by even the best social policies. It is a great challenge for the social welfare system. Social services should be multiplied, although this may not be effective in the absence of resources. Is it just because politicians lack imagination and competence, that they are guided by political calculations that generally are devoid of common sense – social pedagogues should remain silent?

At the same time, analogical situation arises with the upcoming law 2.0, called the „constitution for science”! There will be a need strength and unification, because the consequences of those legal changes may be gloomy – as some members of the community believes. Do authors of such predictions believe that we will be able to fight or express our opinion? After all, this law is a strictly political decision. Will someone give us permission to express an opinion? Maybe Minister Gowin? We have to unite, because we have to fight for the interest of our profession – wrote the authors of letters addressed to the chairman of the Legal Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Why only their profession? This is another huge mistake and a remnant of past mentality. This is how we were taught in socialist activity: watch over your backyard, do not unite with anyone, because... It was yet another manipulation of the communist social engineering. When I wrote letter of protest to Minister A. Zalewska on behalf of the Association of Socially Involved Pedagogues, I became aware of the obvious truth: Even I, a university professor, am a zero, a nobody! Our Association and me are a barely visible cell in the social organism. My Chair and Pedagogical Faculty – these are voices that can be heard. All pedagogical faculties at universities and colleges would be a considerable force that could perhaps correct the shortcomings of the unfortunate reform. All the universities and all the academic circles of the country – they are a power that even such an arrogant authority as the present one could yield to! Take for example the „black protest”! Other analogy: „Poznań uprising” – a local protest combined with a local tragedy. December 1970. – In a broader sense, but more of a scattered drama and tragedy. A strike in the Gdańsk shipyard, in the memorable 1980, if it had not been for the subsequent events, it would have been an incidental conflict, extinguished by false promises. It was not until the events of 16/17 August 1980, when the Interfactory Strike Committee was established, that the whole

country united around the protest and changed the face of the Gdańsk strike itself, the face of the whole Poland, before which the „invincible” system yielded. All thanks to the unification and size of the protest. Therefore, thinking according to the scheme: whatever bad happens, we focus on the matter, because we will be competent and effective. This is similar to the reasoning of the protagonist of Orwell’s prophetic novel: „Animal Farm”, in which all inappropriateness, obstacles and failures are met with determination; I have to work more, increase the effort, grit my teeth... This could not be more wrong; particularism, dispersion of the community is the basic premise of ineffectiveness and certainty of failure. What unites the most and gives invincible strength. In Polish conditions, these are universal values which remain in the archetype of the community.

However, it is bizarre, in the light of all these reasons, to draw the line between the moral support of the right candidate and the alleged political nature of this act, and thus to refrain from supporting it. Is it not possible to look at this issue in a different way, considering what politics is today, universally...? It is specialized social engineering of „holding the mug” of public opinion. Volumes of studies all over the world have already been written about its motives, motivations and pragmatics of exercising power. Fortunately, in most European countries, also in our country – we are not dealing with blatant pathology, para-criminal practices, or a coincidence of corporate and mafia ethos. However, the recognition of the opinion of politicians as indicators and criteria of appropriateness and moral correctness is overwhelmingly naive.

Meanwhile, such compliance with the expectations of politics and the recognition that there is political correctness, expressed in unconditional silence, can, especially today, be regarded as a grave mistake. Let us therefore remain silent, because it is not appropriate for the scientific elites to interfere with politics, despite the visible threat taking away the autonomy and freedom of science, without which no real science can exist. Let us remain silent and wait until we wake up in a system where science and education are controlled, patterns of which are not traceable in even in Orwell’s work.

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