

Paweł Lewandowski

MAN AND FAMILY ACCORDING TO
REV. STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI ON THE BASIS
OF PUBLICATIONS IN “ŁAD BOŻY”

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War the authorities of the People’s Republic of Poland successively took a number of planned political decisions aimed at secularisation and communist indoctrination of the Polish society. Rev. Dr. Stefan Wyszyński, who had already left Laski near Warsaw before the end of the Second World War and returned to Włocławek¹ in order to become actively involved in the organisation of diocesan life, decided to establish a new Catholic periodical “Ład Boży” [God’s Order].² According to the words of Rev. Antoni Borowski, Vicar General of the Włocławek Diocese, in a proclamation addressed to the clergy on 24 July 1945, the periodical adopted as its aim “the propagation of Catholic thought in family

REV. DR. PAWEŁ LEWANDOWSKI – The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; correspondence address: Al. Raławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland; e-mail: pawel.lewandowski@kul.pl; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4543-4382>

¹ Rev. S. Wyszyński made the decision to return to Włocławek at the end of February 1945. On 1 March, after celebrating a Mass for the intentions of Mother Elżbieta Róża Czacka (1876-1961), Rev. Władysław Emil Kornilowicz (1884-1946), the employees and the blind at the Institute for the Blind, he left Laski, heading for Włocławek. On his way, he stopped at Maurzyce near Łowicz, where a group of blind people under the care of nuns and lay employees, who had been forcibly evacuated from Laski, were staying. He arrived in Włocławek on 11 March [Romaniuk 1994, 214-16].

² “Ład Boży” – a Catholic religious periodical published by the Diocesan Curia in Włocławek from 1945 to 1953 as a weekly, from 1982 to 1997 as a biweekly, and from 1998 to 2004 as the Włocławek edition of the periodical “Niedziela” [Warmiński 2006, 353].

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and social life, spreading the principles of the Kingdom of Christ, addressing the current issues in the life of our and other nations, introducing at the same time a section on practical matters of everyday life and a section devoted to our children and youth” [Borowski 1945, 1]. As the first editor of the weekly, well prepared for journalistic and organisational work both theoretically – through specialised studies at the Catholic University of Lublin – and practically – through cooperation with the editors of “Kronika Diecezji Kujawsko-Kaliskiej”,³ “Charitas Christi”⁴ and “Ateneum Kapłańskie”,⁵ Wyszyński published a number of authorial articles in “Ład Boży” in a series entitled “Ład w myślach” [Order in thought]. The articles comprising this series focus on the three issues of particular importance to the future Primate of Poland: man – family – marriage. While a number of valuable studies have been published on the Primate’s activity from 1949 onwards, inter alia, through the repeated printing of his writings in multi-volume editions, often provided with a solid critical apparatus,⁶ Wyszyński’s publication output before the Primate’s period has never been the subject of a comprehensive analysis.⁷ Therefore, the purpose of this article

³ “Kronika Diecezji Kujawsko-Kaliskiej” – an official diocesan periodical published since 1907. After the change of the diocese boundaries in 1926, published as “Kronika Diecezji Włocławskiej”. Since 2006 “Miesięcznik Diecezji Włocławskiej”. Rev. Wyszyński collaborated with the editors of the periodical from 1925 [Frątczak 2001, 237; Kałuściński 2015, 531-32].

⁴ “Charitas Christi” – a bulletin published by the Association of Charitas Priests between 1926-1929 and 1935-1939, later transformed into “Pax Tecum”; intended mainly for the Association members, with a small circulation. Rev. Wyszyński edited the bulletin in 1926-1928 [Frątczak 2001, 239; Romanko 2018, 167].

⁵ “Ateneum Kapłańskie” – a Catholic periodical published since 1909 in Włocławek with the aim of popularising theological knowledge and informing about the activities of the Church. In 1931, Rev. Wyszyński became a member of the editorial board of the periodical, serving as its secretary and from 1933 to 1939 as editor-in-chief. The circulation of the periodical in 1929-1936 was 4,000 copies [Józwiak 1995, 1043-1044; Frątczak 2001, 237; Romanko 2018, 167].

⁶ Suffice it to mention the twenty-three-volume series: *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński. Prymas Polski, Dzieła zebrane*, published since 1991 by Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński Publishing House “Soli Deo”, the Pope John Paul II Institute, the Institute of National Remembrance and the Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski Institute for Legacy of Polish National Thought.

⁷ At the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, under the supervision of Rev. Prof. Mirosław Sitarz, a grant awarded by the Ministry of Education and Science as part of the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities in the module National Heritage is currently being implemented, entitled *Prelude to the Collected Works. Stefan Wyszyński vis-à-vis totalitarian regimes – Analysis and critical edition of*

is to analyse a unique source material (difficult to access due to its time frame),⁸ which makes it possible to define Wyszyński's worldview from 1945-1946 on the subject of man and family.⁹

1. MAN

Rev. Stefan Wyszyński devoted the first ten articles published as part of the series "God's Order" to man, emphasising that it is man – right after God – who occupies the central place in the world [Wyszyński 1945e, 4; Idem 1945b, 3]. In an attempt to put earthly affairs in order, following the model of God's order, he considered it essential to present a "healthy view of man". In his opinion, a properly shaped man, formed on a human, spiritual, intellectual and physical level, constitutes a proper building block for marriage [Idem 1945g, 3].

Having a deep understanding of the axiological dangers of the time,¹⁰ Wyszyński first of all opposed the propagation of a false vision of man founded on the assertion that it is the State, society and even God himself who must give way before man. He saw the danger of deification of man who independently decides on the principles of morality to be followed at any given time [Idem 1945b, 3]. With similar conviction, he also warned against currents seeking to annihilate man and his inalienable rights [ibid.]. He saw the remedy in the biblical and catechismal truth of man's creation in the image and likeness of God. He wrote: "in his initial being, man is dependent only on God. He came into the world without permission to live, without permission of the board and lodging committees. Everything that he has in his dignified nature, man received from God: an immortal soul, reason, will. Owing to these gifts, man is a person, that is,

sources for the years 1924-1949, which aims at the analysis and critical editing of scientific output and social thought of Rev. Stefan Wyszyński in that time period in five volumes planned as a supplement to *Dzieła zebrane* [Collected Works].

⁸ Note, however, the reprint of Wyszyński's articles [Wyszyński 2001] and the study by Kukołowicz 1982, 27-34.

⁹ A separate article has been devoted to the issue of marriage, submitted for publication in the journal *Teka Komisji Prawniczej PAN Oddział w Lublinie*.

¹⁰ To which he gave expression, for example, in other earlier publications: Wyszyński 1924, 1; Idem 1928; Idem 1930, 145-67; Idem 1931, 470-86; Idem 1934; Idem 1936, 69-78; Idem 1937a; Idem 1937b; Idem 1938a; Idem 1938b; Idem 1939, 233-34.

a rational and free being, created in the image and likeness of the wise God. Hence, we have human rights only from God: neither by the will of blood or race, nor by the will of statesmen, but from God we are born” [ibid.].¹¹

Having experienced the drama of the Second World War, which stripped man “of the remnants of rights, of honour, of dignity”, Wyszyński – following Pope Pius XII – pleaded for human rights.¹² As the most fundamental he considered the right to life, to honour God, to family, to work, to freely choose one’s state and to use worldly goods. “These are the rights which no one may violate. Each act of their violation is lawlessness, which destroys social life, the natural order established by God and confirmed by human wisdom. It is not necessary to destroy the stones on which the edifice of social life rests. The order of the world must be established by respecting human rights” [Idem 1945f, 3]. As a doctor of canon law, promoted by Rev. Prof. Jan Wiślicki, who came from the Tarnów Diocese [Sitarz 2020, 25],¹³ he believed that human dignity should be properly safeguarded in Polish law. “To restore the honour of man violated by the sword of war, scarred in the execution camps and prisons created by the partitioners – this is the most urgent task of the new Poland. It will be fulfilled by everyone who lives with dignity and who protects the dignity of others. This is our

¹¹ See John 1:12-13: “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

¹² In his article *Odwieczne prawa człowieka* [*The eternal human rights*], Wyszyński cited a speech by Pope Pius XII of December 1942. [Wyszyński 1945f, 3]. He undoubtedly had in mind the Christmas Eve address that Pius XII delivered on 24 December 1942, which he himself translated from Italian: Wyszyński 1946d. The Pope divided the speech into four substantive parts: (1) coexistence in order; (2) coexistence in the midst of peace; (3) five essential points concerning order and the reassurance of human coexistence; (4) a reflection on the world war and social revival. In Part III, he emphatically called for the respect and observance of the rights of the human person, including the right to: the preservation and development of physical, mental and moral life; religious education; the private and public worship of God; marriage and the attainment of its inherent purpose; the establishment of a family community and a one’s own home; work as a necessary means of maintaining family life; the free choice of one’s state of life, including the priestly and monastic state; the use of worldly goods while respecting one’s duties and limitations of a social nature. Pius PP. XII, Nuntius Radiophonicus a Summo Pontifice die XXIV mensis Decembris a. MCMXMT, in *Pervigilio Nativitatis D. N. Iesu Christi, Universo Orbi Datus Il Santo Natale e la umanità dolorante* (24.12.1942), AAS 35 (1943), pp. 9-24, no. 28.

¹³ On the life and work of J. Wiślicki, see Sitarz 2006, 309-12; Idem 2018, 539; Idem 2014, 695-96; Idem 2011, 243-57.

common – supreme concern. This is the most urgent task Poland is facing” [Wyszyński 1945h, 3].

Man does not remain alone in carrying out this task because the Creator has arranged the world in such a way that everything that has come out of God’s thought tends to cooperate with each other. In his teaching and writings, Rev. Wyszyński emphasised the social nature of the human person. He believed that, in the first place, man has a God-given aspiration to family life [Idem 1945a, 3]. Moreover, every living person is connected with the national community. It is the family, properly formed, honouring patriotic values, that brings people into the life of the nation. The life of each nation, in turn, develops best in its own state. Therefore, man cannot be indifferent to the fate of the state. After all, man goes to heaven through the Church as a community of believers [ibid.].

Stefan Wyszyński was very concerned with the education of the new man. He believed that after the Second World War, the time had come when man had to live to the fullness of his being. Up to that time, in his view, people had led a half-hearted life. It was either a worldly life of a selfish nature, subjected to the bondage of material means and economic gain, or man remained stripped of his own aspirations, subjected to another bondage, which was service to the state. According to Wyszyński, both attitudes were wrong. “To avoid the old errors, modern man should be educated comprehensively – for himself, for God, for the state, and for the nation or society. Education should concern the whole human person, that is, embrace his personal and social character” [Idem 1945i, 3]. Wyszyński perceived numerous deficiencies in the national education of children and young people. At the same time, he warned against ascribing blame to the Church for these failings. He forcefully unmasked the fashion of criticism pointing out that Catholic upbringing had failed, which, according to some, was supposed to prove the weakness of the Church, the lack of influence of the clergy on young people. He noted that “the principles of the Church were not always upheld by the state and by the family; that his work was hindered; that what he did in the temple and in religious education lessons was spoiled in the street, in the cinema, in the theatre, in books, and sometimes – in the family and in political life” [Idem 1945d, 3]. Despite these numerous obstacles, Wyszyński still recognised the enormous influence of the Church on the nation and saw the responsible role of the clergy in the mission of educating the new man.

2. FAMILY

For Rev. Stefan Wyszyński, the need to live together with other people, which naturally directs every human being towards the family, was obvious. “God implanted in man a striving for family life” [Idem 1945a, 3]. He taught that God created man only once and left the rest to the family. He stressed that if this basic social cell ceased to fulfil its fundamental function, the world would very quickly become depopulated [ibid.]. He therefore regarded the family as the oldest, first and most necessary community [Idem 1945g, 3].¹⁴

The family creates an environment in which God binds the hearts of parents and children together with His love, and only this love enables man to forget himself completely and give himself wholly and exclusively to his neighbour. From a well-formed family, children derive the most precious gift for social life – “love towards brothers, sisters, the environment” [Idem 1945a, 3]. Through family life, God prepares man for life in the national, state and church community. “We are introduced into the life of the nation by the family. In the family we receive a gift – the mother tongue. Through language, native history, song, we bind ourselves to the nation and even to God. The dearest word ‘God’ is uttered in our mother tongue. God wants us to develop our spiritual values through co-existence with the nation. This is evidenced by our innate strong feeling of love for the Homeland” [ibid.].

Wyszyński was very concerned with safeguarding the dignity of the family, and he interpreted this dignity primarily as justice, i.e. preserving the rights of God and other men. He taught with conviction that it was from God alone that all the solemnity of human dignity flowed, realised in the proper treatment of one’s neighbour and, above all, of oneself. He demanded that parents, especially husbands, lead decent lives, strongly opposing the habit of drunkenness and the associated domestic violence

¹⁴ Wyszyński noted the importance of the family, which no other institution can match: “[...] attempts were made to replace the family by state-run shelters and by Hitler’s ‘race factories’ – but we know that they have only increased the wandering crowds of unaccompanied children and created a profession of state-paid prostitutes. Only the family offers the intrinsic family well-being, which can be achieved by co-existence within the family; and this is the spirit of family togetherness, love, closeness, gifts of body and spirit” [Wyszyński 1945g, 3].

against children and wife. “Whoever abuses and kicks his own wife, whoever abuses his children, the domestic tyrant – who is becoming here a social tyrant – violates his own dignity more than he violates his unfortunate victims. Dignified titled drunkards, abusing their, at times, high position and social status, throwing their dignity into the city ditches and setting a bad example to youngsters using their freedom for nocturnal screams – these are people without dignity” [Idem 1945h, 3]. He considered the way in which parents behaved towards their children, spouses towards each other, to be very important, because every person exerts a great influence on other people, especially those closest to them [Idem 1945c, 3].¹⁵

As has already been noted, Wyszyński always considered national and state themes to be important. In his search for an answer to the question as to what the family offers to society and the state, the future Primate of Poland pointed to four areas. In the first place, the family gives the national and state community a human being – created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), equipped with rational and free nature, capable of full development, possessing all the dignity of an immortal being. Secondly, the family bequeaths to society a citizen – and this gift, according to Wyszyński, should be seen as particularly valuable, since it is in the family that “a civic sense of law and order” is instilled in children, using not force or violence, but parental love. Thirdly, the family bears the greatest hardship and sacrifice in the area of acquiring the resources necessary to feed and raise offspring.¹⁶ Fourthly and finally, the family is the “mother” of society – hence it must be seen not only as the basic cell of society, but above all as the “womb” of society.¹⁷

¹⁵ Wyszyński stressed that an individual’s morality is not a private thing: “If there are many people in a nation who abuse alcohol – even if each of them drinks alone, they form a nation of drunkards. If in a nation there live many people who make a living by stealing – the world will call it a society of thieves. If there are many people living in it who violate the truth – the whole world will call it a nation of liars” [Wyszyński 1945c, 3].

¹⁶ “In fact, neither the state, nor the nation, nor society would be able to relieve the family of this responsibility. Wherever attempts have been made to replace the family with state care, the result has been misery and homelessness for children. Crowds of wandering, naked and hungry, semi-feral street children: this is the consequence of the breakdown of the family” [Wyszyński 1946b, 3].

¹⁷ Wyszyński explains this truth very vividly: “The family holds the fate of society in its hands. Empty cradles, lonely homes – these are the soon to be empty streets of cities and villages. And since the state arises from society, hence everything society

Since the state receives a number of valuable gifts from the family, first and foremost the human being himself, Wyszyński recognised the interdependence of the family and the state. However, he believed that the family could more easily cope without the state than the state could without the family's help. Compensatory justice requires that for all the goods the state receives from the family and without which it could not function properly and fully, it is obliged to uphold the public and private welfare of the family. Building on the achievements of the Church's social teaching of the time, in particular Pope Leo XIII's apostolic encyclical *Rerum novarum*,¹⁸ in his article *Co należy się rodzinie od państwa?* [*What does the state owe the family?*] Wyszyński formulated six principles – “the cornerstones of justice towards the family” – which must be accepted and fully implemented if the state system is to be considered fair towards the family: “1. Man and human life is the most essential wealth of society and the state. 2. The family, which brings forth human life, must be given the most benevolent care and concern by society and the state. 3. The sanctity of the family and its connection with religion through the sacrament of marriage should be recognised as the strongest family bond. The indissolubility of marriage must be secured by law. 4. Economic conditions must be created for the family and the whole state system must be conducive to this goal. 5. A healthy population policy must be first and foremost a family policy. 6. The cooperation of the Church, society and the state for the benefit of the family must be regarded as indispensable” [Idem 1946a, 3].

The supreme right of the family, which should be sanctioned by the state, is the right to exist. Rev. Wyszyński, who was wanted by the Gestapo during the Second World War, was entered with other priest professors of the Seminary in Włocławek on the list of those sentenced to death. During his stay in Kozłówka, he served as chaplain to partisans and during the Warsaw Uprising as chaplain of the resurgent hospital and the Kampinos group of the Polish Home Army operating in Laski [Romaniuk 2011,

has received from the family is a blessing from the state itself. The state therefore makes use of the gifts of family life and must develop them, in accordance with its inherent purposes” [Wyszyński 1946b, 3].

¹⁸ Leo PP. XIII, Litterae encyclicae de conditione opificum *Rerum novarum* (15.05. 1891), ASS 23 (1890/91), pp. 641-70.

43-54].¹⁹ He was well aware of the realities of war. “The battle front undermined the family’s right to exist. Many families perished without a trace from the face of the earth. No one reckoned with the family’s right to preserve its offspring, a right held in such reverence in the Holy Scriptures” [Wyszyński 1946a, 3]. For this reason, he argued that the existence of the family and its fulfilment of the fundamental purpose of transmitting life constituted a fundamental right which the state “is obliged to take in its care and maintain its solemnity” [ibid.]. In this regard, he also stood up for the life of the unborn. He believed that neither man himself as an individual nor the entire society as a collective could freely undertake an attack on the lives of unborn children. He uncompromisingly demanded that full protection of human life from the very conception be secured in Polish law [Idem 1946e, 3].²⁰

Wyszyński also fought for decent material security of the family. He believed that family existence should principally be regulated by private property. The primary task of the state is thus to support the personal property of every individual as the basis for ensuring sustenance. Every family, as a basic social group, is entitled to its own home in order to “make it possible to organise [...] a domestic hearth in which a physically and morally healthy family life could develop to its full strength and values” [Idem 1946c, 3].

¹⁹ As a form of protection, Wyszyński used the pseudonym Radwan III [Romaniuk 2011, 49].

²⁰ It should be noted that before the enactment of the first Polish penal code (Ordinance of the President of the Republic of Poland of 11 July 1932. Penal Code, Journal of Laws of 1932, No. 60, Item 571) abortion in Poland was completely prohibited. The absolute prohibition of abortion was abolished by the said code in 1932. Henceforth, the rationales for the legal termination of pregnancy were medical (protection of the life and health of the pregnant woman) and criminal (criminal origin of the pregnancy). “There is no offence under Articles 231 and 232 if the procedure was performed by a doctor and, moreover: a) it was necessary for the health of the pregnant woman, or the pregnancy was the result of a criminal offence under Articles 203, 204, 205 or 206” (Article 233 of the 1932 Penal Code). The 1932 Penal Code analysed here is one of the most liberal abortion legislations in Europe at the time. Only the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had more liberal abortion legislation between 1920 and 1936. It is also worth noting that although the ban on abortion on so-called “demand” was still in force during World War II, due to the anti-naturalist policy of the Nazi occupiers, the practice of abortion was widely tolerated [Borkowska 2023, 68-71].

CONCLUSION

Rev. Dr. Stefan Wyszyński, the founder and first editor of the periodical “Ład Boży”, clearly perceived a number of dangers resulting from political decisions taken by communists after they seized power in the People’s Republic of Poland. He believed that the activities initiated in this area were premeditatedly planned as a tool for the successive laicisation of Polish society and socialist indoctrination of all areas of both personal and family life. In his articles comprising the series “Ład w myślach”, he emphasised the close relationship between man and family, the Church and the State. He called for a free man who put God and His commandments first in his life. He believed that a human being, equipped with an inventory of inalienable rights, is capable of creating a healthy family, in which God unites with his love the hearts of parents and children – parents prepared to make a number of sacrifices and to overcome numerous educational difficulties, and children brought up in deep respect for the Church, Nation and State.

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Man and Family According to Rev. Stefan Wyszyński on the Basis of Publications in "Ład Boży"

Abstract

The article analyses fourteen texts by Rev. Stefan Wyszyński, the originator, founder and first editor-in-chief of the weekly "Ład Boży" [God's Order], published as part of the author's series "Ład w myślach" [Order in thought]. Perceiving a serious threat coming from the communist indoctrination of all areas of social and economic life in the People's Republic of Poland, Wyszyński undertook a courageous struggle for the Catholic "soul" of the Polish Nation – in a particular way striving for a proper interpretation of the duties and rights of man and family.

Keywords: Stefan Wyszyński; Ład Boży; Ład w myślach; man; family.

Człowiek i rodzina według ks. Stefana Wyszyńskiego na podstawie publikacji w „Ładzie Bożym”

Abstrakt

Artykuł zawiera analizę czternastu tekstów ks. Stefana Wyszyńskiego, pomysłodawcy, założyciela i pierwszego redaktora naczelnego tygodnika „Ład Boży”, opublikowanych w autorskiej serii „Ład w myślach”. Wyszyński, dostrzegając poważne zagrożenie płynące z komunistycznej indoktrynacji wszelkich obszarów życia społeczno-

gospodarczego Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej, podjął odważną walkę o katolicką „duszę” Narodu polskiego – w szczególności sposób zabiegając o właściwe interpretowanie obowiązków i praw człowieka i rodziny.

Słowa kluczowe: Stefan Wyszyński; Ład Boży; Ład w myślach; człowiek; rodzina.

Informacje o Autorze: KS. DR PAWEŁ LEWANDOWSKI – Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II; adres do korespondencji: Al. Raławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Polska; e-mail: pawel.lewandowski@kul.pl; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4543-4382>