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The role of religion in constructing public reality. In the margin of Karl Marx texts in connection with the 200th anniversary of his birth

Rola religii w konstruowaniu rzeczywistości publicznej. Na marginesie tekstów Karola Marksa w związku z 200. rocznicą jego urodzin

Abstrakt. W artykule stosuję Marksowską metodę nakazującą wykrywać ziemską aktywność wyobrażeń religijnych. Kantowskie rozróżnienie istoty i przejawu wraz z Marksowskim nakazem wznoszenia się od konkretu do abstrakcji i od niej z powrotem do konkretu pozwala ukazać, jak religijne tezy światopoglądowe przemieniają dobro w zło i odwrotnie. Przykłady tego rodzaju aktywności można znaleźć zarówno w przeszłości – w mowie Mojżesza, jak i obecnie – w tzw. strategii Busha. Dobro staje się złem także wtedy, kiedy rzecz zastępuje jej przejaw. Przypadek ten odnajdujemy w Marksowskiej krytyce utożsamiania zasady humanistycznej i zasady socjalistycznej. Aktualnym przykładem może tu być praktyka socjalizmu realnego, w którym kategorię wspólnoty usunięto poprzez zastosowanie podporządkowania jednego z elementów drugiemu. We wspólnocie powinny być one tylko przyporządkowane. Kolejnym przykładem wskazującym na aktywną rolę religii w życiu społecznym jest artykuł Marksa zatytułowany *W kwestii żydowskiej*. Filozof podkreśla w nim, że religijność próbuje zastąpić istotę emancypacji jedną z jej form. Takie zastąpienie treści formą obserwujemy także w Wielkiej Rewolucji Francuskiej. Jest to oczywisty błąd, który zarazem stwarza historyczną konieczność socjalizmu. Zamiana ta jest nie do przyjęcia z naukowego punktu widzenia.

Słowa kluczowe: religia, humanizm, rewolucja Jezusa Chrystusa, wspólnota, religijny artefakt kulturowy.

Introducing

In the article, I use Marx's method to detect the terrestrial activity of religious images. Kant's distinction between essence and appearance, together with Marx's command to rise from concrete to abstract and from it back to concrete allows us to show how religious interpretations can change good into evil. It is found both in the past – in the speech of Moses – and now in the so-called Bush strategy. Good becomes evil also when a thing replaces its manifestation. We find this example in Marx's criticism of replacing the humanist principle with a social-ist principle. The current example is the practice of real socialism, in which the category of community was additionally removed by applying subordination to one element. In the community they should only be assigned. Another example pointing to the active role of religion in social life is Marx's article *On the Jewish Question*. In it Marx emphasizes that religiosity tries to replace the essence of emancipation with one of its forms. This substitution of form by the content that this form has taken is also observed in the Great French Revolution. This is an obvious mistake, which at the same time creates the historical necessity of social-ism. This substitution of content is unacceptable from a scientific point of view.

The subject of the consideration presented here is the problem of the active role of religion in the capitalist being and in social being. Marx's method of ana-lysing hiding religious forms and content in each real – seemingly irreligious life relationship is used here. Only this method – explained the Author of *Capital* – is materialistic, and therefore scientific. He literally said: "[...] It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religions, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relation of life the correspond-ing, celestialised forms of those relations. The latter method is only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one" (Marx, 1990, pp. 493–494).

Religion cultural artefacts in contemporary social life in the perspective of E. Kant's philosophy

In clarifying this method, it is worth using E. Kant's hint in which he distin-guishes the essence and appearance of things (Kant, 1998, p. 617 and 673)[1]. So let's consider some facts from social life. It is said that man is good by nature

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[1] In the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant wrote: "Critique has not erred in teaching, that the object should be taken in a twofold meaning, namely as appearance or as a thing in itself" (Kant, 1998, p. 116).

(Rosseau, 2009, pp. 552)[2]. In religious thinking, good[3] is the essence of social relations receives, among other things, a divine religious sanction: "do not kill".

However, there are many contradictions in social life. So far strength is dominating them. People are killing each other. Good turns into evil[4]. We find its justification in the created religious doctrine. It is heard in Moses's call ""»Who is behind the Lord, to me!« And then all the sons of Levi joined him. And he said unto them: »Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel. Let each of you put a sword to its side. Go back and forth from one gate in the camp to another and kill: who is your brother, who is your friend, who is your relative«" (Ex 32, 26–27). This fragment M. Hempoliński interpreted as a change of God's commandment. "don't kill" turned into an order: "kill because you are authorized". A history knows many authorizing Others to kill on the road towards the alleged good.

A different interpretation of this event is also possible. Using the achievements of Russian philosophy, it can be said that the commandment "do not kill"

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[2] This is proven by a series of studies confirming that the sense of good and evil is innate to us (Oszubski, 2013).

[3] G o o d (Gr. *aghthón*, Lat. *bonum*) – what is considered valuable, successful, useful in meeting certain needs, achieving the goal. In the aspect of being, good is the value and perfection of being; in moral terms, good is an action consistent with morality; in economic effort, the good meets the material needs of man; in social life, values that serve the individual and society are good (Karpiński, 2019; Maryniarczyk, 2001).

[4] E v i l – what is undesirable; the object of moral disapproval; negative value or no value; denial of good. Evil is interpreted as an attribute of being, an effect of on-going disharmony, either as a scarcity of good, or as a chance twist of fate, or only as a subjective illusion. In the history of philosophy, evil has been associated with the nature of the world (ethical dualism, A. Schopenhauer) or a state of ignorance (Indian ethics, Socrates, Plato), suffering (epicureanism), unhappiness (eudaimonism, utilitarianism), conformism (F. Nietzsche, existentialism), incompatibility of attitude with World Reason (stoicism) or non-use in proper action a man of medium measure (Aristotle). In the religious worldview, evil means the manifestation of the free will of man in sin, God's admission to disobey his will. In Marxism, evil is associated with specific problems of life, social conflicts and antagonisms, the exploitation of one social class by another, a state of unmet needs and questioning of personality values. Today, more than ever before, the concept of evil also applies to all forms of disrespect for life, including, among others, the phenomenon of ecological disaster (ecology) (Kosior, Jedynak, 1994).

Moral evil can be understood in an objective and material sense, when the entity violating the objective moral principle is unaware of this violation and therefore is not responsible for it, or in the subjective and formal sense, when it means a free and conscious decision against moral good and then the resulting an external act and a well-established habit and internal attitude. The metaphysical evil according to Leibniz (1646–1716) is the lack of any perfection of the features of being related to the finiteness of being (Podsiad, Więckowski, 1983; Krąpiec, 2008).

is the value of "that side"[5]; value from God. It is therefore an absolute value – a formal and logical abstraction, a pure idea, i.e. without any empirical admixture[6]. Its abstractness was built in historical concrete human experience. To create certain things, facts as facts, we begin the process of concretization from this abstraction. Moses did so. Facing the possibility of abandoning faith, he orders to kill. In this way, it creates formal and symbolic value "from this side". Essence: good dictates "not to kill" takes a certain manifestation. It is the order "kill because you are authorized". After all, Moses was a prophet – "calling" by order of Yahweh, in a specific place of the profane. Then the value – formal and logical abstraction becomes a formal and symbolic value with the content: "do not kill if you are not authorized" or "kill, because you are authorized".

In modern times, it does the same. The authorized ones are constructing a new manifestation, i.e. "new rules" – the social commandment "do not kill". Here at 1st of June in 2002, at the West Point Military Academy, George W. Bush formulated a National Security Strategy called the Bush Strategy. It consists of elements: 1. The idea of a unipolar world created by Western civilization with American leadership, led firmly, by using force, which could be seen in the assault on Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and other countries; 2. Readiness to overthrow regimes that threaten this unipolarity, identified with world security. The US was to organize through sanctions, political and economic isolation of those countries which according to the US were to create the so-called axis of evil; 3. Organization

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[5] The human entity is a concrete essential manifestation of the human species, a concrete expression of its biological and spiritual complex versatility, i.e. the unity arising at the intersection of the infinity of mental transcendence ("the other side") and the finiteness of its biological and spiritual being, and thus biological and spiritual unity, united with tradition – a total matrix placed in a four-dimensional space: 1. "the other side" also called the "holy cosmos" (Luckmann, 1967), "world as sanctuary" (Skolimowski, 2010), i.e. the absolute system values – the ultimate reference of all that is experienced. The values of "that side" are translated and expressed in the formal and symbolic form of "this side"; 2. diachronia, or what was; what is and can be. Time is in unity with space as the attributive reality of individual being, the natural environment and the social environment conditioning the effort of becoming human life. Filegenetic time and spatial place indicates the content of the presence of human units; 3. synchrony created through – first – the genetically inflated and self-enhanced development of corporality (growth, flowering and disappearance), which is the basis for the intensification of individual spiritual content subjectivity and their potency in objectivable social relations, in co-existence with Others; 4. fields of social coexistence in which individuality becomes in its concreteness as a shaped historical figure.

[6] Simplicius discusses about the importance of so-called "eye of wisdom", recalling an anecdote about a horse, which he used as an example from Plato, who discussed about that with Antisthenes: "My Plato – Antisthenes said – I can see a horse, but I cannot see horseness" – Plato said, "Because you have only one eye, by which you can see the horse, but you do not have a second eye, which is an idea of watching a horse" (Leśniak, 1968, p. 43).

of "coalitions willing to participate in preventive wars; 4. Initiating pre-emptive wars without declaring them; 5. Promotion of specific liberalism and specific neo-colonial democracy to "end human history"; 6. Promoting global trade liberaliza-tion, which is essentially cryptocolonial neocolonialism (Jureńczyk, 2019). In this way, the religious idea – the commandment "do not kill" has evolved into its nega-tion. For the alleged building of good, imperial capital is constantly at war, but there where it cannot buy, subordinate it in other forms the country necessary for its development. The essence – the good of man – is realized through evil, and thus through his negation. The unsolvable theological problem remains: why does good God allow his man to choose evil?

We also find this problem in the realization of Marxist real humanism. Its creator is not limited to the simple negation of "private property" and replacing it with the "socialist principle", i.e. joint ownership. The "socialist principle" is only a "form of the humanistic principle". Humanism limited to the negation of pri-vate property is a appearance of unilateral humanism, limited to "the real exis-tence of man". Its other side is also the "theoretical existence of man", which should also be criticized. We find this moment in J. Szczepański's assessment of the Polish Peoples' Republic[7].

In practice, this non-critical implementation of the socialist principle was limited to a simple negation of the private ownership of the means of production. As a result, good was created by evil, because every simple negation requires strength, including military power, to be realized.

Analysing the essence of this process, we notice that it destroys that what is a community. We find the category of community in E. Kant, of course in formal term. He writes that category intercourse, being an attribute of man, indicating its ontic socialization has its derivative concepts, which cannot be ignored. Each of them is entitled to existence / coexistence, i.e. merging into one whole. In it, things remain in a community relationship. Since one of them cannot be con-

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[7] The role of the government of the Polish Peoples' Republic was to "educate »a man of socialism«, who was to differ from a man of capitalism in the same way as a middle-class entrepreneur was different from a feudal lord. The education of this man of socialism was an important task of the new system. This man was supposed to take over from revolutionary groups the leadership of a society in which the principles of socialism were recognized, internalized and in which the socialist economy could function without resistance, because labour motivations, income distribution rules, and other principles act as accepted directives. The education of the man of socialism was a necessary condition for stabilizing the consolidation of socialism. And let's add right away that in this field the party suffered defeat, that it was a pedagogical defeat, that the administratively subordinate and party schools retained the autonomy of mind and moral order. The pedagogical defeat of socialism had many effects in all areas of collective life" (Szczepański, 1995, p. 18).

tained in the other, they are conceived as assigned, not subordinated. Therefore, they define themselves not unilaterally as in series, but mutually as in aggregate. By subordinating one thing to another, we accept one division of the whole, while excluding the others, subordinating them.

A similar connection occurs when we mean a whole created from a thing in which one element as an effect is not subordinated to the other as the cause of its existence, but is assigned simultaneously and mutually as the cause due to the definition of the other thing. It is a different kind of connection than the one found only in the relation of cause to effect (reason to result), where the succession does not determine collusion on its part, and therefore does not form a whole with it as the creator of the world with the world (Kant, 1998, p. 491).

Emmanuel Kant concludes, therefore, that religious thinking is dominated by the relationship of subordination, excluding assignment. Here is the being – God creates the world, commands and forbids. In this world, man, the human being, is an object for God. And even if the popes, the conciliar resolutions of Catholicism have made some revalorization of man, it does not change the essence of things at all. Looking for a definition for this process, Mirosław Nowaczyk coined the name: theocentric anthropocentrism (Nowaczyk, 1983).

In social practice, therefore, a religious relationship was created: God-creator-subject-man-object-God-subordination. This relationship was realized in the socialist revolution that was being carried out. The same thinking was used. Private ownership of the means of production was subordinated to the common good represented by the state, ultimately to the state. At the same time, with this movement, the community was annihilated, which is – I would like to remind – the ontic value of socialism, abolishing (Hegel) capitalist individualism. The community assumes the existence of a relationship of two or more entities. And subjectivity, her freedom is a function of her property. However, when the ownership of the means of production was subordinated to one of the entities – the common good represented by the state, its other member was destroyed; the one who, as a producer, could be the owner of a produced item. Along with its removal, the community relationship also disappeared. Socialism has destroyed its foundation: community. In propaganda this is stated by the phrase: the individual is zero (Majkowski, 2009).

A free community – at the present stage of its history – assumes private ownership of the means of production with their assignment to the common good, not subordination. How can to this mapping is realised? This can be done – as practice in some countries suggests, e.g. Sweden – by taxation. After all, its essence is the transfer of ownership. Tax is a public levy of a fiscal, economic, political and social nature. It allows the accumulation of funds for financing various public tasks,

achieving economic, social and political goals. Through taxes, the state is involved in economic and social processes. This involvement, however, depends on the model of the state, its political and economic doctrine (Ofiarski, 2010, pp. 20–21).

There is no such reasoning in the works of K. Marx. It is difficult to guess whether he knew E. Kant's *Critique of pure reason*, where these two categories are included, but only in a formal way. I think K. Marks "got stuck in the culture" (Karpiński, 2013, pp. 289–318). In his analyses we find a description of capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century and possible future socialism, and thus two boundary conditions. And what could have been in the middle that should lead to socialism disappeared from his sight. The result: the goal of socialism, called communism, has become an utopia. This notion also covers specific indications from the *Communist Manifesto*. After all, truth is not limited to results. Its essential element is also the way to achieve it, which convinces us G. W. F. Hegel.

The abolition of religious artefacts of culture as the realisation of human freedom

Marx interpreted religion as the theory of this world, as an encyclopaedic abbreviation, its logic in a popular form (Marx, 1994, p. 11) and thus recognized it as the "principle of the world" which unites the whole of a spiritual culture that manifests itself in various forms. Religion for Marx is therefore the basis unifying theory and practice, the activities of intellectuals and folk masses, thus being a unified cultural, social, political and economic block. Marx's religious descriptions range from specific religious doctrinal expressions to abstract abstraction, i.e., God as an extraterristelial being. Marx was not limited to criticizing religion as an abstract, formallogical category denoting the form of social awareness. His criticism of religion focuses on the subject matter, which is created by human actions and his products. In this way, the abstract, before Marxist criticism of religion, was replaced by concrete criticism, which does not take up some fantastic ideas, but concrete, empirical things that hide some religious ideas (Marx, Engels, 1979, pp. 17–277).

Their criticism requires specific categories. Namely those that describe what is "objectively-theoretical". I have presented their use in previous considerations. With their help, we can move from the concrete to the abstract, which is in essence the abstraction of the abstraction and from it to what is a certain form of being and from it to the concrete, but the one that remains already recognized, which has become a fact, i.e.: a unity of thought adequate to the substance. It is therefore a real organic whole. It is a socio-historical subject.

Objectively-theoretical categories identify real structures of socio-historical life. The formal-symbolic categories mean abstract objects. Their names include

elements of the objective world that have some common features, although there are no real cause-effect existential and genetic relationships (Kozyr-Kowalski, 1988, p. 124). Thus, Marx's objectively-theoretical criticism of religion consists in showing its relationship with other forms of social consciousness and all other structures of social existence which take on a religious form although they are expressed in a secular form, that is, in finding "in every real life relations their religious form".

Let's look at the ever-current and constantly recurring problem of Jewishness. It was taken up by K. Marx in the article: *On the Jewish question* (Marks, 1994, pp. 1–27). It explains the essence of political emancipation and its relation to emancipation as such.

He says:

As soon as Jew and Christian recognize that their respective religions are no more than different stages in the development of the human mind, different snake skins cast off by history, and that man is the snake who sloughed them, the relation of Jew and Christian is no longer religious but is only a critical, scientific, and human relation. Science, then, constitutes their unity. But, contradictions in science are resolved by science itself (Marks, 1994, p. 3).

For the Author of *Capital*:

The emancipation of a Jew for man, or emancipation of a man from Jewishness, was therefore conceived not as in the case of Mr. Bauer as a special task of a Jew, but as a common, practical task of today's world, which is the Jewish world to its very depth. It has been proved that the task of abolishing the essence of Jewry is in truth the task of abolishing Jewry in civil society, abolishing the inhumanity of today's practice of life, the summit of which is the money system (Marks, Engels, 1956, p. 148).

Bauer, with whom Marx argued

[...] could not go beyond religious opposites. He could only perceive the attitude of the Jewish religion to the Christian religion towards the Christian world. He even considered it necessary to critically restore religious opposition, as a contrast between the Jew's and Christian's attitude to critical religion, to atheism, this last level of theism, the negative recognition of God (Marks, Engels, 1956).

For Marx, the essence of emancipation is to free man from many dependencies. It is the realization of human freedom, which will be not a religious artefact (Karpiński, 2009, pp. 203–205). This process materializes by taking many appearances, admits of there are three the most important. They are ideological, political and economic emancipation and none of them can be equated with human emancipation.

The process of ideological emancipation was after all caused by the revolution of Jesus Christ. Christianity equated people with each other, but only in the sphere of chosen ideology. Saint Paul says: "For there is no dissention between Jaw and Greek, for the same Lord over all is generous toward all who call upon Him. Everyone who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10 Rom. 12–13 *Modern English Version*). It is difficult to overestimate this statement. Until now, man was Greek or Roman, and others – barbarians could only be slaves. Jesus and his disciples equated people, at least in ideology, in one of its forms: in Christianity. Every Christian became human. Others, non-Christians, continued to be barbarians, which is the limitation of this revolution. Her postulate is for a particular human being to recognize the fact that another – a Christian, next to his neighbour, is also a man, although he says differently, thinks and defends his land, although he is from a different tribe, a nation. Therefore, it is not allowed to treat another neighbour – a Christian as a barbarian. Historians describe ways of understanding and implementing this idea (Chomsky, 1999; 2008).

The second emancipation was the Great French Revolution. It proclaims the slogans: freedom, equality, brotherhood and property. This revolution adopted these slogans, but only partially implemented them. The reason for this lies in the nature of things. Since the unity and interdependence of the slogans developed require that everyone be divided by ownership, equality, freedom and brotherhood, in the absence of the possibility of implementing this postulate, they all remained empty, only formal solutions. Only those who gained private ownership of the means of production were committed to their reality.

Conclusions

Therefore – Soloviev says – socialism is an attempt to implement these principles in reality. It is therefore a historic necessity to "finish" bourgeois revolutions. For example, the French Revolution introduced civic equality. But in conditions of socioeconomic inequality, freeing oneself from the power of one ruling class means subordination to another class. The power of the monarchy and feudal lords was replaced by the power of capital and the bourgeoisie. Freedom alone does not give much to the majority of a nation when is lack of economic equality. Although the revolution announced it, in the world of wars, struggles, rivalry of individuals, equality of rights means nothing without equality of power. The principle of equality, equality before the law turns out to be something real for those who have political and economic strength.

This force passes from one hand to another, and just as the class possessing wealth, the Jewish bourgeoisie used the principle of equality for its interests by

acquiring at some point of this strength, the non-possessing class, the proletariat, intends, as soon as it acquires strength, to use the principle of equality for its benefits (Sołowiow, 2011; Bauman, 2009; Kochan, 2013). It must be added here that due to its dominant position in society, this class will abolish classes in general.

This issue will be further aggravated by the recognition of P.J. Proudhon's definition of property. He explains that if power – through exploitation – deprives man of thought, will, personality becomes power over his life and death and, by making man a slave, it does as much, as murdering him. So also to the question: what is property? We can answer similarly: property is theft! (Proudhon, 2007). The owner of the means of production steals the difference that necessarily arises between the wage as a wage, and thus its formal, abstract view and utility work.

Thus, political emancipation expresses, among other things, the division of man into a "religious citizen" and a "religious private man". Human emancipation, however, is about freeing man from religion, from its essential and manifest content, and thus about such liberation in which both religiosity and atheism become superfluous. "Communism begins from the outset (Owen) with atheism; but atheism is at first far from beginning communism; indeed, that atheism is still mostly an abstraction. The philanthropy of atheism is therefore at first only philosophical, abstract phyllomorphy and that of communism is at once real and directly bent on action" (Marx, 1994, p. 72).

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