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Christian Democracy in Poland (19th–21st Century)

ABSTRACT

Christian parties, which emerged as organized parliamentary powers in the second half of the 20th century, have a long history and initial phase, which is presented in this paper. The period of their historical, progressive development was a breakthrough, and a transition from the pre-revolutionary era to the post-revolutionary world, characterized by the liberalization of a strong state, industrialization and the emergence of social problems, new ideologies and processes of secularization.

The development of Christian-democratic parties in Poland took place with almost two decades of delay in relation to the flowering of Christian democratic parties in Western Europe. The first Christian democratic parties appeared in Poland only in the interwar period. During this period, the weakest point of Polish Christian democrats was the small share of intelligence in its ranks and lack of support from the Catholic Church. In the early 1990s, numerous Christian democratic groups began to appear on the Polish political scene, but none of them retained their positions for longer. First of all, it was characterized by a huge gap, almost arbitrary programme, which often had more to do with conservative ideology than with Christian-democratic one.

Key words: Christian democrats, Catholic Church

INTRODUCTION

This article attempts to answer the question: why is there no Christian party in Poland, a country where the majority of citizens declare their affiliation to the Catholic Church [Sozańska 2011: 27]? Additionally, it will demonstrate a place for Christian democracy on the Polish political scene. When analyzing the relations between the Catholic Church and the Polish State over the last two centuries, the thesis can be put

forward that the lack of established Christian parties in Poland is a result of, among others, the lack of a constant electorate and the misinterpretation of the idea of Christian democratic parties. "At first glance, the most obviously distinguishing feature of a Christian party seems to be its name. Assignment of this particular etiquette is undoubtedly important and indicates the party's image" [Sozańska 2011: 45]. At the beginning of the 1990s, Christian parties in Poland were mainly identified as the Catholic Church's interference in public life, in particular, the political space. The basis of the conflict was mainly the lack of knowledge of the European standards [Mazurkiewicz 2001: 288]. Clay Clemens states that "[t]he Christian democracy was established [...] as a defense movement and at the same time a movement of social, cultural, religious and civic renewal, the aim of which was to create a social and political democracy, inspired by Christian ideas" [Clemens 1991: 8].

It should be noted that after the Second World War the Catholic Church became a mainstay in the creation of Christian democratic parties in Europe; this was also part of the Vatican's goal to reform the "Christian Europe", as the third political force in the postwar world. The Church tried to actively influence politics and even in 1947 in "L'Osservatore Romano" it published materials suggesting to Italian Catholics who they should vote for [Webster 1961: 103]. Starting with the establishment of European Communities, the Christian parties decided to become independent from the direct influence of the Church. Currently, Christian democratic parties have deviated from their union with the Catholic Church, i.e. they are not associated with it in the institutional sense. The demands voiced by these parties have also changed. Their ranks comprise people of other faiths and also atheists. Christian democracy today is not quite as strongly associated with religion, while it still bases its doctrine on the principles of Christian ethics. The Catholic Church in Poland hoped that after the collapse of communism it would continue to have an important role in public life, while the state saw its place mainly in the public, moral sphere of citizens. During the system transformation, the Polish bishops stated that the state cannot have a religious character but also cannot lack religious beliefs. The state should provide the Churches with the possibility to implement a religious mission in public life [Skorowski 2009: 50].

The study of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) shows that "from the point of view of society, the Catholic Church is one of the most important institutions in Poland. It constitutes not only a part of the universal Church, but it is deeply inscribed in the history of our country" [Catholic Church in 2014: 7]. In the National Population Census, in the section "National-ethnic, language and religious structure of the Polish population – NSP 2011", the data confirms the statistically dominant position of the Catholic Church in the Latin rite: "the group of people considering themselves as faithful to the Roman Catholic Church amounts to 33,729 thousand people, representing 87.6% of the total population" [National Census 2011: 92]. However, despite these facts, in Poland there is no strictly Christian democratic political party. Moreover, the analysis of Christian democratic parties in other European countries

shows that Christian democracy is much stronger in countries where Catholicism is not the dominant religion (e.g. Germany). There is no doubt that modern Europe is becoming increasingly secular. The 1990s put forth challenges that the Church had never faced before. Analyzing the events of the last century, it can be concluded that the Catholic Church maintains its life where it is persecuted, discriminated against in its rights, in the field of open conflicts, etc. Material wealth, freedom and democracy are conducive to the weakening social position of the Church and help spread religious indifference [Janowski 2007: 117]. The creation of the Christian-democratic party in Europe was closely associated with the conflict between the Church and the bourgeois state. At the end of the 18th century, the Church lost its political monopoly. It could rebuild its influence precisely through rivalries for seats in parliament.

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

The Christian social movement, which gave a beginning to Christian democracy, indicates its source as the encyclical *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII. The encyclical *Rerum novarum* itself in a sense has approved only some of the theoretical findings of activists of the Christian social movement. Some researchers of Christian democracy believe, however, that the encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885) was first to be dedicated to the Christian state regime [Maier 1969: 24]. We read in it that recognizing the supreme authority of God, the power of the state should also recognize religion and promote its development. Leo XIII stated that “the Church never condemns any form of government, so long as it corresponds to the rules of wisdom and justice. In particular, that is positively accepts democracy” [Majka 1988: 283].

The earliest Christian social movement called “social Catholicism” appeared in France [Irving 1973: 19]. Then, in Italy under the name *Azione Cattolica* (Catholic Action) [Misner 2004: 654]. In time, *Azione Cattolica* grew to become the main instrument of the Church’s influence on contemporary politics in Italy. The Italian model of Catholic Action evolved from 1923 to 1946, and organizations of this type had a huge impact on the socio-political situation of the country. The first Christian-democratic parties began to form in Europe at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. At the beginning, they were organizations that were made up of Catholics in the majority. The German Centre Party (*Zentrumspartei*) was the first Christian-social grouping which obtained the status of a political party [Kselman, Buttigieg 2003: 3–4]. This group organized itself in the Prussian parliament in 1852 in the form of the so-called Catholic Faction [Antoszewski, Herbut 2000: 68]. The interwar period produced several parties, which adopted the implementation of the Christian-democratic doctrine as their programme: France – *Parti Démocrate Populaire* (PDP; Democratic People’s Party); Italy – *Partito Popolare Italiano* (PPI; Italian People’s Party); Belgium – *Union Catholique Belge* (UCB; Belgian Catholic Association), in 1936, the Catholic UCB transformed into the Belgian Catholic Block

(*Bloek Catholique Belge*), which was comprised of two organizations: the Flemish *Katholieke Vlaamse Volkspartij* (KVV) and Walloon *Parti Catholique Social* (PCS); Poland – *Chrześcijańska Demokracja* (Christian Democracy) [Markiewicz 1988: 33]. In 1925, the International Secretariat of Democratic Parties with a Christian Outlook was founded in Paris [Sopicki 1991: 68]. Several conventions took place with representatives of different countries. During World War II, another association was created in London – International Christian Democratic Union. Its body was the monthly periodical “People and Freedom” [Sopicki 1991: 68]. It is also worth noting that not all Christian democratic parties used the adjective “Christian”. They were all, however, based on the principles of Christian ethics. In their programme, Christian-social parties drew a lot of attention to the worker and his job. It should be emphasized that the proper development of Christian democratic parties occurred only after the Second World War.

Since the dawn of time, Christianity was not only a great ideology organizing the human view of the world and outlining standards of human conduct, but also in its various forms it was always strongly involved in political life. Catholic thinkers began to realize that the Catholic Church may lose its influence on workers if it does not propose an attractive vision of social order, at the same time, competitive with socialism. The basis of the new Vatican socio-political topics became the already mentioned encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Rerum novarum*. With time, however, the political influence of the Holy See began to wane, and this trend persists to this day. The 19th- and 20th-century popes laid the foundations of the contemporary social teachings of the Church, and, thus, for the doctrine of Christian democracy, especially those who sat on the “Holy See” after World War II. The Second Vatican Council in the years 1962–1965 also had considerable contribution to the development of this political and social thought. The most important papal encyclicals, from which Christian democracy drew inspiration include: *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Graves de communi re* (1901) – Pope Leo XIII; *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) – Pope Pius XI; *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Pacem in terris* (1963) – Pope John XXIII; *Populorum progressio* (1967) – Pope Paul VI and *Redemptor hominis* (1979), *Laborem exercens* (1981) and *Evangelium vitae* (1995) – Pope John Paul II. It should be also noted that Christian democracy also drew from earlier philosophical heritage, among others: St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as from the philosophical trend called “personalism”.

The Christian-social movement grew from the teachings of the Church, but it should be noted that many parties or organizations with a conservative program also have fervent Catholics in its ranks. Very often groups of this type are confused with the Christian democratic current. The name “Christian democracy”, in reference to the socio-political movement, was used for the first time by Fr. Antoine Pottier [Kowalczyk 2016: 42].

In 1897, Prof. Giuseppe Toniolo (1845–1918), one of the actual co-authors of *Rerum novarum*, the founder of the so-called Pisan school of economics and theo-

rist of corporatism, defined “Christian democracy” as “a social order in which all the social, legal and economic forces, in their full hierarchical development, work proportionally for the common good, to achieve as a result the improvement of the fate of the lower classes” [Webster 1961: 10–11]. In addition, Toniolo insisted that Christian democracy not be mixed with any form of government or political regime. Two years later, at the XIV congress of the official organization of Italian Catholics Work of the Congress (*Opera dei Congressi*), editor-in-chief of the daily “L’Unità Cattolica” Giuseppe Sacchetti announced:

Yes, Christian democracy exists, but it is not a religious school that wants to reduce or combine with the new concept of the Catholic doctrine. Since the term “Christian democracy” was used by the Holy Father, no one dares to reject it, although it is not particularly indispensable and does not mean anything new for us. From a scientific point of view, Christian democracy is nothing else but the study of social problems in order to solve them on the basis of the doctrine of the Gospel and the historical tradition of the Church. From a practical point of view, Christian democracy means activities directed primarily to meet the religious and economic needs of the nation, its religious and civic education, organizing the Christian people in a living force capable of self-defense, and the general public against intrigues and attacks of socialism and atheism. (speech dated 18 April 1899) [Bartyzel]

Numerous Christian organizations (including societies, trade unions) were created before the publication of the encyclical *Rerum novarum*. In the Catholic Church the first voice in defense of the working class spoke in Germany. In 1848, Bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel Ketteler began to preach, seeking to improve the fate of the working class [*Dwie Encykliki...* 1937: 7]. In a famous speech of 1896, he advocated an increase in wages according to the values and work, a reduction of working hours, and additionally demanded days of rest, ban of child labor and work of mothers in factories [Maier 1969: 266]. In Germany, by the initiative of Bishop Ketteler and a Catholic activist Adolph Kolping, several Catholic-social associations were founded, the oldest of which is *Kolpingwerk* (Kolping’s Work), also called the Catholic-Socialist Society of Kolping, which was established in 1849. A disciple and follower of the idea of Bishop Ketteler was Fr. Franz Hitze, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party (*Zentrumspartei*). During this period, the case of workers had started to be of interest also in France. The first activists on this issue were two officers: Margrave de la Tour du Pin Chambly and Count Albert de Mun [*Dwie Encykliki...* 1937: 7]. In France, in December 1871, Albert de Mun established the organizations *Oeuvre des Cercles Catholiques d’Ouvriers* (Society of Catholic Worker Circles). In 1885, by the initiative of priests working among young workers, the Catholic Society of French Youth Association (*Catholicus de la Jeunesse Francaise*) was established. In 1887, the Christian trade union of workers employed in industry and commerce (*Syndicat des Employés du Commerce et de l’Industrie*) was created. In

Italy, since 1867, the Society of Italian Catholic Youth (GCI) operated and through it the First Catholic Congress was convened in Venice in June 1874. The Congress turned into a permanent institution – *Opera dei Congressi*. In 1889, one of its most active activists, Prof. Giuseppe Toniolo, founded the Union of Catholic Social Studies [Przybylski, Przybyła 1996: 31–32]. The Catholic social movement was growing more and more in Rome. The International Association for Catholic-welfare studies was established. In 1884, the Freiburg Union was established, which dealt with the most important social issues. Union members informed Pope Leo XIII on the results of their work [*Dwie Encykliki...* 1937: 7]. In 1920, numerous Christian trade unions merged into the International Union of Christian Trade Unions, based in Utrecht. In 1928, there were more than 2 million members [Stolarczyk 1969: 78].

Through the Christian-social doctrine, the Church influenced the education of Catholics' consciousness. The Vatican addressed its doctrine not only to its members, but also to politicians and socio-political organizations. The doctrine was periodically modified and adapted to the changing conditions, as evidenced by the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII and his successors. It is also worth mentioning that Christian democracy as strictly political parties, in the initial period were not exactly supported by the social doctrine of the Church. Pope Pius XI in the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* agreed to the liquidation of Christian-democratic parties, recognizing that corporatism (converging in many ways with fascism) is closer to the Catholic spirit than Christian democratic parties.

There are big differences between history and the present occurring in Christian-democratic parties. Nevertheless, the Christian ideology of democracy is based on fairly solid foundations: it is based on the Christian vision of the world and of humans and Christian morality. Christian democracy is often referred to as the party of the people: "One of the main tasks of a people's party is to further the exchange of elites and create access to centers of social power to the people representing the least privileged groups" [Buttiglione 1993: 101].

In the interwar period, Christian democracy fought for social reforms and opposed nationalism and totalitarianism. During the Second World War, the Christian democrats worked in the undergrounds, where it was the main force of resistance. After the war, it became a crucial political party. It should be also noted that in fact, it is only after the Second World War, that the Catholic Church became a mainstay in the creation of Christian-democratic parties; this was also behind the goal of the Vatican to reform the "Christian Europe", as the third political force in the postwar world. The Church tried to actively influence politics and even in 1947 in "*L'Osservatore Romano*" it published materials suggesting to Italian Catholics who they should vote for [Webster 1961: 103]. In time, Christian democratic parties decided to become independent from the direct influence of the Church. It also weakens the moderating effect that the religious cleavage has on the class cleavage, thereby forcing Christian democrats to compete more on the, less gainful for them left-right dimension of the political spectrum [Kersbergen 2008: 264]. It should be also re-

membered that the social doctrine of the Church was not the only official doctrine of the parties co-creating the Christian Democratic International, because some parties like the CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union* – Christian Democratic Union) and CSU (*Christlich Soziale Union* – Christian Social Union) were interdenominational parties and could not refer only to the Roman Catholic Church. It was difficult for the Holy See to “waive” direct control of Christian democratic parties, which was particularly evident in Italy. The French Revolution revealed certain regularities, namely that the state cannot exist without the support of moral roots. The very idea of human rights in isolation from Christianity is difficult to understand. In Germany, the Protestant part of the population in the empire saw the reflection of their national hopes, and the Catholic minority found it more difficult to identify with the state. The vision of man as responsible to God, should protect against all totalitarianism [Martin 1997: 47]. Christian social organizations and Christian democratic parties sought to achieve a specific economic, political and social goal. This goal was defined in their programmes and other party documents, which corresponded to the Christian vision of the world. Christian democracy changed along with the changes taking place in social and political life. Thus, it tried to adapt to new conditions. Currently, Christian democratic parties deviated from the union with the Catholic Church, i.e. they are not associated with it in the institutional sense. The demands voiced by these parties also changed. Their ranks comprise people of other faiths and also atheists. Christian democracy today is not quite as strongly associated with religion, while it still bases its doctrine on the principles of Christian ethics. Social policy in the light of Christian responsibility is guided by the Christian understanding of the human being, and this means that it consists in the protection of human dignity. It is this dignity that demands that the broad social policy not only makes humans subject to protection; in the name of accountability to God, it should be concentrated on human [Martin 1997: 47].

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY IN POLAND

The development of Christian-democratic parties in Poland took place with almost two decades of delay in relation to the flowering of Christian democratic parties in Western Europe. The first Christian democratic parties appeared in Poland only in the interwar period. The reason for this was the political situation, because at that time Poland was divided between three occupying powers, which hindered the creation and development of new political movements. Nevertheless, the origin of the socio-Christian movement in Poland dates back to the late 19th century. The first activities in the then Galicia, where Fr. Stanisław Stojąkowski published the periodicals “Wieniec” and “Pszczółka” since 1875, can be considered as the foundations of the Christian Democratic movement. In 1896, Stojąkowski formulated the first socio-Christian programme. The programme included, among others, “the demand

of a complete self-government of the Church with the restoration of the election of bishops and parish priests by the faithful, free education and autonomy of educational institutions, far-reaching civil liberties, freedom of work, etc.” [Krzywobłocka 1974: 15]. In the parliamentary elections of 1897, Stojalkowski managed to introduce up to 6 of his followers. Furthermore, like in other countries of Western Europe, in Poland at the end of the 19th century, Catholic trade unions began to appear. In 1890, in Wielkopolska, local clergy organized the first Catholic workers’ societies. They mainly dealt with legal advice, looking for jobs for the unemployed, running post-mortem offices and educational work [Przybylski 1980: 24]. One of the first meetings of the delegates of Catholic workers’ unions was held in Tarnów on 7–8 February 1897. In the same year, the Christian-National Association “Czytelnia Katolicka” was formed, which issued the daily “Ruch Katolicki”. In Kraków, in 1900, the Catholic Women’s Union was established, and in 1907 – the Polish Trade Union of Christian Workers. However, the attempt to create a political Christian democratic current failed in this period [Krzywobłocka 1974: 17–19]. In the Kingdom, the first organizations of the Catholic-social movement as church unions were founded by Fr. Marceł Godlewski.

The first initiatives to create a Christian democratic grouping in Poland are associated with the appointment of the Catholic-National Faction on 23 June 1898. The organization operated in the area of Kraków and Lviv. During this time, the activities of the Galician clergy intensified to join the existing Catholic workers’ associations. As a result, in 1906, the Polish Trade Union of Catholic Workers (PZZKR) was established. Shortly after this, in 1908, the Polish Christian-Social Faction (PSCh-S) was appointed. It is worth noting that during this period, the Christian democratic movement in Poland was decisively overtaken by conservatives and national democrats [Przybylski 1980: 25–26].

In 1916, in the Russian annexation, the Christian Democratic Faction was founded, and in 1918, in Galicia, the Christian-National Workers’ Faction was established, while on the territories of the Prussian annexation – the National Workers’ Faction (NSR) [Sozańska 2011: 78]. In 1920, NSR was divided into the National Workers’ Party (NPR) and the Christian-National Workers’ Faction (ChNSR). In 1919, in Kraków, the groups from Galicia and the Kingdom were joined into the Polish Christian Democratic Faction (PSChD). The ideological and programme assumptions of PSChD were consistent with other Christian democratic parties operating in Europe. The Christian-National Workers’ Faction (ChNSR) took part in the historical First Congress on 23–24 May 1920, during which ChNSR united with PSChD, which, consequently, founded the Christian-National Labor Faction – Christian Democracy (ChNSP – ChD). Of all the Christian-democratic groups, Christian Democracy (ChD) had the oldest lineage (CHD). This party referred to the 19th-century tradition based on the encyclical *Rerum novarum* [Przybylski 1980: 23]. At the second congress, which took place in 1925, the name was shortened and the Polish Christian Democratic Party (PSChD) was founded. The party was weakened by frequent splits

within it, the two biggest took place in 1927 and in 1934. During the second split, the Christian-Social Union was formed, and in 1935 – two other splinter parties – the Christian People's Faction and the Christian Democratic Faction [Majchrowski 1984: 17–18]. There is no doubt, however, that the most important Polish Christian democratic party of the interwar period was the Polish Christian Democratic Party (of Wojciech Korfanty), existing in the years 1919–1937 [Majchrowski 1984: 17–18]. In 1937, PSChD and the NPR became part of the Labor Faction (SP). After the end of World War II, the Christian democrats had to be isolated from the working class, and work institutions were to be an area of activities of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) [Stępień 1999: 229]. As a result, in 1946, the Labor Party suspended its activities in the country and began operations in exile. In the 1950s, it was attempted to reactivate Christian democracy, however, these actions did not produce any results.

In addition to the main Christian democratic parties, acting in the interwar period in Poland, it is worth mentioning smaller groupings. In 1920, the National-Christian People's Faction was founded, which on 16 August 1922, became part of the Christian Union of National Unity (so-called *Chjena*), together with the People's National Union, Christian-National Workers' Faction and the Christian-National Agricultural Faction [Holzer 1974: 145–146]. After the May Coup, activists of the group divided themselves into the pro-Sanation ones who formed the Christian Workers' Faction, and the others who joined National Democracy. Another Christian Democratic grouping was the pro-Sanation National-Christian Labor Union (it sat in the Sejm of Silesia in the years 1930–1939, former members of larger Christian democrats operated in it). The origins of Christian democracy in Silesia began by preparing the programme assumptions of the Christian People's Union (ChZL), according to which the Silesian Christian democrats acted in the years 1920–1921 [Drogoń 2003: 22].

A separate category are Catholic parties, which have, to a large extent, the nature of a Christian-democratic one, but (like the National Democratic Party) are related ideologically and they can be mentioned due to their similarity in referring to a name in religion. In 1912, in Grudziądz, the Polish Catholic People's Party was established. In 1918, the Polish Catholic People's Faction in Galicia was created. Moreover, the Ukrainian Catholic People's Party operated on the Polish territory; it was founded in 1930 (in 1932 it was renamed the Ukrainian People's Renewal) (Christian Democratic Parties).

Throughout the interwar period, the biggest disadvantage of Christian democracy was the small share of intelligentsia in its ranks and lack of support from the Catholic Church. The Church hierarchy did not want to engage in the activities of Christian democrats, because Polish Catholicism was politically divided. Therefore, the Church took the bipartisan stand [Przybylski 1980: 24]. On the other hand, during the period of the Polish People's Republic, Christian democracy was completely “blocked” by the communist government. Despite this, the Christian democrats refused to give up and changed their official party activities into engaging in work

for magazines (including “Tygodnik Powszechny”, “Znak”) and Catholic organizations. One of the most famous Catholic organizations that works to this day, having branches in most cities of Poland was the Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK). The origins of the organization are associated with the appointment of the Polish Club of Progressive Catholic Intelligentsia (OKPIK) on 24 October 1956. The first Board of the Club consisted of: Jerzy Zawieyski, Jerzy Turowicz, Irena Sławińska, Waław Auleytner, Zygmunt Kubiak, Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Zygmunt Skórzyński. In 1957, there were already about 100 branches of Catholic clubs operating in all of Poland [Stępień 1999: 229].

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN THE PERIOD OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC OF POLAND

In the early 1990s, numerous Christian democratic groups began to appear, however, none of them retained their positions for longer. First of all, it was characterized by a huge gap, almost arbitrary programme, which often had more to do with conservative ideology than with Christian-democratic one.

A revolutionary event for Poland was 4 June 1989, the parliamentary elections were then won by “Solidarity”. The mission of forming a new government was entrusted to Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In world opinion, Poland was identified as the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to overcome communism. The democratic changes were accompanied by general enthusiasm [Pawlina 1995: 104].

In 1989, the Labor Party in exile returned to the country, which, at the Third Congress in April 1990, changed its name to the Christian-Democratic Labor Faction. ChDSP in the 1990s was a member of several coalitions and did not compete independently in the elections. In the elections of 1991, under the Christian Democracy committee, ChDSP started out in the election campaign together with the Polish Christian-Democratic Forum. This party was formed in 1991 by PAX and PZKS activists (having associations in the Sejm of the Polish People’s Republic). In 1994, after joining the Christian Democratic group, it changed its name to Christian Democrats-Labor Party [Gołoś 1999: 254]. In 1996, CHD-SP was one of the initiators of the creation of the Election Action Solidarity. In 2000, after joining the group of the small People’s Independence Coalition, the party adopted the historical name – SP, under which it survives until this day, however, the group’s activity has disappeared. The Labour Faction cooperated with various parties, mainly with PiS.

At the same time that SP returned to the country, the Christian-National Union (ZChN) began its activities. The party tried to join lay Catholics, but its social support was declining from year to year [Bale, Szczerbiak 2008: 484]. At the head of ZChN were Wiesław Chrzanowski, Ryszard Czarnecki and Marian Piłka. It is worth noting that although the party considered themselves a Christian democratic grouping, with time, the programme became much closer to conservatives.

The next party, established in 1990, was the Center Alliance (*Porozumienie Centrum*). The grouping consisted of activists of the Citizen's Committee with the chairman of the NSZZ "Solidarność" Lech Wałęsa and Christian groupings. Jarosław Kaczyński was also a member of the party [Kowalczyk 2016: 148]. The modern Christian democratic party which was founded in 1990 was called the Party of Christian Democrats (PChD). The group was appointed, among others, by MPs of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club gathered in the Association of Christian Democrats [Gołoś 1999: 255–256]. With time, PChD worked together with KKW "Ojczyzna", then in AWS. In 1999, the party merged with the Movement for the Republic and part of the Center Alliance, forming the Alliance of Polish Christian Democrats. However, in 2002, it merged with the Conservative-People's Faction, forming CPF – New Poland Movement (*SKL – Ruch Nowej Polski*). It operated until 2003, then the Center Party was set up, which existed in the years 2004–2008.

In 1990, the political scene began to get organized by ideological criterion. There was a tendency to eliminate the Church from public life. Of course, the important role of the Catholic Church in the overthrow of communism was emphasized, but, at the same time, there were warnings against a religious state and clergy dominance [Zieliński 2003: 397]. In the parliamentary elections of 1991, the Church supported the Catholic Election Action, and additionally two bishops intervened in the governor position. These actions caused that the Church was pinned the label of a politicized institution [Gowin 1995: 48]. "Electoral instructions" on who one should vote for appeared in some curiae, i.e. the already mentioned Catholic Election Action, Center Citizen Alliance, People's Alliance, Christian Democracy, Party of Christian Democrats [Kowalczyk 2016: 70].

We can observe the political commitment of the Catholic Church since the beginning of the Third Polish Republic. In 1993, priests during masses directly urged to vote for the Catholic Election Action. These actions did not help, because parties "advertised" by the Church – ZChN and other allied right-wing groups – did not win a mandate to parliament [Golec 1996: 112]. Often, there were voices of the decreasing role of the Church and its influence on public life. Views of this type were present not only among respondents or MPs who were unfavorable to the Church, but also among the representatives of the Democratic Union (UD), liberals, MPs of Solidarity and the Christian-National Union (ZChN) [Auleytner 1993: 20]. During the two-year rule of AW "S"–UW (1998–1999) the withdrawal of the Church from public political debate could be seen. According to observers, the reason for these activities is twofold. First, the Church began to slowly implement a new strategy, which was to pull out of its current participation in political life, and second, it did not want to be associated with a party which failed despite being supported by the Church [Lubczyński 2000: 89]. This does not mean, however, that the Church completely "renounced" its right to an opinion in the major socio-political issues of the country. Hierarchs continue to actively participate, e.g. in the work on the law on radio and television, by introducing a legal provision for respecting Christian

values. In addition, it is worth noting that “the Church has its own vision of political life. A very precise and detailed vision, sometimes even related to personal details” [Golec 1996: 112].

It should be noted, however, that in the early 1990s, the Church was very positively assessed by Polish society, nearly 90% of Poles thought that the Church contributed to the fall of communism [Bankowicz 2010: 304]. However, there was no shortage of criticism, which related mainly to the excessive activity of the Church in public life. The 1990s were associated primarily with defining the role of the Catholic Church after the transformation of the political system. The issue of religious education in schools returned, and the most important issue was the concordat.

In the minds of many Poles, the concordat was associated negatively and was understood as giving a privileged position to the Church [Gruca 1994: 15]. It should be also noted that the signing of the concordat in 1993 coincided with the election campaign. Post-communist parties used the concordat as part of their campaign, scaring the public that Poland will become a religious state which will be ruled by the Church.

In 1997, a Christian democratic party, called Christian Democracy of the Third Polish Republic (ChD III RP) was also founded by Lech Wałęsa. The party did not comprise the established Electoral Action Solidarity. As Wałęsa explained at the time, “ChD III RP will not compete and take away votes from AW “S”, and wants to look for support among approx. 50% of the society that does not participate in the elections”. The programme assumptions of the group were close to the German CDU. In 2002, the group was dissolved. Then, in May 2004, the Registration Court in Warsaw again registered the Christian Democracy of the Third Polish Republic. Wałęsa was registered as the leader of the Christian Democrats, and the vice-president was Piotr Dwornicki. In an interview from 2015, Wałęsa said that “in the precarious situation that has arisen in Poland, it is needed to reinstate the activities of the Christian Democratic party. However, I will not lead it. [...] The party was dormant, because there was no climate for it to exist” [Wałęsa 2015].

In the years 1991–2001, the Polish political scene was characterized by excessive volatility, the majority of the parties governing at that time did not survive until today. To a large extent, these groupings contributed to their own collapse “by incorrectly calculating their political mission and overestimating the voters’ support for their visions” [Antoszewski 2012: 265]. Instability should be understood as the irregularity of participating in voting, which is considered to be a weak connection between the party and voters [Antoszewski 2012: 270].

In the Third Polish Republic, a number of parties were formed which did not directly identify themselves as Christian democracy, however, they contained some elements of the Christian-democratic ideology in their programmes. Among the largest are: Center Alliance (in 2001 the Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – PiS) was founded in its place); AWS Social Movement, Conservative-People’s Faction and the Polish People’s Party. In the European Parliament, in the Christian

democratic fraction – the Group European People’s Party – there are two Polish parties: Polish People’s Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*) and Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*). Today we do not have a Christian democratic group in Poland, and many people confuse Christian democracy with national democracy. In this way, the Law and Justice party is often referred to as the Christian Democratic Party. Nothing can be further from the truth, this is a grouping that belongs to the family of conservative parties [Kowalczyk 2016: 105]. Of course, the doctrine of right-wing democratic groups contains many Catholic elements, but it basically ends at this convergence. In the Catholic brochure of Law and Justice from 2005, under the title “A Catholic Poland in Christian Europe”, it is written that the intention of the Law and Justice party “is a common front of a patriotic character, at the same time, seeing a place for Poland in the Western and Christian circle of civilization”. Not surprisingly, Law and Justice is identified as a Christian democratic party, since in this brochure it lists actions towards a Christian moral order: the establishment of a National Day of Life (falling on 24 March, so on the eve of the Annunciation); act of the Sejm on the treaty inviolability of the Polish legislation that protects life, family and education (before accession to the European Union); recognition in parliamentary documents of the need to emphasize in the draft European constitution the Christian character of European civilization; legislative initiatives in the field of material rights of the family; official reactions affecting the moral order of actions of a Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Women and Men; rejection of the state budget financing contraceptives.

First of all, in national democracy parties there are elements of nationalism. The Christian democrats emphasized that “the most dangerous reaction to the fall of communism is nationalism”, which becomes absolute and rejects other values. Socialism, in turn, is the natural heir of communism: “It is also a cripple, because either it uses the old slogan of class struggle, [...] or like social democracy, it rejects class struggle but remains suspicious of civil society” [Martens 1995: 133]. The Christian-democratic political idea is first ideology and principles, which means the most important goals and values to which policy must be referenced. An important element of the political philosophy of the Christian democrats was community personalism, the kind that was taught by Emmanuel Mounier: “our idea of Christian-democracy can be expressed in the convenient term: »community personalism«” [Lamberts 2003: 124]. The Christian-democratic doctrine mainly contains two rules that can be defined as follows [Dabin 1992: 27]: human is the foundation, the subject and the objective of social order; the task of society is to work for the benefit of all.

The Christian concept of human captured in terms of the human person is the central value in the mind of the Christian democrat. In this context, Christian democrats stressed that “everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs, who are close to Christian values and respect for human dignity, will find a place in our ranks” [Jansen 1998: 125]. In the political thought of Christian democracy, human dignity is also used as a measure of individual and group behaviors as well as an assessment

of not only the current socio-political and economic order but also the directions of transformations of the adopted order. In the mind of the Christian democrat, human rights can be divided into four groups [Łyżwa 2003: 27]: social rights (the right to work and fair pay, the joint management of a company, or the creation of labor unions); solidarity rights (development of the human person, material, spiritual, intellectual being); the right of freedom (defines the limits of freedom of religion, speech, conscience, thought); the right of the new generation (right to information, to a clean environment, genetic identity).

To conclude, the political thought of Christian democracy was formed on the basic values such as human dignity and human rights, freedom, equality, justice, social solidarity, subsidiarity. Democracy and its principles are dealt with the social, political, economic and international dimensions [Caldera 1990: 27]. Frequent recourse to the idea of solidarity in Christian democratic thought is to emphasize its difference from both individualist and collectivist currents by pointing to the dignity of the human person. According to the Christian democrats, "solidarity means awareness of interdependence and interconnectedness of individuals and their communities. It also means practical action, division, effective support and rights and obligations in relation to individuals and their communities, which are part of the whole" [Łyżwa 2003: 33]. An important value in the mind of the Christian democrat is also justice, which is closely related to the dignity of the human person. The idea of justice is based on the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, which adheres to the principle that everyone should be given what is due to him according to the rights entitled to him arising from the Christian axiological order [Maier 1969: 18]. These values form the core of the Christian democratic concept of politics. It should be noted, however, that these are values that even an atheist can identify with. In terms of economy, the flagship banner of the Christian democrats is a social market economy. But in politics, Christian democracy is situated in the center. Although now it is getting closer to the center-left.

The programme of Law and Justice from 2014, in the introduction entitled "Our Principles and Values", refers to almost all the principles of Christian democracy (freedom, equality, solidarity and justice). The only difference is that principles of PiS are defined slightly differently, like: freedom: "Our attitude towards the defense of life is not opposed to heroic values. We are convinced that only a free person can effectively strive for his own welfare and that of his family, close relatives and communities, which he belongs to, including the national community"; solidarity: "We strongly reject the opposition: individual liberty or the rights of the community. We recognize them as false. Both the right to life and the freedom of the individual are related to solidarity, which is the basis of every community". In addition, PiS also has a different view on the role of the Church in the country in relation to the Christian democrats, who, since the end of the 1950s, began a "policy" of emancipation from the direct influence of the Catholic Church. A particularly important element of Christian democracy is secularization, i.e. a broad and diffuse social

process “by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols” [Kersbergen 2008: 263]. In the analyzed election programme of 2014, it is written that “the Catholic Church in our national and state life is extremely important; we want to maintain it and we believe that the attempts to destroy the Church and unfair attacks are threatening for the form of social life”. Christian elements are scattered throughout the documents of the Law and Justice party, they are present in all of them with various intensity; “although in official documents the Law and Justice party do not strive for Christian identity, in private conversations, the activists see their party a Christian democracy. The feature determining the Christian character of Law and Justice was to be mainly the connection of the program with the social teaching of the Church” [Sozańska 2011: 180].

The Civic Platform party, which was established at the same time as PiS, is definitely closer to Christian Democracy. In terms of personnel, the grouping was mainly based on politicians originating from UW, the Peasant and Conservative Party, Social Movement AWS, Real Policy Union, Citizens for the Republic of Poland Association, and “Solidarity in elections” Association [Kowalczyk 2016: 140]. First of all, PO is a center party, it supports social market economy, and in matters of faith it tries to be above religion. For this reason, on the international arena, PO is often treated as Polish Christian Democracy. However, it is worth emphasizing that this is a grouping that belongs to the family of liberal parties. The liberals forming the Civic Platform party stated, however, that since 90% of Poles declare the Catholic religion, it is worth adjusting, to some extent, their program to them [Kowalczyk 2016: 129]. Moreover, in the election of 2007, Civic Platform appealed to the idea of the so-called economic miracle, which was borrowed from the German economic miracle – *Wirtschaftswunder* – a term for an operation that was carried out in German economy in 1948 under the leadership of the Christian democratic Minister of Finance, Ludwig Erhard. In the programme of PO regarding the “economic miracle”, Donald Tusk wrote:

I and the entire Civic Platform, are ready to talk and deal with anyone who joins the plan of great building, who understands that today the time has come for the Polish economic miracle. An introduction to this talk about Poland is this program: the proposal of Civic Platform concerned what needs to be done for there to be an economic miracle in Poland.

On the one hand, Civic Platform was against the enforcement of religious norms by the state, and on the other hand, it did not agree to their violation. In this way, the Civic Platform party tried to fulfill the task of a wide center party [Kowalczyk 2016: 141–142].

In addition to PiS and PO, the Polish People’s Party (PSL) also often gets the name of a Christian democratic party. In its name it has the adjective “people’s”, it is worth recalling that Christian democracy often described itself as the party of the people. Christian democratic parties conceive of themselves as popular or people’s

parties in a specific ideological, anti-liberal sense [Hanley 1994: 33]. It should be emphasized that the Polish People's Party "adapted only the ideas of neo-agrarianism and social Catholicism, at the same time, setting aside the solely religious motivation" [Kowalczyk 2016: 181]. In an interview from 2013, the then chairman of PSL, Janusz Piechociński, planned to create a new Christian democratic party together with the group *Polska Jest Najważniejsza* (PJN):

I just want to show that Paweł Kowal's environment focuses today not on conflict, not on gadgets, but on defining the problems of Polish politics. And that is why it is a valuable partner in my concept of building a new Christian democracy around PSL, a broad people's-Christian movement, which would not be affected by the pathologies of today's various Polish right-wings. We could create an alternative for the parties to the right of PSL, which destroy Polish politics with the culture of conflict, the abuse of language insulting opponents or some social groups. And in addition, these pathologies occur not only on the right. [Piechociński 2013a]

The economic program of PSL unfortunately has no reference to the Christian-democratic concept of the social market economy, we are dealing with neo-liberalism, Piechociński himself claimed that "If I had to define my position on socio-economic matters, I'd say that I'm reformed in my response to the challenges of new Keynesian globalization" [Piechociński 2013a]. In terms of the world outlook of the new Polish Christian democracy, Piechociński said that "in Europe, there are very different Christian democracies when it comes to our choice of morality, then [...] we certainly do not see the possibility of building an alternative to marriage and the family in Polish law" [Piechociński 2013b].

So far I have located three refutations of the thesis of distinctiveness. The first argument holds that Christian democracy is no more than a variety of conservatism, one that perhaps pays slightly more attention to religious matters and issues of morality. The second claim is that Christian democracy lacks distinctiveness because it is fundamentally a movement of the center (or the middle). The third and related contention is that the specificity of Christian democracy is thwarted by its being enshrined in catch-all parties. Christian democracy is usually interpreted as being simply a variant of conservatism or located on the centre-right [Hanley 1994: 31–32].

Some researchers say that Christian democracy is distinct from its competitors by virtue of its specific model of social and economic policy and because religion accords the movement an unparalleled opportunity to adapt to changing circumstances.

The analysis of the programmes of PiS, PO and PSL shows that none of these parties are Christian democracies. Moreover, none of the main Polish right-wing or center-right parties currently operating in Poland has sought to profile itself self-consciously as Christian democratic [Bale, Szczerbiak 2008: 485]. The paradox of the persisting attractiveness of Christian democracy in an increasingly secular world lies in [Hanley 1994: 42]:

- The increasing pressure of political competition in the post-war era was affected, among other things, by the ongoing secularization that moderated significant religious cleavages within societies;
- The transformation of the social structure presents parties with a necessity to adapt to maintain their electoral strength;
- Christian democracy is still a political movement with an unparalleled ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Contemporary Christian democrats do not compete for a tight connection of religion and state; on the contrary, they accept the separation of Church and state. Some of the Christian democrats also support divorce, the legalization of abortion and formal relationships between persons of the same sex. The thesis can be put forward that Christian democrats will try to match their programme so that it is attractive for every person, even the atheist. In fact, even now it is difficult to indicate large programme differences between Europarties, e.g. the European People's Party and the Party of European Socialists.

CONCLUSIONS

Christian democratic parties have long been distinctive political actors in terms of their religiously inspired ideology (with respect to issues of Christian values and private morality, their social concern and their pro-European integration stance), cross-class (electoral), appeal and alliances and the politics of mediation [Kersbergen 2008: 262]. As a result of socio-political changes in Poland, the Church began to lose its socio-moral prestige. However, this should not be considered in the negative issues because it is typical of democratic societies and developed countries. The position of the Church should be seen as part of a pluralist society [Piwowarski 1993: 9]. The Second Vatican Council defined the role of the Catholic Church, which is to fulfill a religious mission, not a political one. Of course, this issue relates only to the clergy, because Catholics have the right to participate actively in political life. The Catholic Church, however, has the right to assess the programmes of political parties, prohibit voting for the parties that proclaim programmes incompatible with Christian values, and encourage participation in elections [Piwowarski 1993: 12]. In the Polish People's Republic, the Catholic Church held various substitute functions in society. It represented citizens in their relations with public authorities, it sparked a sense of national identity. The political transformation deprived the Church of these functions. After all, the Polish clergy very quickly realized that it must reform the public sphere of influence. Measures were then taken to increase the activity of lay people and organizations of various Catholic associations [Mazurkiewicz 2000: 167–168].

Of all the NGOs, approx. 75% are members of movements and religious communities. The situation is similar with regard to the laity, which often comes down to participants of a variety of movements or religious communities. Throughout

Poland there are many different forms of religious activities in which the laity participates. However, from the standpoint of the number of people who belong to such groups, there are not so many of them. Some researchers suggest that the reason for this is historical nature. Because for years, even taking into account the period of the communist regime, the cooperation of the laity with the clergy was “around the Church”, and not within it [Królikowska 2010: 69]. During the communist times, the social dimension of the Church’s activity was primarily the struggle for human freedom. Today, the Church must change the system of actions; today, it should primarily invest in the human, beginning from school catechesis, through University Chaplaincy Centers, ending with entrepreneurs and employees [Jarecki 2001: 4]. In its actions, “the Church should not enter into any arrangements but always be guided by justice. Even if we lose in this world, then in the social and moral dimension we will win” [Jarecki 2001: 11].

Today, “democracy” is an attractive word, at least in the Western world. However, it should be remembered that the universal importance of democracy does not simultaneously extend to Christianity. It seems that today, democracy is superior to Christianity in terms of public recognition, previously it was just the opposite. It was only after the Second World War that democracy was appreciated as a common good [Näf 2005: 5–7]. Especially in the last century, Christianity and democracy have found each other, an example of which was the creation of first, the Christian democratic movement, then, mass Christian-democratic parties and, finally, international Christian democratic organizations. Undoubtedly, an expression of the great strength of the Christian democratic movement was the fact that in the past, to the present day, it has been able to function without a shaped ideology, at the same time, not losing in its content and ability to act. The Christian-democratic policy means first of all attention to the human being and finding solutions to contemporary problems in the spirit of love towards one’s neighbor. It should be noted, however, that in a number of important social issues, Christian democracy does not differ significantly from other political families. Over time, in the economic, social and international policy, there was a gradual, clear convergence between Christian democracy and liberals and conservatives. For this reason, with the values that Christian democracy preaches, everyone can basically identify, not necessarily a believer. Christian democracy seeks to integrate society in this way, where class antagonisms would disappear and sees European integration in the same way.

The age of Christian democracy in Europe has ended. The political parties that use its name and owe loyalty to its past for the most part have not disappeared and show few signs of doing so in the foreseeable future. The current social democratic quasi-hegemony in the European politics will prove transient, and new opportunities will present themselves for Christian democratic parties to regain the political initiative, both in the European Union and in the new (or restored) democracies farther east [Conway 2003: 43].

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