



Ewelina KANCIK-KOŁTUN 

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Lublin, Poland

Michał WALLNER 

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Lublin, Poland

Marta MICHALCZUK-WLIZŁO 

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Lublin, Poland

The Attitude of New Political Parties in Poland towards Religion and the Catholic Church Based on the Example of Left-Wing Parties*

Stanowisko nowych partii politycznych w Polsce wobec religii i Kościoła katolickiego na przykładzie partii lewicowych

• Abstract •

In recent years, the issue of the relationships between the state and the Catholic Church has been increasingly present in public discourse in Poland. New political parties have become embroiled in the debate, taking diverse stances. The paper discusses the attitude of new political parties in Poland towards religion and the Catholic Church, using three groupings as examples: the Palikot Movement [Ruch Palikota], Robert Biedron's Spring [Wiosna Roberta Biedronia] and the Together Party [Partia Razem]. The authors, using

• Abstrakt •

W ostatnich latach problematyka relacji państwo–Kościół katolicki jest coraz bardziej obecna w dyskursie publicznym w Polsce. Nowe partie polityczne biorą w nim udział i prezentują swoje zróżnicowane stanowiska. W artykule przedstawiony został stosunek nowych partii politycznych w Polsce do religii i Kościoła katolickiego na przykładzie trzech ugrupowań: Ruchu Palikota, Wiosny Roberta Biedronia oraz Partii Razem. Autorzy, wykorzystując jako metodę badawczą analizę treści, dokonali przeglądu programów partii oraz

* The article is the result of international research project no. PPN/BCZ/2019/1/00012, entitled: *New Political Parties in the Party System of Poland and Czech Republic*, funded by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and carried out by Poland and Czech Republic.

content analysis as the research method, reviewed the party policies and media statements made by politicians on the topic. The aim of the article is to investigate the positions taken by selected political parties towards religion and the Catholic Church and to verify the hypothesis that the new left-wing parties advocate a strict separation of church and state.

Keywords: new political parties; left-wing parties; religion; Catholic Church

wypowiedzi medialnych polityków dotyczących tytułowych kwestii. Celem artykułu jest analiza stanowisk wybranych partii politycznych wobec religii i Kościoła katolickiego oraz weryfikacja hipotezy, że nowe partie lewicowe postulują ścisły rozdział Kościoła od państwa.

Słowa kluczowe: nowe partie polityczne; partie lewicowe; religia; Kościół katolicki

Introduction

The relationship between the state, on the one hand, and churches and other religious associations on the other, especially between the state and the Catholic Church, is one of the more heated topics in public discourse. It grows in importance particularly during the election period, when political parties and their leaders make declarations and present their positions during their campaigns. At that time, the media devote attention to new political parties whose promises are yet to be disclosed.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the stances of chosen new political parties in Poland towards religion and the Catholic Church. The authors considered their ideological values, the model of state-church relations they advocate, how they perceive the issue of religiosity and secularity, and their stand on abortion. The research focused on political actors considered to be new political parties. The literature contains many definitions of what a new political party is (Wojtasik, 2012, p. 160). One was proposed by Peter Mair (1999, pp. 216–217), who associated the inception of new parties with one of the following situations: the merger of political groups, internal party divisions and splits, the transformation of groups and the creation of a new party. When selecting parties for this study, the number of parliamentary seats they won in elections was taken into account. The analysis covers relevant parties – i.e., ones that managed to secure parliamentary representation. At the same time, we were interested in parties with a left-wing orientation (at least in the axiological dimension) (Sokół, 2003, p. 54). Ultimately, the following groupings were chosen: the Palikot Movement [Ruch Palikota], Robert Biedron's Spring [Wiosna Roberta Biedronia], and the Together Party [Partia Razem].

In order to address the issue in question, party programmes, stances and declarations in the media were examined. Party policies are the assumptions that serve to define a party's identity, specify the system underpinning its most crucial values,

and formulate the party's goals, principles and plans of action (Potocka-Hoser & Polkowska, 1993, p. 193). The authors' aim is not to polemicise against the stands taken by parties or politicians (or at least this is not the main objective), but to present various issues connected with the relationships between the state and the church in the programmes of the new political parties. To achieve their objectives, the authors used a systematic method and comparative analysis.

Palikot Movement

From the beginning of his political activity, Janusz Palikot has evoked controversy and attracted public attention. In June 2005, he became a member of the Civic Platform and then was twice elected to the Sejm from the party's slates.¹ In September 2010, Palikot declared the formation of his own party, which was followed by the organisation of the Palikot Support Movement Congress in October 2010, and the registration of the "Palikot Movement" party.

The group presented its programme entitled "The Modern State", in which it unequivocally advocated the separation of state and church, and considered the existing norms to be the reason for the incomprehensibly privileged position of the Catholic Church at the expense of the constitutional principle of the secularity of the state. The postulated separation of the altar from the throne was to take place through the liquidation of the Church's financing from the state budget (including the abolishment of the Ecclesiastical Fund), termination of payment for religion lessons from the budget, the return of religious classes to churches and Sunday schools, the revocation of the decision of the Property Commission, non-participation of clergy in secular ceremonies, or burdening the clergy with standard taxation (Program Nowoczesne Państwo, 2012). Also in worldview-related matters, the promoted values contradicted those which the Catholic Church professes. There were demands for the legalisation of civil partnerships, liberalisation of the abortion act, state funding of in vitro fertilisation and free universal access to contraception (Wasiuta, 2015, p. 169).

The Palikot Movement, taking an unequivocal² stance on essential but controversial worldview-related issues, with a coherent media message, has become an

¹ The second time was in 2007.

² Janusz Palikot was criticised for radically changing his views from strongly conservative to very left-wing and for publishing the conservative magazine *Ozon*, cf. e.g.: *Palikot wyznaje: Wstydzę się okładki "Ozonu" z "zakazem pedałowania"*.

attractive alternative on the Polish political scene. It mainly attracted young, well-educated³ city dwellers.⁴ Surveys conducted by CBOS [Institute for Public Opinion Research] before the parliamentary elections of October 9, 2011 clearly indicated two characteristics of the electorate of the Palikot Movement: age and participation in religious practices (CBOS, 2011). Support for the party was declared by 21% of the respondents under the age of 25 and those who did not attend religious practices at all (20%) or attended religious worship a few times a year (17%). Among the respondents who attended religious practices several times a week, nobody declared their intention to vote for Janusz Palikot's party (CBOS, 2011). In the parliamentary elections, the Palikot Movement won 40 seats in the Sejm and came third.

Anti-clericalism and the need for a complete separation of the state from the Catholic Church resounded not only in the policy paper, but also in other statements and actual actions taken by the leader and other members of the party. Janusz Palikot demanded that the then Speaker of the Sejm, Grzegorz Schetyna, remove the cross from the Sejm's Assembly Room (Gość.pl, 2011), and party members tabled amendments, most of which concerned the Ecclesiastical Fund, to the Budget Act debated at the end of December 2012. On the radio, Janusz Palikot arbitrarily stated that the Catholic Church in Poland would be forced to restructure its assets as in other countries, and he claimed that the tabled amendments would be the first step towards this goal, while the Palikot Movement would continue to try to force changes in the functioning of the Catholic Church (Polish Radio, 2012). In May 2012, the Palikot Movement initiated the "Week of Apostasy", at the end of which Janusz Palikot read out an act of apostasy under the windows of the Bishop's Curia in Kraków and nailed the text on the door of the Basilica of Franciscan Fathers.⁵ In his opinion, "the Church in Poland is marked by incredible financial greed, an inability to cleanse itself ethically or morally, and it is like a political party in character. So the extreme materialism, the ethical decline, the partisanship of the Church mean that I cannot be in this Church" (Dziennik.pl, 2012). In November 2012, the Palikot Movement submitted to the Sejm a bill on apostasy, according to which any member of the Church could withdraw from this institution by handing in an appropriate declaration to a parish representative. Presenting the bill, Roman Kotliński, an MP of the Palikot Movement, emphasised that "one such fundamental right must be

³ 13% held a university degree and 10% had completed secondary education.

⁴ 38% of the respondents declaring to have participated in the 2011 elections and to have voted for the Palikot Movement lived in cities of various sizes, mostly (23%) in those with more than 100,000 inhabitants.

⁵ An act of apostasy thus performed is invalid as not complying with the regulations of the Code of Canon Law.

the right to freedom of conscience, as well as the right to join and leave religious associations and churches” (*RP przygotował projekt...*, 2012).

The group built on its opponents’ lack of clarity and weaknesses, and became a challenge to the Catholic Church, leading to inevitable confrontation. The support obtained in the parliamentary elections by the Palikot Movement was also a signal sent to the Church by society (cf. Dudkiewicz, 2012). On October 5–6, 2013, at an extraordinary congress, the Palikot Movement was transformed into the Your Movement [Twój Ruch].

Robert Biedroń’s Spring

The ephemeral left-leaning (because not classically left-wing) party “Robert Biedroń’s Spring” has, since its inception, taken a clear position on the issue of state-church relations.⁶ Already during the party’s founding convention at Warsaw’s Torwar Hall, on February 3, 2019, the leader of the new group, Robert Biedroń, presented a number of party demands for confessional relations in the state. It is worth quoting his statement *in extenso*: “The Catholic Church in Poland has more land than anyone else except the State Treasury. There is therefore no reason whatsoever for this institution to receive any allowances or benefits. A priest in an average parish in Poland pays around PLN 200 in tax, so several times less than his parishioner in the same town who runs a hairdresser’s salon or a car repair shop. Let’s put an end to these privileges! Let’s abolish the Ecclesiastical Fund and let’s tax offertory! So that we are all equal. We will withdraw religious lessons from schools and stop their funding. And the culmination of this will be the renegotiation of the Concordat! Yes! Yes! We will do it boldly. We will do what politicians in Poland lacked the courage to do after 1989. Because when we say we will not kneel before the bishops, we will not! Because unlike other politicians we have never knelt before them” (*Wiosna Biedronia...*, 2019).

The image of the party emerging from this statement is that of a grouping that is not only secular, but also populist and anti-clerical. In its aggressive anti-church

⁶ Formally, the party was registered in June 2018 under the name “I Love Poland”. In December of the same year, an application was submitted to the Regional Court in Warsaw to introduce changes to the register of political parties, including, among others, a change of the party’s existing name to “Wiosna” [Spring]. Shortly afterwards, in January 2019, another letter was filed with the court requesting that the party’s name be changed again, this time to “Wiosna Roberta Biedronia” [Robert Biedroń’s Spring] (abbreviated “Wiosna” [Spring]). On February 11, 2019, the court decided to enter the name in the register of political parties (Stankiewicz, 2018; Ruszkiewicz, 2019).

rhetoric, the Spring resembled earlier political initiatives, especially the Palikot Movement (later Your Movement – Twój Ruch), with which, by the way, Robert Biedroń was formerly associated (Nowakowska & Wielowieyska, 2013; Wasiuta, 2015). It is also typical that the issue of religious relationships in the state was largely reduced, by the leader of the Spring, to the state's relations with only one religious community – the Catholic Church, although of course the implementation of some of the party's demands, such as the abolition of the Ecclesiastical Fund or the removal of religious education from schools, would also affect other churches and religious associations with a regulated legal situation. The Catholic Church was presented by Biedroń as a powerful institution, enjoying undue privileges and exerting an overwhelming influence on political life in Poland. The former mayor of Słupsk called for a radical remodelling of the relationship between the state and the church, which would result in a far-reaching separation of the two institutions. This purpose was to be achieved, among others, by the abolition of the Ecclesiastical Fund, taxation of the Church revenues collected during mass, liquidation of publicly funded religious lessons and a significant modification of the Concordat (Suszek, 2021, p. 92).

The same slogans that resounded during the convention in Torwar were then repeated in the party's programme (in slightly different wording). "Biedroń's Deal: The New Deal for Poland", also known as the "policy booklet", is a 27-page document that can be divided into several main parts (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). It begins with an introduction, which is a message addressed by the party leader to its supporters and potential voters. Then comes a brief diagnosis of the socio-political situation in Poland ("Poland: As It Is"), and a succinct presentation of the party's election promises ("Poland: It's Time for a Change!"). Part four of the document is devoted to the axiology of the Spring. Afterwards, the programme authors return to discussing their election promises, but this time in more detail. They also organise the election slogans, dividing them into three sections: 1) "A Person Comes First", 2) "A Community of Us All", and 3) "A State I Trust". The last two parts of the document address the issue of financing the electoral promises and Robert Biedroń's curriculum vitae, respectively.

Some mention of the Church already appears in the introduction to the "policy booklet". Robert Biedroń assures the reader that: "It is possible to exercise secular power without constantly pleasing the Church" (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). This thought is developed further in the "substantive" part of the document, in the section "A State I Trust". Here we find the symptomatically titled section "Separation of State and Church", which reads: "The state should finally sort out its relationship with the church. The Catholic Church is the second largest landowner in Poland

after the State Treasury. There is no reason for privileged treatment of its finances. We will withdraw religion from schools and put the money we save into education and health protection. We will do away with the Ecclesiastical Fund and include priests in the universal pension scheme. We will tax the clergy just like all citizens. To this end, we will proceed with the renegotiation of the Concordat” (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.).

It should be emphasised that these demands were neither something new nor original in Polish politics. The problem of the Ecclesiastical Fund, for example, has been cropping up in the public debate in Poland with varying degrees of intensity since 1989. “From time to time, different sides of the political scene raise voices for or against its abolition”, notes one researcher (Tyrakowski, 2009, p. 281). The issue of the discontinuation of public funding for religious lessons was nothing new either. Both of these demands appeared, for instance, in the bill on a secular state, which was publicly presented a few weeks before the founding convention of the Spring by Barbara Nowacka, on behalf of the Polish Initiative association (later transformed into a political party of the same name) (Dyda, 2019). Moreover, the radical nature of the political agenda of Spring was that in place of the institutions being abolished, essentially nothing was proposed in return. The rescission of the regulations on the Ecclesiastical Fund would not solve the problem of state financing (or rather co-financing) the clergy’s social insurance, because – with regard to the Catholic Church – the Concordat obliges the Polish state and competent ecclesiastical bodies to work out new solutions in this respect (Concordat, Article 22 sections 2–3). For this reason, the authors of Spring’s political programme put forward a conclusion both logical and radical – since the Concordat imposes a limitation on the state authorities as to the form of financial support for the Catholic Church (and, in practice, also for other churches and religious associations, as they have equal rights under Article 25 section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997), this concordat should be renegotiated.

Interesting from the point of view of political marketing is the use of certain eristic tricks in the Spring policy document. In order to lend credibility to their programme, the authors of “Biedroń’s Deal”: a) invoke the opinions of “ordinary citizens”, b) rely on the authority of “experts”.⁷ Regarding the section “Separation of State and Church”, the position of “ordinary citizens” is represented by 57-year-old Tomasz from Tarnowskie Góry, who says: “I wish this country was not ruled by a priest. So that Poland would be Poland, not Rydzkoland [Tadeusz Rydzyk is an

⁷ The first eristic technique is nothing more than an *argumentum ad populum*, while the second exemplifies *argumentum ad verecundiam*.

influential Polish priest – trans.] (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). The role of “expert”, on the other hand, was played by Krzysztof Śmiszek, PhD, later a member of the Polish Sejm on behalf of the Spring, presented in the “policy booklet” as a “lawyer, expert on justice”. He states that: “The secular state is the basis of democracy and the democratic rule of law” (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). Incidentally, this raises the question as to whether the Spring’s expert would count formally confessional states, such as, e.g., Denmark or Greece, among democracies.

In the “agenda booklet”, Słupsk under the mayoralty of Robert Biedroń is presented as a model solution for the arrangement of state-church relations. “In Słupsk, city celebrations were secular”, boast the programme’s authors (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). The authors of “Biedroń’s Deal” raise the issue of confessional relations in the state in the penultimate document’s section entitled “How Do We Finance It?” as well. They estimate that the separation of state and church will add three billion zlotys to the budget (*Umowa Biedronia...*, n.d.). However, it is not clear how this amount has been calculated; no detailed information about this and the methodology of the estimate has been provided. Besides, the other sums quoted in the financial section of the Spring’s programme are also quite questionable.⁸

Only a few months after the founding convention of Spring, the party’s operating formula changed. While the Spring party stood for election to the European Parliament of May 26, 2019 independently, it decided to run jointly with the Democratic Left Alliance and the Left Together in the election to the Sejm and the Senate held on October 13 of the same year. Other parties and left-wing organisations later joined the agreement. No formal electoral coalition was created in order to avoid the 8 per cent electoral threshold, obligatory for coalition electoral committees in the Sejm elections. The Spring activists ran as candidates from the slates of the Electoral Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance (hereinafter: EC SLD).

The electoral alliance with the Democratic Left Alliance and others did not fundamentally affect the vision of state-church relations in the political programme of Spring.⁹ The coalition’s postulates were presented in the policy paper of EC SLD

⁸ One columnist commented on this as follows: “[...] the enumerations are extremely vague, especially in view of the fact that the remaining few dozen pages of the booklet are promise on promise. Besides, there are plenty of objections even to these calculations [...] Biedroń and his people have treated the issue of funding very lightly, not to say recklessly” (Rogojasz, 2019).

⁹ Taking an overall look at the programme of Spring, one may notice a shift in emphasis after the party entering into a coalition with the SLD and Left Together. Namely, it moved away from mainly worldview demands to a more comprehensive electoral offer covering also social and economic issues. As Arkadiusz Suszek notes, “after the formation of the electoral coalition, the Spring began to change the course it had taken earlier. It became open to demands classically attributed to the left, by placing greater emphasis on social and economic ideas in connection with gaining seats on the SLD slate. The

entitled “Poland of Tomorrow: The Main Postulates of the Left” (*Polska jutra...*, n.d.). Like “Biedroń’s Deal”, the EC SLD’s policy paper is relatively short (only 19 pages) and does not include a table of contents. However, it has been clearly divided into four main sections: “Cooperation”, “Community”, “Freedom”, and “Budget 2020”.¹⁰ The issue of state-church relations that interests us appears primarily in the section “Freedom”. It is also mentioned in the last section entitled “Budget 2020”.

The position of the Catholic Church and other churches and religious associations in the state comes to the fore in the “Freedom” section. This is because the first point raised here is a “Secular State”. Let us recall its content. “We will introduce cash registers for priests. We will fairly tax the Church. We will oblige churches to disclose income on the same basis as NGOs. Ultimately, we will abolish the tax privileges of all churches and religious associations. [...] In 2018, the state’s share in the Ecclesiastical Fund took a record of PLN 156 million. In the current economic environment and following the completion of the work of the Property Commission, there is no justification for the continued functioning of this institution. We will remove this item from the budget. [...] We will withdraw religion classes from schools and the money thus saved will be used to provide additional English language tuition. We will abolish the conscience clause. We will ensure that medical services and products are fully accessible regardless of the beliefs of doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists. No public establishment, regardless of its type, will be allowed to restrict services by invoking the conscience clause” (*Polska jutra...*, n.d., p. 15).

As can be seen, EC SLD’s policy paper upholds the main demands of the Spring party regarding state-church relations. It differs from the original ideas of Biedroń and his colleagues basically in the details only. The “Secular State” item in the SLD’s programme is undoubtedly more specific than the relevant parts of the “Biedroń’s Deal”.¹¹ It also breaks with the somewhat obsessive focus on only one religious

party took over, as it were, the Alliance’s programme, which can be described as being fully responsive to the classic left-wing voter. A certain programmatic shift was also evident in the media statements of Robert Biedroń. He stressed the ideological nature of the coalition and thus of his own party, and was more willing to address left-wing economic and fiscal demands” (Suszek, 2021, pp. 92–93).

¹⁰ “Each of the listed extracts contains bulleted policy issues. ‘Cooperation’ covers the matters related to climate, environment, agriculture, efficient state, development, labour. ‘Community’ addresses: health, education, housing, family, transport, and social policy. The section on freedom discusses the secular state, women’s rights, equal rights, and the rule of law. The final section of the Left’s election programme was intended by the authors to answer the question of how to finance its election promises, and includes a one-page table listing the proposed changes to the 2020 budget” (du Vall, 2021, p. 107).

¹¹ Slightly more detailed financial calculations are also shown in the “Budget 2020” section.

community (the Catholic Church) and notes the presence of other churches and religious associations. In addition, it more clearly emphasises the need for abolition of the so-called conscience clause (this postulate resounded during the founding convention of Spring, but it is no longer included in “Biedroń’s Deal”) (Bartkiewicz & Malinowski, 2019).

In the 2019 parliamentary election, the Electoral Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance won 12.56% of the valid votes, which translated into 49 seats in the Sejm. In the Senate, on the other hand, the EC SLD won two seats. The share of Spring representatives in this group was significant: Biedroń’s party gained 19 seats in the Sejm and one in the Senate. MPs elected from SLD slates formed the Coalition Parliamentary Club of the Left (Together, Democratic Left Alliance, Robert Biedroń’s Spring). This club seeks to implement the programme demands of Spring concerning state-church relationships. In June 2020, a group of Left-wing MPs submitted a bill on the disclosure of revenues of churches and religious associations and abolition of their financial privileges, i.e., among other things, liquidation of the Ecclesiastical Fund (*Projekty ustaw Koalicyjnego Klubu Parlamentarnego Lewicy...*, 2020). At present, the bill has been put on the back burner – it has not yet been assigned a number and has not been referred for its first reading (*Wniesione projekty ustaw...*, 2022). In the meantime, in June 2021, the General Assembly of Spring decided to dissolve the party, and in October of the same year, a unification congress took place, during which ex-members of the SLD and Biedroń’s party formed the New Left. This ended the relatively short life of Spring as an independent political entity.

Together

In the electoral programme of the left-wing Together Party [Partia Razem], abbreviated to Together [Razem], founded in 2015, no references to the relationship between state-church, religion or the secularity of the state can be found. However, its position is known thanks to media appearances, mainly by Adrian Zandberg, and information on the party’s website. In 2015, the Together Party championed, in the media, the abolition of state budget financing for religion education, the liberalisation of the abortion law, as well as the reimbursement of universally

According to the table there, the “secular state” package was expected to generate revenues of PLN 700 million and savings of PLN 2.3 billion. The EC SLD’s policy paper therefore uses the amount previously declared in “Biedroń’s Deal”, i.e., three billion zlotys, but breaks it down into two separate items (*Polska jutra...*, n.d., p. 19).

available contraception and in vitro fertilisation. The party's representatives have devoted much attention to these issues by presenting their position on the "Secular State" subpage. It is divided into the following sections: introduction, Concordat, secular education, financing of religious associations, Article 196 of the Polish Penal Code, impartiality of public institutions, conscience clause, churches and religious associations in the public space. The introduction illustrates the idea of the secularity of the state as understood by the party: "[...] only a modern secular state guarantees worldview freedom for all citizens [...]. A secular state provides space for the expression of one's religious and non-religious views, gives citizens the right not to disclose their outlook on life, guarantees freedom of speech and artistic expression and does not derive its legal norms from religious doctrines. The secular state takes care to ensure freedom from religion for its citizens just on the same basis as it gives them the right to participate in religious practices" (Razem, 2022). Regarding the Concordat, party representatives believe that the Constitution will have to be amended first, so that the Concordat can be done away with and replaced with an act. The party advocates secular education in which religious instruction classes should not be placed on an equal footing with other subjects of the curriculum, nor be graded. Consequently, the party is calling for an end to public funding for catechesis in kindergartens and schools at all levels. In the long term, the party demands "[...] complete removal of religious instruction from schools. In the Polish reality, it is difficult to reconcile teaching religion with ensuring secular education [...] exclusion of religious elements from school ceremonies and removal of religious symbols from school premises" (Razem, 2022). The party also proposes changes to higher education to fund secular courses exclusively and stop using religious symbols and religious rituals. As far as the financing of religious associations is concerned, the party believes that the remuneration of the clergy and their pension contributions should not be paid from public funds. In line with the demands of Together, "[...] religious associations should be financed from a voluntary tax, the amount of which would be a statutorily stipulated percentage of the tax base [...]" (Razem, 2022). As can be read further on, religious associations should support themselves by running their own businesses and by accepting voluntary contributions and donations from the faithful. At universities, on the other hand, only secular faculties would be funded, and religious associations ought to be financed on the same basis as other NGOs. The construction and maintenance of places of worship should not be funded either. The Together Party finds it necessary to remove Article 196 from the Polish Penal Code; it concerns offence against religious feelings. This is because, in the party's view, the legal regulation privileges the religious and discriminates against the religiously indifferent and non-believers. In the section on

the impartiality of public institutions, it is argued that the secular state cannot allow the following situations: “Public performance of religious rituals on the premises of public institutions or under their auspices; Display of symbols used by any religious association in public places (other than places of worship); Official participation of representatives of state and local government authorities and uniformed services in religious ceremonies; The inclusion of religious ceremonies in official programmes of state holidays or anniversaries of historical events, as well as those organised by state and local government authorities and public institutions” (Razem, 2022).

The Together Party advocates the abolition of the conscience clause for doctors, pharmacists, or teachers, among others, as it believes it violates civil rights and targets vulnerable people. The final part, devoted to churches and religious associations in public space, puts forward demands for religious symbols not to be placed in public spaces, such as schools, offices, hospitals, the Sejm or the Senate. Party representatives believe that religious symbols should not be displayed at public events organised by state or local authorities. All the demands posted on the website are pushed in the socio-political space by representatives of the party, which supports legal abortion, bills initiated by citizens and in vitro fertilisation.

Conclusion

The views on state-church relations communicated by the Palikot Movement, Robert Biedroń's Spring and the Together Party appear to be strongly convergent. The common denominator of these three parties is the demand to depart from the current model of religious relations in the state, which was set out in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997. Instead of the existing solutions – i.e., the secular state model characterised by a coordinated or friendly separation of church and state – a more rigid separation between the two is proposed. This would mean abandoning the concept of the relationship between the state and the church which was adopted at the Second Vatican Council and which provided inspiration for the framers of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland (*Gaudium et spes*, 1965). One of the pillars of this concept is the principle of cooperation between the state and the church for the common good of the people (Krukowski, 2000, p. 97). Instead, the implementation of Palikot's, Biedroń's or Zandberg's demands would bring Poland closer to a model of hostile separation *à la française*, in which there is essentially no room for cooperation between the state and the church. Moreover, according to the Together Party, there is a need to move away from the constitutional principle of shaping relations between the state and the Catholic Church on the

basis of an international agreement (Mojak, 2003, p. 112). In this way, the idea of a secular state without the Concordat is promoted (Krukowski, 2000, pp. 95–96).

Given the issue of state-church relations and the place occupied by religion in social life, one might be tempted to try to classify the parties of interest in a group of parties with a similar attitude. Taking into account the importance of Christian values in the parties' programmes, the evaluation of the Catholic Church's role in public life, the model of religious relationships, the vision of the desired axiological order, Krzysztof Kowalczyk distinguished five political orientations: (1) secular; (2) axiologically moderate; (3) appealing exclusively to Christian values; (4) quasi-religious; (5) not raising religious issues. Using the proposed typology, all the parties analysed in this paper should be categorised as having a secular orientation, as determined by "diverse ideological traditions; lack of reference to Christianity; separation of church and state (hostile separation); neutrality of the state in matters related to citizen's worldview; limitation of the role of the church to pastoral functions; critical assessment of the political involvement of the clergy; the right of the individual to decide about their worldview choices (including the right to abortion)" (Kowalczyk, 2015, p. 187). It is also worth noting that at one time or other left-wing parties (SdRP, SLD, UP), as well as the neoliberal KLD, favoured this option (Kowalczyk, 2015, p. 188).

References:

- Bartkiewicz, A., & Malinowski, P. (2019, February 3). *Robert Biedroń zakłada partię Wiosna. Przedstawiono postulaty*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art1505981-robot-biedron-zaklada-partie-wiosna-przedstawiono-postulaty>.
- CBOS. (2011). Research Communication, 2011 BS/149/2011. Warsaw, p. 4.
- Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland*, signed in Warsaw on 28 July 1993 (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] of 1998, No. 51, item 318).
- Dudkiewicz, I. (2012, February 6). *Kościół dziękuje za Palikota*. Retrieved from: <https://magazynkontakt.pl/kosciol-dziekuje-za-palikota>.
- du Vall, M. (2021). Religia, wolność wyznania, państwo świeckie w kampanii parlamentarnej 2019. In: P. Borowiec, & A. Tyszkiewicz (Eds.). *Kampania parlamentarna 2019 roku* (pp. 101–116). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Dyda, K. (2019, January 11). *Analiza zgodności z Konstytucją RP projektu ustawy o świeckim państwie przygotowanego przez Stowarzyszenie Inicjatywa Polska*. Retrieved from: <https://ordoiuris.pl/wolnosc-sumienia/analiza-zgodnosci-z-konstytucja-rp-projektu-ustawy-o-swieckim-panstwie>.
- Dziennik.pl. (2012, May 19). *Palikot jak Luter? Przybił dokument do drzwi kościoła*. Retrieved from: <https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/polityka/artykuly/391090,janusz-palikot-przybil-akt-apostazji-do-drzwi-kosciola-w-krakowie.html>.

- Gaudium et spes*. (1965). Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et spes". Retrieved from: <http://ptm.rel.pl/czytelnia/dokumenty/dokumenty-soborowe/sobor-watykanski-ii/141-konstytucja-duszpasterska-o-kosciele-w-swiecie-wspolczesnym-gaudium-et-spes.html#p141-1>.
- Gość.pl. (2011, October 12). *Palikot: Zdjąć krzyż w Sejmie*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gosc.pl/doc/984245.Palikot-Zdjac-krzyz-w-Sejmie>.
- Kowalczyk, K. (2015). Stanowiska polskich partii politycznych wobec religii i Kościoła. Propozycja typologii. *Studia Politicae Universitatis Silesiensis*, 15, 156–189.
- Krukowski, J. (2000). Konstytucyjny system relacji między Państwem a Kościołem katolickim oraz innymi Kościołami i związkami wyznaniowymi. In: R. Mojak (Ed.). *Ustrój konstytucyjny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (pp. 95–119). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Mair, P. (1999). New Political Parties in Established Party Systems: How Successful Are They? In: E. Beukel, K.K. Klausen, & P.E. Mouritzen (Eds.). *Elites, Parties and Democracy* (pp. 207–224). Odense: Odense University Press.
- Mojak, R. (2003). Zasada autonomii i wzajemnej niezależności oraz współdziałania w stosunkach między państwem a kościołami i innymi związkami wyznaniowymi. In: W. Skrzydło (Ed.). *Polskie prawo konstytucyjne* (pp. 111–114). Lublin: Oficyna Wydawnicza VERBA.
- Nowakowska, A., & Wielowieyska, D. (2013, July 16). *Posłowie uciekają od Palikota. Przez "bez-mózgi antyklerykalizm"*. Retrieved from: <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,14281407,poslowie-uciekaja-od-palikota-przez-bezmozgi-antyklerykalizm.html>.
- Polish Radio. (2012, December 12). *Palikot: będziemy wymuszać zmiany w Kościele*. Retrieved from: <https://www.polskieradio.pl/7/129/Artykul/743056,Palikot-bedziemy-wymuszac-zmiany-w-Kosciele>.
- Polska jutra – główne postulaty Lewicy*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 10, 2022 from: https://klub-lewica.org.pl/images/media/Program_Left.pdf.
- Potocka-Hoser, A., & Polkowska, A. (1993). Programy wyborcze jako forma politycznego oddziaływania. In: J. Reykowski (Ed.). *Wartości i postawy Polaków a zmiany systemowe. Szkice z psychologii politycznej* (pp. 193–233). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Psychologii PAN.
- Program Nowoczesne Państwo*. (2012). Retrieved January 24, 2022 from: http://old.polonia.nl/wp-content/uploads/RUCHPALIKOTA.pdf&usg=AOvVaw22z7tpw8Wt1EyxsoW_qQzV.
- Projekty ustaw Koalicyjnego Klubu Parlamentarnego Lewicy, November 2019 – August 2020. (2020). Retrieved from: https://klub-lewica.org.pl/images/dokumenty/lewica_ustawy_net.pdf.
- Rogojz, Ł. (2019, February 3). *Wiosna Roberta Biedronia. Polityczna złota rybka, której boją się rekiny*. Retrieved from: <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114884,24426851,wiosna-roberta-biedronia-polityczna-zlota-rybka-ktorej-boja.html>.
- RP przygotował projekt ustawy o apostazji*. (2012). Retrieved from: <https://deon.pl/swiat/wiadomosci-z-polski/rp-przygotowal-projekt-ustawy-o-apostazji,199029>.

- Ruszkiewicz, S. (2019, March 2). *Partia Biedronia zarejestrowana. Mamy informacje z sądu*. Retrieved from: <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/partia-biedronia-zarejestrowana-mamy-informacje-z-sadu-6355022017980033a>.
- Sokół, W. (2003). Klasyfikacja partii. In: W. Sokół, & M. Żmigrodzki (Eds.). *Współczesne partie i systemy partyjne. Zagadnienia teorii i praktyki politycznej* (pp. 29–64). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Stankiewicz, A. (2018, December 7). *Skrywana partia Biedronia*. Retrieved from: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/skrywana-partia-roberta-biedronia/3h7cr06>.
- Suszek, A. (2021). Wiosna jako przykład partii ad hoc. In: P. Borowiec, & A. Tyszkiewicz (Eds.). *Kampania parlamentarna 2019 roku* (pp. 81–100). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Tyrakowski, M. (2009). Prawnofinansowe aspekty funduszu kościelnego. *Studia Elckie*, 11, 281–293. Retrieved from: https://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media/files/Studia_Elckie/Studia_Elckie-r2009-t11/Studia_Elckie-r2009-t11-s281-293/Studia_Elckie-r2009-t11-s281-293.pdf.
- Umowa Biedronia. Nowa umowa dla Polski*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2021 from: <https://wiosnabiedronia.co.uk/program>.
- Wasiuta, M. (2015). Populizm Ruchu Palikota. *Athenaeum. Polskie Studia Politologiczne*, 45, 157–175. DOI: 10.15804/athena.2015.45.09.
- Wiosna Biedronia – Nowy Rozdział! 03.02.2019, Hala Torwar* [Video]. (2019). YouTube. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4DbowQGZ7A>.
- Wniesione projekty ustaw, którym jeszcze nie został nadany nr druku*. (2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/agent.xsp?symbol=PROJNOWEUST&NrKadencji=9&Kol=D&Typ=UST>.
- Wojtasik, W. (2012). Sukces Ruchu Palikota w świetle czynników możliwego sukcesu politycznego (Political Opportunity Structure). *Preferencje Polityczne. Postawy – Identyfikacje – Zachowania*, 3, 159–174.