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PRIMATE STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI'S *PRO MEMORIA* JOURNAL AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

Abstract: This article is a concise analysis of the value of Primate Stefan Wyszyński's *Pro memoria* as a historical source. It presents the most important facts concerning the hierarch's journal, and proceeds to present a comprehensive discussion of the topics which Wyszyński touched upon in his notes, and of his writing style. The summary indicates fields of research which could utilize *Pro memoria* to their benefit, and also recapitulates the potential importance of the journal for scholarly research into the history of Poland in the years 1949–81.

Key words: Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, *Pro memoria*, the Catholic Church, political-social reality.

Introduction

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński played a very important role in Polish twentieth-century history, one that went far beyond pastoral work and the typical functions of a hierarch of the Church, as his ministry as Primate of Poland coincided entirely with the period of Communist dictatorship. Even now, new books are being written — in at least three different fields of learning — about his life and work.¹ But despite their sheer number, we have not yet been given a complete, scholarly biography of Cardinal Wyszyński that would present his life story in a comprehensive context and appropriately depict the most important areas in which he was active.² Doubtless of key significance for understanding his role in Polish

¹ For the most recent list of the topical literature, see Rafał Łatka, Beata Mackiewicz and Dominik Zamiatała, *Prymas Stefan Wyszyński: Biografia*, Warsaw, 2020; Rafał Łatka and Paweł Skibiński, 'Stefan Wyszyński', in *Słownik biograficzny polskiego katolicyzmu społecznego*, ed. Rafał Łatka, Warsaw, 2020–, vol. 1, 2020, pp. 465–83.

² In spite of its length, this in-depth requirement has not been satisfied by Ewa

history are the entries comprising *Pro memoria* — a journal which he kept in the years 1948–81, that is throughout his entire primateship. They allow us to better understand his intentions, motivations, and reasoning underlying the decisions and actions which he took.

The present analysis focuses on a concise assessment of the import of *Pro memoria* as a historical source. The article is composed of four sections. The General Comments contain basic information about the Primate's diary. This is followed by an outline of the topical matters on which Cardinal Wyszyński centred his attention, illustrated with examples taken from his notes. The following part addresses itself to his writing style, while the final segment is an original summary that attempts to explain why *Pro memoria* could, or indeed even should, be considered a text of crucial significance for those researching the history of Poland in the twentieth century. The study makes use of both the manuscript and typescripts of *Pro memoria*, as well of course of those volumes that have already been published.

To date, only a single article contribution has been published which refers directly to the value of Cardinal Wyszyński's journal as a historical source. Its authors, Anna Migas and Jacek Żurek,³ have provided basic information about those of the Primate's entries that were known in 2008, and briefly described the nature of his notes based on examples taken from the years 1948–49 and 1952–53, to which they had access. Another scholar, Michał Sołomieniuk, has focused on the Cardinal's writings gathered in the Gniezno Archdiocesan Archives (hereinafter GAA), of which the journal obviously constitutes a very important part.⁴

General Comments

The manuscript of *Pro memoria* is located in GAA. The original notes have been placed in twenty-eight dossiers (each dossier usually covers one year of entries).⁵ Notes for the years 1971, 1972 and 1974 are extant only in manuscript form, although the reason for this state of affairs is not known. The documentation containing the entries also includes

K. Czaczkowska's biography — *Kardynał Wyszyński: Biografia*, Cracow, 2013 — which in places resembles more a newspaper report than a scholarly monograph.

³ Anna Migas and Jacek Żurek, 'Dzienniki prymasa Wyszyńskiego', *Glaukopis*, 11/12, 2007/08, pp. 470–81.

⁴ Michał Sołomieniuk, 'Spuścizna po prymasie Stefanie kardynale Wyszyńskim w Archiwum Archidiecezjalnym w Gnieźnie: Zawartość i stan opracowania', *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne*, 110, 2018, pp. 339–56.

⁵ The exception is the period of imprisonment. Jan Kopiec, 'Przedmowa', in Stefan Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, Warsaw, 2017–, vol. 1: 1948–1952, ed. Paweł Skibiński, 2017, p. XV; Sołomieniuk, 'Spuścizna po prymasie', pp. 341–42.

twenty-four inserts. The majority are in the files (sixteen) relating to the period of his imprisonment, and are mainly family letters (written primarily by Wyszyński's father) and communications from clergymen.⁶ Additional copies and typescripts of *Pro memoria* are in the possession of the Warsaw Archdiocesan Archives (hereinafter WAA) and the Archives of the Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Institute.

Two institutions — the Archdiocese of Gniezno and the Archdiocese of Warsaw — are the owners and curators of the texts. In 2016, a decision was taken to prepare one complete and critical edition of the Primate's notes. In all, six institutions are involved in its publication: the Archdiocese of Gniezno; the Archdiocese of Warsaw; the Institute of National Remembrance and the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University jointly as the publisher; the Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Institute; and, since 2019, the Museum of John Paul II and Primate Wyszyński. To date, ten volumes of Cardinal Wyszyński's journal have been printed, and these contain notes written in 1948–62 and 1965.⁷ In the years preceding the initiation of the project, two publications were issued with notes from 1948–53,⁸ as well as a selection devoted to the millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland.⁹ In addition, the entries from the period of imprisonment form an integral part of *Zapiski więzienne*,¹⁰ which has been reissued many times. At this point we should add that the Primate's journal for the years 1948–49 and 1952–53 (until 20 September)¹¹ was seized by the Security Service upon

⁶ Sołomieniuk, 'Spuścizna po prymasie', pp. 342–43.

⁷ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 2: 1953, ed. Ewa K. Czackowska, 2017; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 3: 1953–1956, ed. Iwona Czarcińska and Andrzej Gałka, 2018; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4: 1956–1957, ed. Michał Białkowski and Monika Wiśniewska, 2020; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 5: 1958, ed. Małgorzata Krupecka, 2018; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 6: 1959, ed. Grzegorz Łeszczczyński, 2020; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7: 1960, ed. Rafał Łatka, 2019; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 8: 1961, ed. Monika Wiśniewska, 2019; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 9: 1962, ed. Antoni Poniński, 2020; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 12: 1965, ed. Paweł Skibiński, 2021.

⁸ Stefan Wyszyński, *Pro memoria: Zapiski z lat 1948–1949 i 1952–1953*, ed. Małgorzata Bujnowska et al., Żabki, 2007.

⁹ Stefan Wyszyński, *Zapiski millenijne: Wybór z dziennika 'Pro memoria' z lat 1965–1967*, ed. Maria Okońska, Mirosława Plaskacz and Anna Rastawicka, Warsaw, 2001.

¹⁰ *Zapiski więzienne* is richer in content as, in addition to the notes included in *Pro memoria*, it also presents spiritual reflections that were not written down in the Primate's journals, and selected correspondence from the period of imprisonment. See, for example, Stefan Wyszyński, *Zapiski więzienne*, Warsaw, 2006. The first edition of *Zapiski* was issued in 1982 by the Pallotine publishing house Éditions du Dialogue. From the moment of imposition of martial law, this was one of the books most frequently published in samizdat, Iwona Czarcińska and Andrzej Gałka, 'Wstęp', in Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 3, p. XIV.

¹¹ The Primate's entries stop five days before his arrest. It is impossible to say

Cardinal Wyszyński's arrest during the night of 25–26 September 1953.¹² For this reason, the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (AIPN) only has a microfilm copy. The AIPN also contains Wyszyński's notes from a part of his period of internment (1953–55); these were transcribed in Stoczek Warmiński at the behest of the Security Service by the Primate's fellow-prisoner, Sister Maria Leonia Graczyk, who had been recruited by the authorities under the pseudonym 'Ptasińska'.¹³

Fragments of *Pro memoria* were printed in the journal *Znaki Czasu*, which was published in Vienna in the years 1986–93 by Andrzej Micewski, and in the Circular Letter of the Press Office of the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopate, which edited entries from 1952.¹⁴ The Primate's notes were also quoted, rather extensively, in a source edition concerning his participation in the Second Vatican Council.¹⁵ They can be found, too, in the writings of Peter Raina, and in particular in the multi-volume work which he conceived as an unconventional biography of the Cardinal. But while Raina cited them copiously, he failed to point out that many of the notes were incomplete.¹⁶ Moreover, the researcher did not mark the omissions that he had made in his own text, nor did he quote those of Wyszyński's entries which contradicted his own theses and assessments — which at times were somewhat bold and controversial. Other authors who made use of *Pro memoria* include Andrzej Micewski (when working on the first biography of the Primate, which was published in Paris in 1982),¹⁷ and Marian Piotr Romaniuk, who elaborated a four-volume calendar presenting the life of Cardinal Wyszyński.¹⁸

whether the hierarch had ceased writing at that time, or if the notes were lost or destroyed, Ewa Czackowska, 'Wstęp', in Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 2, p. IX.

¹² For a broader treatment of the Primate's arrest, see Jan Żaryn, 'Aresztowanie Prymasa Polski — okoliczności, przebieg, konsekwencje (1953–1956)', *Studia Prymasowskie*, 1, 2007, pp. 47–69.

¹³ Prymas. Pamiętniki Wyszyńskiego, AIPN 01283/99-103; Migas and Żurek, 'Dzienniki prymasa', p. 471. Regarding the co-operation of Sister Graczyk and another fellow-prisoner, Father Stanisław Skorodecki (agent 'Krystyna') with the Security Service, see Krzysztof Żebrowski, 'Źródła "Krystyna" i "Ptasińska" — najbliżsi współtowarzysze uwięzionego Prymasa', *Studia Prymasowskie*, 6, 2012, pp. 191–98; Jacek Żakowski, *Mroczne wnętrza: Uwięziony Prymas prywatnie w oczach współwięźniów i swojej siostry*, Warsaw, 2000.

¹⁴ *Pismo Okólne Episkopatu Polski*, 1987, 2; 1988, 1–2.

¹⁵ Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński Prymas Polski, ojciec Soboru Watykańskiego II (1962–1965): Wybór dokumentów, ed Stanisław Wilk and Anna Wójcik, Lublin, 2013.

¹⁶ The most recent edition of his work is Peter Raina, *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński: Prymas Tysiąclecia*, Wrocław, 2016.

¹⁷ Andrzej Micewski, *Kardynał Wyszyński, Prymas i mąż stanu*, Paris, 1982.

¹⁸ Marian Piotr Romaniuk, *Życie, twórczość i posługa Stefana Kardynała Wyszyńskiego Prymasa Tysiąclecia*, 4 vols, Warsaw, 1994–2002.

As has already been mentioned, the Primate's notes cover the years 1948–81. The first is dated 22 October 1948, and the last 12 May 1981. It is not known exactly what caused the hierarch to start writing the journal; however as Paweł Skibiński has proved, his decision was not connected with the assumption of new functions in the Church: those of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw.¹⁹ He took up his duties while still Bishop of Lublin, and insofar as concerns his not being aware that he would soon be advanced within the Church.²⁰ Paweł Skibiński, mentioned above, had this to add:

We cannot reliably explain why the notes ceased for a certain period in February 1949. And we know even less why they were resumed on 28 October 1951. From this date on, Cardinal Wyszyński made entries regularly right until his death. Neither are we cognizant of any events that could have resulted in the February 1949–October 1951 entries having become lost, assuming that they existed in the first place.²¹

Here we can only conjecture. It may be that they disappeared when the home of the Archbishops of Warsaw was searched during the arrest of the Primate and Bishop Antoni Baraniak.²² However we possess no data either proving or disproving this hypothesis.

The notes were kept daily, and any long interruptions were few and far between and can be explained by changes in the hierarch's activities, both forced (imprisonment) and natural (holidays, periods of sickness and convalescence — especially in 1977,²³ or a lack of time due to other pressing obligations). Wyszyński usually wrote in the evenings, at the end of his day's work, or — less frequently — in the mornings. The role of the notes, as Jan Kopiec has aptly observed, was to record current events and help the Primate organize his thoughts.²⁴ For my part, I would just like to add that Wyszyński probably also used them in later years to refresh his awareness of past happenings, meetings and the people he had encountered (this would explain why the names of the persons whom he had met or made references to are underlined in the

¹⁹ Paweł Skibiński, 'Wstęp', in Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, p. XXVII.

²⁰ *Pro memoria* outlines the circumstances of his appointment, Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, pp. 7–31.

²¹ Skibiński, 'Wstęp', p. XXVII.

²² Bishop Antoni Baraniak was arrested without Cardinal Wyszyński's knowledge. The Primate learned of the fact only in 1955. For a broader treatment of the bishop's detention, see Konrad Białecki et al., *Arcybiskup Antoni Baraniak 1904–1977*, Poznań and Warsaw, 2017, pp. 29–31.

²³ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1977, GAA.

²⁴ Kopiec, 'Przedmowa', p. XV.

manuscript, although there is some inconsistency in this regard).²⁵ Further, it would seem that he gradually realized that his journal could in the future become an important historical source, and that this led him to submit subsequent parts of the manuscript to GAA.²⁶ Doubtless the Primate did not record all of his activities in the journal. For example, only rarely and on the whole enigmatically did he write about priests who visited him from other countries of the Eastern bloc, and particularly from the Soviet Union.²⁷

The authenticity of the Primate's authorship is unquestioned. While the work contains few deletions, he would sometimes add comments to the body of the text in the margins. There are no signs of later changes that could have been made by Wyszyński himself, or of any interference by third persons. We do not know when exactly successive batches of notes were submitted to GAA. The entries are of varying length: some contain but a sentence, or only enumerate persons with whom Wyszyński had met, while others comprise a number of pages (this concerns in particular accounts of his travels to the Holy See, meetings with popes, and discussions with the highest representatives of the Polish Communist authorities).

We should also pay attention to the specificity of entries from certain periods of the Cardinal's life. Of greatest significance in this regard would be the period of imprisonment, when he wrote less frequently and less profusely.²⁸ At times the notes are more reflective in nature, although they contain references mainly to the conditions of solitary confinement, or to the behaviour of his guards and fellow-prisoners, Father Skorodecki and Sister Graczyk.²⁹ When compared to the other volumes of *Pro memoria*, the first volume is definitely atypical in that it is dominated by observations

²⁵ Małgorzata Krupecka, 'Wstęp', in Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 5, p. XII.

²⁶ The manuscripts were first rewritten on a typewriter, whereupon Wyszyński would hand over the originals to GAA in person. He wrote on this matter in *Pro memoria* on 28 March 1973, Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1973, entry from 28 March 1973, GAA.

²⁷ Most certainly, of decisive importance was a fear for their safety — as well as the necessity of ensuring that the assistance provided to the Church in other countries behind the Iron Curtain would be kept secret from the authorities.

²⁸ As the authors of the introduction to this volume have correctly observed: 'This was probably dictated by the situation in which the Primate found himself — by the monotony of prison life and the fear that his notes could fall into the wrong hands', Czarcńska and Galka, 'Wstęp', p. XV.

²⁹ Spiritual reflections from this period have been presented in Stefan Wyszyński's *Kalendarzyk łaski* (Warsaw, 2020), recently published by the Primate's Institute. See also *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński Prymas Polski w dokumentach aparatu bezpieczeństwa PRL (1953–1956)*, ed. Bogdan Piec, Warsaw, 2001; Wiesław Jan Wysocki, *Osaczenie Prymasa: Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński jako 'podopieczny' aparatu bezpieczeństwa w latach 1953–1956*, Warsaw, 2002.

concerning relations between the Church and state, and references to successive Communist aggressions targeting the clergy. In addition, it contains numerous general comments on the Communist system, which appear much less frequently in later years.³⁰ Highly distinct is the fourth tome, which comprises Cardinal Wyszyński's notes from the turn of 1957, when he wrote copiously about reordering the structures of the Church. And in a way that strove to make up for the time lost in prison he held numerous meetings with both clerics and laymen,³¹ His entries from 1966 display a preoccupation with the millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland (much space is devoted to in-depth reflections on solemnities organized by the Church).³² The notes from 1981, when the Cardinal was sick, were written less frequently and in a more concise style.³³

Topics Touched Upon in the Notes

In his notes, Wyszyński involved himself with a great many issues. The following topical blocks appear as the most important: the functioning of the Catholic Church in Poland, viewed from a very broad perspective; the activities of the universal church and the Holy See; the social-political reality of 'people's' Poland; the functioning of the Communist system; problems in the everyday life of Poles; and personal reflections. Not infrequently, one journal entry spans a number of topics.

1. The Functioning of the Catholic Church in Poland

For the Primate, the issue of the functioning of the Catholic Church in Poland was paramount. Accordingly, he devoted by far the most attention on it, and it invariably constitutes the main topic of his entries. Within this topical block, we can distinguish a number of key issues, among them the following: the central structures of the Polish Church — the Commission/Central Council of the Polish Episcopate and the Plenary Conference,³⁴ the archdioceses of Gniezno and Warsaw (which he

³⁰ These have been cited in part in Rafał Łatka, 'Czy Prymas Polski Stefan Wyszyński był antykomunistą?', in *Antykomunizm Polaków w XX wieku*, ed. Piotr Kardela and Karol Sacewicz, Białystok, 2019, pp. 569–92.

³¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4. See also Rafał Łatka, 'Prymas Stefan Wyszyński w okresie przełomu 1956–1957', *Saeculum Christianum*, 27, 2020, 2, pp. 207–18 (pp. 213–15).

³² Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1966, GAA.

³³ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1980–1981, GAA.

³⁴ Rafał Łatka, *Episkopat Polski wobec stosunków państwo-Kościół i rzeczywistości społeczno-politycznej PRL 1970–1989*, Warsaw, 2019, pp. 40–92.

administered personally);³⁵ the structures of the Church in the Western and Northern Polish Lands (especially in the years 1948–72, when he was their custodian appointed by the Holy See);³⁶ other dioceses; individual orders and their role in pastoral work;³⁷ the Holy See, particularly as regards the affairs of the Church in Poland; and lay Catholics, with a particular focus on those who were politically active. Finally, Cardinal Wyszyński wrote about his own pastoral and organizational work, devoting especial attention to the ‘Great Novena’ and the millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland. It should be added here that in addition to the leading issues listed above, the Primate involved himself in practically all aspects of the functioning of the Church. Consequently, we find notes of discussions which he held with Polish bishops (nearly all can be accounted for), lay priests (also from dioceses which the Primate did not administer), and monks and nuns, all of whom came forward with their problems, rightly considering him as the supreme head of the Church in Poland. The Primate’s closest collaborators — Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, Bishop Zygmunt Choromański, Bishop Bronisław Dąbrowski, Father Józef Glemp, Maria Okońska, Father Władysław Padacz and Cardinal Karol Wojtyła — are regularly mentioned in *Pro memoria*. The exception here is Bishop Michał Klepacz, who was strongly present in the Cardinal’s notes until 1956, while thereafter the number of references became sporadic.³⁸ It appears that

³⁵ The functioning of the Archdiocese of Gniezno in the Polish People’s Republic has finally been analysed in a monograph: Bartosz Kaliski, *Archidiecezja gnieźnieńska w czasach komunizmu 1945–1980*, Warsaw, 2012. But no comprehensive work has yet been written on the Archdiocese of Warsaw in the years 1945–89.

³⁶ For a broader treatment, see Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński *wobec Ziemi Zachodnich i Północnych oraz stosunków polsko-niemieckich: W 100-lecie urodzin Prymasa Tysiąclecia*, ed. Tadeusz Dzwonkowski and Czesław Osękowski, Warsaw and Poznań, 2001; Wojciech Kucharski, ‘Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne jako polska racja stanu w myśli i działaniach prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego w latach 1948–1972 (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem archidiecezji wrocławskiej)’, in *Prymas Wyszyński a Niepodległa: Naród — patriotyzm — państwo w nauczaniu Prymasa Tysiąclecia*, ed. Ewa K. Czaczkowska and Rafał Łatka, Warsaw, 2019, pp. 227–49.

³⁷ One of the Primate’s crucial achievements was the strengthening of co-operation between monastic orders and organizing the Agreement of Higher Superiors of Male Orders and Congregations and its female equivalent. See Krupecka, ‘Wstęp’, p. X. For a broader treatment of the collaboration between the Polish Episcopate and monastic orders in the Polish People’s Republic, see Dominik Zamiatąła, *Zakony męskie a episkopat w Polsce w latach 1945–1989*, Lublin, 2009.

³⁸ For a broader treatment of the activities of Bishop Klepacz, see Krzysztof Gruczyński, *Biskup Michał Klepacz 1893–1967*, Łódź, 1993; Ewelina Ślązak, ‘Uległy czy niezależny? Biskup Michał Klepacz w optyce aparatu bezpieczeństwa’, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 2020, 2, pp. 530–48.

this was because once the Primate had been released from prison, their approaches to the Communist authorities rapidly began to differ. One example of how Wyszyński viewed those from his inner circle is called for here, especially as it will show who in 1977 the Primate viewed as his successor:

Cardinal Wojtyła is getting ready to leave for Rome — I requested that the Holy Father be informed of the current state of my health. I foresaw that I would be unable to take part in the Synod. I reminded the Cardinal that I am 19 years his senior, and that may he therefore take good care of himself, so that after my passing he may persevere for at least as long as I myself following the death of the late Cardinal Hlond.³⁹

Wyszyński's diary entries provide us with an in-depth picture of the functioning of various bodies within the Polish Episcopate, of which the Commission/Central Council and the Plenary Conference were the most important, and a more general description of the workings of the Episcopate's less significant commissions and offices. In this context, it will be useful to cite three notes referring directly to the activities of the Episcopate, as they are an invaluable source for understanding how this institution operated in 'people's' Poland.⁴⁰ Referring to attempts made by the Communist authorities to blatantly recruit or otherwise intimidate clergymen into co-operation, the Primate informed the bishops how they should act:

It is not in the spirit of Church tradition for priests to become supernumeraries at public meetings and manifestations. [...] The bishops cannot approve of the clergy being rounded up for state-sponsored mass meetings and nationwide rallies without undermining their own authority. The priest serves the altar, the pulpit and the confessional — not the speaker's platform at rallies.⁴¹

One of the key entries that allows us to form our own opinion of the Primate's role in administering the Episcopate is that from 11 May 1957, in which he emphasized why he had not called to account the bishops (Bishop

³⁹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1977, entry from 29 September 1977, GAA.

⁴⁰ These constitute an important supplementation of documents originating from the Secretariat of the Primate of Poland that have been gathered in WAA. Particularly valuable are the minutes of plenary sessions and of the Commission/Central Council of the Polish Episcopate, Council/Central Commission of the Polish Episcopate, WAA, Secretariat of the Primate of Poland (hereinafter SPP) 04/3-36; Konferencja Plenarna Episkopatu Polski 1948-1981, WAA, SPP 04/137-307.

⁴¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, entry from 9 December 1951, p. 62.

Klepacz and Bishop Choromański) who had caused the Polish Episcopate to adopt such a submissive stance during his period of imprisonment:

The bishops behaved too softly, and easily gave in to pressure; they did not harness the state of public outrage, and did not sense the government's fear. But I set myself the goal of saving the unity of the Episcopate, even at my own cost. I could not involve myself in feuds, for this would have been convenient to the enemies of the Church. I preferred to leave judgement to God, in order to focus on repairing the wrongs suffered by the Church during those three years. My task was this: to impress upon the government, society and the world outside that there was complete unity within the Episcopate. Perhaps it would have been more befitting to engage in the administration of justice; however, taking into consideration the conditions under which the Church is forced to exist, this would have been detrimental.⁴²

Cardinal Wyszyński was strongly devoted to maintaining the harmony of the Episcopate in its relations with the authorities, and ensuring consent on the most important issues of pastoral care and social-political policy. He made his stance known, for example, on 16 June 1977 during a session attended by ordinary bishops:

Ordinary bishops appointed to serve in the various dioceses have an obligation to care for the dioceses entrusted thereto, and for other dioceses in a given territory or of the Church. — They cannot consider the diocese as their property, but as a bride of whom they have been granted custodianship and whom they are to serve. Whereas, while working in 'their' individual dioceses, the bishops are not released from caring for all other dioceses, although to a different extent. — A bishop may, therefore, be entitled to turn the attention of other bishops to the problems of his own diocese, and, equally, he may expect to be granted assistance and appraised. [...] Thus, when taking a decision, the ordinary bishop must take into account the situation of other dioceses and the opinions of other bishops. Bishops are entitled to reprimand each other, and no one should feel hurt by such action. The above principles have particularly grave import in Poland. Such is the significance that attaches to mutual responsibility and assistance in our country.⁴³

Cardinal Wyszyński's notes also contain comprehensive reflections on the direction of the Church's activities. A telling example in this regard is his journal

⁴² Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 11 May 1957, p. 227.

⁴³ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1977, entry from 16 April 1977, GAA.

entry from 11 April 1957, in which he described the course of the plenary session of the Episcopate. In words addressed to the most important Polish bishops, the Primate stressed:

While providing an assessment of the situation of the Church, I am pointing out its main tasks for the immediate future. Following a period of forced sensitivity to public and political affairs, we must presently shift our attention to the pastoral work of the Church. We must bring about the development of pastoral work, which shall be administered in all aspects by the diocesan curiae. As regards education, we must strengthen visitations aimed at religious instruction, and ensure proper training for priests, nuns and lay Catholics. [...] Last of all — the yearly moral and social tasks. And so: the struggle for social sobriety, the struggle against licentiousness, pornography, profligacy; providing care for mothers of numerous families, organizing neighbourly assistance for families, and caring for ex-prisoners.⁴⁴

Following solemnities held in Lublin, which were interrupted by the Citizens' Militia, Wyszyński presented an interesting conclusion as to the mission of the Church:

The people wanted a procession. Perhaps they demonstrated 'against' [the authorities], but it is clear that they wanted freedom of decision in matters concerning their relations with the Church, without the state's control. The lesson is this: In Poland, the Church cannot 'side with the state', which will always strive to diminish the Church's influence on the people. The Church must stand by the Nation (the people) [...]. The Party is losing, for it irritates people and takes them captive. Whenever they can, the people break free of the Party's iron grasp, and that is why they have 'entered the channel of the Church'. The Church-mother must understand this and accept its children when they run to the Church-mother.⁴⁵

In his notes, the Cardinal directly (and repeatedly) pointed to the close relations existing between Church and Nation:

In Poland, we do not have a relation of the Two: the Church and the State. For this is a juridical base. — In Poland, there exists a triangle: the Church — the State — the Nation. [...] And if mention has been made in the Polish press of the triangle of Church, State and Episcopate, this is

⁴⁴ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 11 April 1957, p. 191. Cf. Konferencja Plenarna Episkopatu Polski z 11 kwietnia 1957 r., WAA, SPP 04/174, p. 16.

⁴⁵ Wyszyński, *Zapiski milenijne*, pp. 104–05.

because this side of the triangle — the Episcopate — is tantamount to the Nation. That is — the Episcopate having support in the Nation.⁴⁶

The Primate also wrote, although unfortunately quite rarely, about his usage of the special entitlements which were granted him by the Holy See.⁴⁷ For example, in an entry from 12 January 1977 he stressed:

I did not want the Secretariat of State to meddle in our affairs, for errors could have been made at our expense. The *facultates specialissime* protected against this. I have often used these entitlements as a shield. Sometimes, the Polish bishops asked me what exactly they contain. To which I would respond: this becomes known in practice. At times, in a specific instance, no action is required; and then it is not necessary to disclose the scope of these *facultates specialissime*. But whenever the need arises, I will reach for such entitlements among the *facultates specialissime* as I have been given orally by Pius XII. They are indeed far-reaching, inclusive of the authority to suspend an ordinary bishop if the good of the Church so requires. Thank God I never had to avail myself of this right. Pope Pius XII granted me this entitlement orally, and I was to explain myself before no one, with the sole exception of Him and his Successor. The same applied to the consecration of bishops, in the event of political barriers, or if there arose a significant need on the part of the Church [...].⁴⁸

A perusal of *Pro memoria* shows us what kind of problems were faced by both the diocesan and monastic clergy. The hierarch's notes include a number of accounts describing his visitations of parishes in the archdioceses of Gniezno and Warsaw. On many occasions, his words were less than pleasant for the visited priests. This was because the Primate demanded a great deal from himself and his subordinates.⁴⁹ He was usually

⁴⁶ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1975, entry from 17 February 1975, GAA. For a broader treatment, see Rafał Łatka, 'Idea dobra wspólnego i racja stanu w nauczaniu Prymasa Wyszyńskiego', in *Prymas Wyszyński a Niepodległa*, pp. 55–76.

⁴⁷ Zbigniew Janczewski, 'Prerogatywy prymasów Polski', *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne*, 31, 1998, pp. 157–69; Józef Krukowski, 'Uprawnienia nadzwyczajne kard. Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Prymasa Polski, wobec zagrożeń ze strony reżimu komunistycznego', *Studia Prymasowskie*, 5, 2011, pp. 29–42; Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, pp. 20–26; *Uprawnienia wyjątkowe prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego: Wybór dokumentów 1948–1979*, ed. Kazimierz Śmigiel and Piotr Lewandowski, Pelplin, 2020.

⁴⁸ Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Wyszyński's approach had been exactly the same during his period of service as Ordinary Bishop of Lublin, Łatka, Mackiewicz and Zamiatała, *Prymas Stefan Wyszyński*, pp. 33–37. For a broader treatment of the course of Bishop Wyszyński's canonic visitations, see *Protokoły wizytacji kanonicznych przeprowadzonych przez biskupa lubelskiego*

able to provide a realistic and at once in-depth assessment of the complications with which individual parishes had to contend. A good example would be his inspection of Zakroczym on 15 July 1960:

I have paid a call on Father Skura, who administers the parish,⁵⁰ and seen the beautiful church and the new presbytery. The church had been burned down in the course of military operations, and the vault destroyed. Father Skura succeeded in rebuilding the church, while 'after October' he was given permission to erect a beautiful, elegant presbytery. The view from there onto the River Wisła and the neighbouring hills is magnificent, and one can see the remains of the residence of the Castellan of Zakroczym, wherein the father of St Stanislaus Kostka once lived. But today there is no trace of this past. The town looks miserable, people build their homes without proper care, for they are afraid of taxes. They drink away the large earnings which they make from plant farming. The entire Town Council is a bunch of drunks, who waive funds intended for reconstruction in favour of other towns, not comprehending the significance of funds that simply cannot be squandered. Although they are all worthless drunks, they are also Communists, and thus considered worthy of trust. We are passing one of them right now, a 'bigwig' in Zakroczym; he scowls at us. It is difficult to drive out of Zakroczym, for the streets are filled with drunken people. Father Zachariasz and Father Makary, acting with great zeal, have got down to combating this plague, however this is but a drop in the nationwide ocean of intemperance. In any case, the local dignitaries frown upon such efforts and hand out bribes in the Offices for Religious Affairs, wherefrom motions are received for this or that priest to be 'shunted' to the curia.⁵¹

The Primate frequently touched upon the faith of ordinary men and women and the issue of piety in various regions of Poland; as Grzegorz Łeszczyński aptly observed:

More than once, the critical appraisal of intellectual circles, which strove to find a compromise with the Communists, is contrasted with the simple and honest piety of the masses, which the Primate greatly valued. This is confirmed by his descriptions of canonic tours throughout Poland, with

Stefana Wyszyńskiego w parafiach na terenie obecnej diecezji zamojsko-lubaczowskiej 1946-1948, ed. Mariusz Leszczyński, Warsaw, 2020; *Protokoły wizytacji kanonicznych przeprowadzonych przez biskupa lubelskiego Stefana Wyszyńskiego w parafiach na terenach obecnej archidiecezji lubelskiej i diecezji sandomierskiej 1946-1948*, ed. Leszek Adamowicz, Lublin, 2021.

⁵⁰ Piotr Skura (1905-91), a Roman Catholic priest and the parish priest of Zakroczym in the years 1945-85.

⁵¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7, pp. 173-74.

colourful presentations of welcomings, church services, and visits at the homes of ordinary people.⁵²

The Primate considered this particularly significant in the Western Lands, for he viewed the return of these territories to Poland — accompanied by the victory of Catholicism — as a manifestation of divine justice.⁵³

Cardinal Wyszyński's notes allow us to observe the everyday functioning of the Church in Poland and the course of many of the most important solemnities, particularly those held in connection with the 'Great Novena' and the millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland. As an example, we may cite the Primate's entry from 5 May 1957, when millennial preparations were commenced in the Archdiocese of Warsaw (and in all other dioceses simultaneously):

The cathedral is overflowing with people; never before has it been so crowded. The faces of those present — even small children — display a myriad of emotions. One can tell that they are very aware of the uniqueness of the approaching occasion. When we realize that, at this hour, the same act is taking place throughout Poland, in all the parishes, we may finally comprehend the grace bestowed by Mary upon the Nation, and how great an experience this shall be for society.⁵⁴

In *Pro memoria*, Cardinal Wyszyński gave detailed descriptions of his trips to the Holy See, with particular emphasis on his meetings with successive popes: Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II. He had very close relations with each, although by far the most cordial with John XXIII⁵⁵ and, obviously, the Polish Pope.⁵⁶ In his journal, we find in-depth accounts of his stays in the Vatican and Italy, the longest of which was that of May–June 1957, lasting forty-four days in total.⁵⁷ The Primate's notes also describe the tensions appearing in relations with the Holy See, particularly in the context of its eastern policy. These found expression in numerous comments made in the 1970s, when the Cardinal resolutely and

⁵² Grzegorz Łeszczynski, 'Wstęp', in Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 6, p. XII.

⁵³ Dominik Zamiatała, 'Prymas Wyszyński wobec Ziem Zachodnich', in *Prymas Wyszyński a Niepodległa*, pp. 251–71 (p. 257).

⁵⁴ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 5 May 1957, p. 216.

⁵⁵ For a broader treatment of the topic, see *Więzy jedności Jana XXIII i kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego: Wybór dokumentów*, ed. Stanisław Wilk and Anna Wójcik, Lublin, 2016. Wyszyński was welcomed with great warmth at Cardinal Angelo Roncalli's first audience following his election as pope. He was satisfied with its course and with the understanding shown by the Holy Father for Polish affairs. See Krupecka, 'Wstęp', p. XI.

⁵⁶ Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, pp. 55–56.

⁵⁷ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, pp. 216–96.

effectively opposed the establishment of a permanent diplomatic mission of the Vatican in the Polish People's Republic.⁵⁸ For example, during deliberations of the Central Council he pointed out: "The Holy See has its "opening to the East" — to which it is entitled, however Poland cannot let itself be drawn into this "opening". We must have a sense of responsibility for the Church and the Nation in Poland. This requires us to display independence in conducting the affairs of the Church in Poland."⁵⁹ While in another entry he stressed:

[...] we do not want to pay with any of the Church's values [...] the Episcopate must remember that it is responsible for the Church in Poland. [...] The Episcopate's 'line' cannot coincide fully with either the line of the government of the Polish People's Republic or — outrage — with the line of eastern policy pursued by the Holy See.⁶⁰

Thus, it was not uncommon for Cardinal Wyszyński to polemicize with Paul VI. He left a few telling reflections concerning the matter in the pages of his journal. Of special interest is his account of a meeting with the Pope on 9 December 1973. The Primate expressed his misgivings regarding the possibility of an arrangement being made over the heads of the bishops and contrary to the interests of the Polish Church: "We do not want to die amidst a conspiracy of silence". Paul VI replied: "There exists no "ours" or "yours". We too have assumed a pastoral stance, although we speak in a different language. But the objective is the same — for the Holy See and for the Polish Episcopate. We are in agreement. Please believe me".⁶¹

Pro memoria shows clearly that, after being elevated to the position of Chairman of the Episcopate, Wyszyński began to steadily attach ever greater importance to relations with the Catholic intelligentsia, both that grouped in organizations and that which functioned around various parishes or other centres, such as Laski near Warsaw.⁶² His relations with the Catholic milieu that were politically active in the Polish People's Republic — the adherents of PAX, Znak, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Więź* — were

⁵⁸ For a broader treatment, see Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, pp. 183–255.

⁵⁹ Peter Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński*, 20 vols, Warsaw, 1993–2010, vol. 13: *Czasy prymasowskie 1974, 2006*, p. 39.

⁶⁰ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1974, entry from 4 July 1974, GAA.

⁶¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1973, entry from 9 December 1973, GAA.

⁶² The activities of the Catholic intelligentsia in the Polish People's Republic are yet to be researched and described. Regarding the centre in Laski, see, for example, Marcin Tunak, "Środowisko Lasek wobec opozycji antysystemowej w latach 1976–1989 i rola rektora kościoła św. Marcina w Warszawie we wsparciu dla działaczy KOR i "Solidarności", in *Księga dla władzy groźni: Duchowni współpracujący z opozycją (1976–1989)*, ed. Rafał Łatka, 2 vols, Warsaw, 2019–20, vol. 2, 2020, pp. 149–75.

never easy. This was due to the demands that he made on them, which they were not always (or, rather, very rarely) able to satisfy, thus causing the Primate — as Peter Raina has observed — constant sorrow.⁶³ First and foremost, he accused them of lacking moral fibre and displaying excessive flexibility in their actions,⁶⁴ as well as being unwilling to leave their own elitist circle and join ‘the broader masses of society’.⁶⁵ Cardinal Wyszyński made two fundamental demands of the Catholic intelligentsia — namely, they were to propagate Catholic social teaching and remain in the closest of contacts with the Church hierarchy. He further felt that they should involve themselves in fostering and deepening contacts between Catholic and non-Catholic Poles, and provide assistance in the struggle against the anti-Church campaigns of the authorities. He also expected them to be courageous in expressing their faith and popularizing the work of the Polish Church.⁶⁶ We should keep in mind here that although he did make demands of the politically active Catholics, the Primate did not intend to engage in any form of micromanagement, leaving them freedom to function and considering them responsible for their own decisions and actions.⁶⁷ Importantly, the hierarch accepted a pluralism of opinion among the laity and did not impose his own views. At the same time, after being released from internment in October 1956, he abandoned all contacts with PAX, as he was convinced that Bolesław Piasecki had contributed to his imprisonment, and that in the months immediately preceding it he had been involved in an ambiguous ‘play’ with the Church.⁶⁸ Years later, following Piasecki’s death, his stance changed somewhat and he granted PAX’s new chairman, Ryszard Reiff, a number of audiences (two in 1979).⁶⁹ This did not, however, alter his overall critical appraisal of the milieu.

Wyszyński devoted a sizeable portion of his notes to the anti-Church campaigns of the Communist authorities, writing regularly about repressions that targeted both clergy and laymen. He also outlined how he himself and the Polish Episcopate (and in particular the Commission/Central

⁶³ Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński*, vol. 11: *Czasy prymasowskie 1972*, 2004, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Czackowska, *Kardynał Wyszyński*, pp. 382–83. In the beginning of 1972, the Primate noted down that none of the politically active lay Catholics enjoyed any authority within the Catholic milieu, Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1972*, entry from 7 January 1972, GAA.

⁶⁵ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1972*, entry from 18 October 1972, GAA.

⁶⁶ Czackowska, *Kardynał Wyszyński*, pp. 345, 384.

⁶⁷ Łatka, Mackiewicz and Zamiatała, *Prymas Stefan Wyszyński*, pp. 58 f.

⁶⁸ He touched upon this topic a number of times in his notes from the years 1956–57, Łatka, ‘Prymas Stefan Wyszyński w okresie przełomu’, pp. 215–16.

⁶⁹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1979*, entry from 29 March 1979; entry from 27 October 1979, GAA.

Council) countered the Communists. His notes show how the religious policies of the Polish People's Republic changed over time, and what the intentions of the authorities — which the Cardinal read faultlessly — actually were. Two entries should be cited in this regard. The first refers to the authorities' reaction to the 'Great Novena' programme, which was planned as a preparation for the millennial celebrations of the Baptism of Poland. In it, Wyszyński details the course of a session of the Joint Committee of representatives of the government of the Polish People's Republic and the Polish Episcopate, which took place on 27 September 1957:

The bishops are reporting the course of the recent discussions. Mr Sztachelski and Mr Kliszko [Party dignitaries responsible for Church policy] launched an attack against the vanguard of the Church. But after the delegation of bishops returned from the Vatican, the vanguard was strengthened. The millennial programme is said to be excessively focused on social affairs. The Church is increasing its zeal. This is not favourably viewed. There is a dangerous attack on the Primate, Bishop Kaczmarek and Bishop Bernacki. The assault is motivated primarily by fear of the Church's strengthening zeal.⁷⁰

An even better example of the Primate's far-sightedness and his ability to see through appearances is the second note, which focuses on the elections of 1972 and changes made in governmental policy following the takeover of power in Poland by Edward Gierek and his faction. In it, he gives an accurate assessment of the 'normalization' of, among others, relations between the state and the Church that was then being promoted by Party dignitaries. Wyszyński gave the reasons why he would not take part in the vote:

- 1) I do not believe in the sincerity of the new political direction of the Party [*sic!*], which is saving itself — and not the Nation or the national economy,
- 2) The criminals who orchestrated the massacre of workers on the Baltic coast have not been called to account to date. In December 1970, we must do everything in our power to stop the killings immediately. [...]
- 3) Two more Militia raids have been organized against the Faithful who were defending their right to attend services [...]
- 4) Sacral building development in the capital continues to be halted,
- 5) The Prime Minister keeps on postponing further talks, which were agreed upon in March last year [...]
- 6) And numerous other reasons. While it remains [...] I cannot delude society.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 27 September 1957, p. 407.

⁷¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1972, entry from 19 March 1972, GAA.

Cardinal Wyszyński regularly commented on the authorities' attempts to interfere with the staffing of the highest positions in the Church. An example is his far-reaching reflections on the activities of priests who had been imposed by the Communists (Father Kazimierz Lagosz in Wrocław and Father Filip Bednorz in Katowice),⁷² and on the government's efforts following the death of Cardinal Kominek to bring about the elevation of their preferred candidate to the title of Archbishop of Wrocław.⁷³

2. The Political-Social Reality of the Polish People's Republic

In his notes, the Primate made numerous references to the political-social reality of then-contemporary Poland. He did so by writing both about specific events, and providing a more general and systemic appraisal of the Communist dictatorship under which Poles were forced to live. We should focus particular attention here to entries which give a comprehensive description of the nature of Communism, and of the hierarch's approach to this ideology. A note he jotted down after an audience with Pius XII in June 1957 is of fundamental importance for understanding his stance towards the political system after 1956. While talking with the Holy Father, Wyszyński indicated that social indifference and nihilism constitute a greater problem for the Church than Communism itself:

I abide by my belief that, for the Church, Communism is not an issue of political alliances, but one of morals. The indifference of the masses is more dangerous to the Church than Communism, for said indifference kills religion in the heart, while Communism forces one to fight — indeed, wherever this system rules, it fights against itself. In present-day Poland, there is no need to conduct a philosophical struggle against Communism, for it combats itself.⁷⁴

The cited view should not be interpreted as meaning that Cardinal Wyszyński did not see the severity of the threat posed by the atheistic state, but rather that he was convinced that as long as Catholics continued to be active, repressions would not force them to renounce their faith.

⁷² Skibiński, 'Wstęp', p. XXV.

⁷³ Peter Raina, *Sprawa obsadzenia metropolii wrocławskiej: Eskapady władz PRL 1974–1976*, Pelplin, 2003; Rafał Łatka, "'Sprawa wrocławska", czyli spór Kościoła z państwem o następcę kard. Bolesława Kominka (1974–1976)', in *Kardynał Bolesław Kominek: biskup, dyplomata, wizjoner*, ed. Wojciech Kucharski and Rafał Łatka, Wrocław and Warsaw, 2020, pp. 349–92.

⁷⁴ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 13 June 1957, p. 282.

One of the most interesting comments made by the Primate in the journal is one which presents his opinion on the 'invariability of the system', which he formulated while pondering his previous discussion with Archbishop Agostino Casaroli on the matter of regulating relations between the government and the Holy See.⁷⁵ Recalling his exchange with the Vatican diplomat, he wrote:

He accepts the thesis of the so-called invariability of the system. This is a thesis that the representatives of the Party [*sic!*] put forward to society. A matter that is academic in nature. In reality, the Communists are declaring thus: we have our own gospel, prophets, doctrinal dogmas and socialist morality. Society has to accept this. But since the Party [*sic!*] dictates from the position of invariability, then it becomes all the easier to understand the Church, to comprehend that its theological teachings, morality and organization are also invariable, although not inflexible. In light of this invariability preached by the Communists, it should be easier to secure tolerance for the invariability of the Church. In its majority, Polish society is tolerant of invariability. But life itself shows that this invariability of doctrine and system cannot be maintained. For already today the Communist governments [*sic!*] in various countries tend, by and large, to focus on the terminology — and not the essence — of Marxism. They are withdrawing from the fixed canon (of Marxist dogma) in doctrinal, political and economic practice. In Poland, Marxism is not being implemented in agriculture, for there it has failed. Social policy too is more akin to the capitalist model than the socialist (example — December 1970 in Poland). While preaching invariability, they are de facto variable. I have held the title of Primate for 22 years. During this time there were a few 'patterns of politics', and in their name we witnessed attempts at eradicating the Church, the tormenting of society and the Nation, and the exploitation of the working class. There were Bierut and Stalin, then Gomułka came, and now we have Gierek. Each demanded unquestioning loyalty from the Church. Today, we may ask — towards whom? — which model was actually true? Whereas the Church is the same and continues on its existence. We talk with the Communists, even though we are considered as people who do not know how to engage in dialogue.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ We should mention at this point that Primate Wyszyński was well aware of the naive approach of the Vatican's Secretariat of State to the issue of establishing diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Polish People's Republic, and therefore took care to ensure that no agreement was reached over the heads of the Polish bishops. For a broader treatment of this topic, see Paweł Skibiński, 'Cele polityki władz komunistycznych w Polsce wobec Stolicy Apostolskiej do roku 1978', *Glaukopis*, 33, 2016, pp. 333–46.

⁷⁶ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1971, entry from 21 November 1971, GAA.

As a matter of fact, the Primate knew how to make use of the ideological atrophy of Poland's Communist authorities. The clearest example of this occurred during the systemic crisis of October 1956, when the hierarchy made a concerted effort to broaden opportunities for the Church. The new agreement which he concluded with the Communists on 31 December 1956 provided the clergy with considerably greater freedom of action within society. The government's 'weakness' also allowed him to effectively implement the 'Great Novena' programme, which resulted in many Poles returning to the Catholic Church.⁷⁷

We should add here that the Primate was of the opinion that the Communist system was temporary in its existence, particularly when compared to the nation, which had survived unbroken throughout hundreds of years, oftentimes experiencing events of great turmoil. He expressed this view Aesopically in one of his notes from the period of imprisonment:

A crow sat down atop a tall fir tree. He looked around imperiously and gave out a cry of victory. [...] Impudence worthy of admiration. But the fir tree did not move even a twig. It appeared not to notice the crow [...] for, after all, so many clouds had sailed over its crown, and so many fleeting birds had rested on its branches. — They passed just as you shall pass. It is not your place here — you do not feel secure, and thus you make up for your lack of courage by screeching. [...] I have to suffer through your presence. You will caw out your boring, dull and oh how pitiful song, and then take off. [...] I shall remain to grow higher and higher [...] you were not here — the forest was, you shall not be here — but the forest will. A fable? Not at all!⁷⁸

The Primate's notes contain a wealth of interesting observations concerning the highest-ranking Communist dignitaries with whom he met.⁷⁹ In fact, his work includes appraisals of all the First Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party who governed Poland during the Cardinal's primateship.⁸⁰ Despite obvious ideological differ-

⁷⁷ Zygmunt Zieliński, 'Wielka Nowenna na tle powojennych losów Kościoła w Polsce', in *Ecclesia Posnaniensis: Opuscula Mariano Banaszak septuagenario dedicata*, ed. Feliks Lenort and Karol Lutyński, Poznań, 1998, pp. 273–88.

⁷⁸ Wyszyński, *Zapiski więzienne*, p. 67.

⁷⁹ Meetings with Communist dignitaries were made possible by the Cardinal's 'habit of discussion'; by his readiness to engage in dialogue even with people who were difficult and strove to eliminate the Church — as his successor, Cardinal Glemp, has observed, Józef Glemp, 'Prymas Wyszyński jako mąż stanu', *Studia Prymasowskie*, 3, 2009, pp. 81–83 (p. 81).

⁸⁰ Over the years, the Primate met with Bolesław Bierut, Władysław Gomułka, Edward Gierek, Stanisław Kania and Wojciech Jaruzelski (at the time, Jaruzelski was

ences and the awareness that one of the objectives of the Communist authorities was to marginalize the Church, the Primate showed a certain kindness towards those persons whom he described. He gave the Party leaders a credit of trust, which, however, due to their actions was always quickly expended. Paweł Skibiński's observation is absolutely correct:

Wyszyński's depictions of successive Communist supervisors of the Church are most interesting — among others those of Franciszek Mazur, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, and Antoni Bida, the first head of the Office of Religious Denominations. When looked at through the lens of his journal, Communism in Poland ceases to be an impersonal pandemonium and acquires the features of its individual disciples, who were responsible for specific crimes. At the same time, however, he refrained from demonizing the Communists, or presenting them in a caricatured or dehumanized form. His opinions of them were exceptionally measured.⁸¹

But this does not mean that the Primate had any illusions as to who he was dealing with, or what plans the Party dignitaries had for the Church. For example, in the entry from 31 December 1965 he noted that:

The present year has been full of difficult work connected with the Oecumenical Council and the millennial programme, and also of numerous torments organized by our native Communists. We always think that they could have been better men if not for the inspiration from Moscow, which is uniquely famous for its hatred of Catholic Poland. And yet there are many among our own Polish Communists who are rabid and narrow-minded, perverting not only Marxism, but Communism itself — and even those of its elements that appeal to nobler motives. Such contemptuous treatment of people, in which the Polish United Workers' Party indulges daily — even of persons of merit who served the Party in good faith — we have not seen for a long time. [...] May the Gracious Lord look after those who have brought so much shame on Communism and Marxism.⁸²

Sometimes, albeit rarely, the Primate allowed himself a snide remark on the Communists' lack of competence. The largest number of these can be found in his notes from 1950–53; they concern mainly Antoni Bida, the first head of the Office of Religious Denominations.⁸³ Władysław

the Prime Minister of the Polish People's Republic), Kazimierz Śmigiel, *Prymasostwo polskie: Instytucja, prymasi, dokumenty*, Warsaw, 2018, pp. 202–03.

⁸¹ Skibiński, 'Wstęp', pp. XXV–XXVI.

⁸² Wyszyński, *Zapiski millenijne*, pp. 24–25.

⁸³ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1; idem, *Pro memoria*, vol. 2.

Gomułka was another politician who strongly annoyed the Primate. This is confirmed by his reflections on their last meeting, which was held on 26 April 1963: ‘The self-confidence of the man is striking. He says everything in his own name: “we”, or rather “I” — “I know my officers, my militiamen”. Everything is his.’⁸⁴ The Cardinal had more to say in the entry for the following day: ‘I apologize for everything that pushed me to resist. To be the witness of platitudinous lies, the narrow-mindedness and impudence of a half-educated man — this is not at all easy.’⁸⁵ We should add (and this has already been touched upon in part) that the Primate clearly perceived the process of the gradual de-ideologization of the Polish People’s Republic. He assessed it as advantageous for the Church and Polish society. We should also stress that in his opinion Edward Gierek was the best ‘lesser evil’, that is the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers’ Party most ready to make concessions. It would seem that of key importance here was Wyszyński’s conviction that Gierek was capable of taking into account the interests of both society and the Church. There is no doubt that his opinion was influenced by two developments: the authorities’ withdrawal from some of the planned amendments to the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic in 1976, and Gierek’s consent to John Paul II’s pilgrimage to Poland in 1979.⁸⁶

In his journal, the Primate offered numerous insightful descriptions of the successive crises which ravaged Communist authority: 1956; March 1968; December 1970; June 1976; and August 1980. This has already been noted in the topical literature devoted to the Cardinal.⁸⁷ In his depictions of the ‘Polish months’, he displays both excellent perception and a canny understanding of the intentions of Party dignitaries and the public’s feelings and perceptions. A good example is his reaction to the infighting taking place among the elites of the Polish United Workers’ Party in March 1968, which he appraised as a struggle for power:

We must show considerable calm in order to maintain some form of balance. We cannot act under the impulse of feverish suggestions, nor can we side with this or that faction. To hastily show some trust towards

⁸⁴ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1963, entry from 26 April 1963, GAA.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, entry from 27 April 1963, GAA.

⁸⁶ For a broader treatment, see Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, pp. 296–350.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Ewa K. Czackowska, ‘Marzec ’68 w dokumentach Konferencji Episkopatu Polski’, in *Stefan Wyszyński wobec oporu społecznego i opozycji 1945–1981*, ed. Ewa K. Czackowska, Warsaw, 2018, pp. 143–55; Paweł Skibiński, ‘Prymas Stefan Wyszyński a wydarzenia grudnia 1970 roku’, in *Stefan Wyszyński wobec oporu*, pp. 157–76; Łatka, *Episkopat Polski*, p. 94 f.; Łatka, ‘Prymas Stefan Wyszyński w okresie przełomu’, pp. 213–15.

X+Y — unknown persons — would be risky. The Episcopate must be able to take decisions with a cool head, free of the subjectivity and passion of various advisers.⁸⁸

The Primate also made references to the diverse actions undertaken by the authorities in the social-political sphere. An example would be his reaction to the amendment of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, which was voted through on 10 February 1976. The Primate, who at the time was staying in Choszczówka, watched the parliamentary session on television, and described the whole experience as 'most painful'. He added:

The point of greatest difficulty was how to word the provision establishing friendship with the USSR — for this is an element foreign to constitutional law. This cannot be justified even on the grounds of Marxism, as the doctrine did not anticipate such situations. [...] Doubtless many elements were masked, having in mind public opinion. All in all, however, the end product was less solemn than had probably been intended. [...] Only Mr Konstanty Łubieński behaved with dignity. Even better was Mr Stomma, the sole MP to abstain from the vote.⁸⁹

Wyszyński frequently pondered the issue of Poland's subservience to the Soviet Union; the accompanying subtopic of potential military intervention by the eastern superpower was touched upon more rarely, only at times of political crisis.⁹⁰ This is illustrated by his analysis of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, which had been adopted in 1952. Archbishop Wyszyński pointed out:

When perusing the Soviet Constitution of 1936, I see how strongly it is reflected in the draft of the Constitution of Poland. In particular, the 'fundamental rights and duties of citizens' have been worded nearly identically. Furthermore, the speech given by the Soviet Marshal during the debate on the draft shows clearly that an invitation to a public discussion on the draft cannot be brushed off with silence, for 'silence as an especial method of expressing disregard is at once a form of critique'.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Rafał Łatka, 'Prymas Wyszyński wobec rzeczywistości politycznej doby Władysława Gomułki', in *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego na Pomorzu Zachodnim*, ed. Michał Siedziako, Zbigniew Stanuch and Grzegorz Wejman, 4 vols, Szczecin, 2016–19, vol. 2: 1956–1972, 2017, pp. 47–66 (p. 59).

⁸⁹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1976, entry from 10 February 1976, GAA.

⁹⁰ Skibiński, 'Prymas Stefan Wyszyński a wydarzenia grudnia', p. 162 f.; Rafał Łatka, 'Prymas Stefan Wyszyński wobec zagrożenia interwencją sowiecką i konsekwencje jego poglądów (1980–1981)', *SDRE*, 53, 2018, 1, pp. 145–64.

⁹¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, entry from 31 January 1952, p. 125.

Equally frequently, the Cardinal's musings on the Eastern bloc resulted in a broader analysis of Poland's geopolitical situation:

There is a desire to avoid war at all cost, even at the price of the lives of the smaller nations. In the West, there is a growing conviction that Russia must yield gradually, under the influence of evolution. Herein lies the danger for nations such as Hungary, Poland, etc. The plan is to weaken Russia at the price of conflict with its dependent nations. The West intends to bring Poland to a boiling point, for this is conducive to the West's policy of destabilizing Russia. Poland must take care to save its existence. There are divisions within the Party. The goals are strongly oriented towards past policy positions. In Poland, the Natolin faction and the Department of Security, the latter camouflaged, play the leading role.⁹²

In his journal, the Primate also wrote about manifestations of resistance towards the authorities, which at the time were focused on demands for freedom of religion and reform of the Polish political system.⁹³ The Church's approach to opposition organizations in the years 1976–80 is best summed up by his comment made at a session of the Central Council on 26 February 1980: 'They should be provided with some form of care without us becoming involved in their dissent.'⁹⁴ Cardinal Wyszyński opined that the Church should treat 'Solidarity' in exactly the same way: 'While supporting "Solidarity", we must protect it from expanding its socio-economic tasks to the sphere of politics.'⁹⁵

Writing Style

Journals as historical sources always reflect the personalities of their authors, and *Pro memoria* is no different. The Cardinal's character and temperament are clearly visible in his personal reflections. Although not exceptionally frequent — the majority can be found in entries from the first years of the diary — they are very important for properly understanding what kind of a man he was. In his introduction to the first volume of the

⁹² Wyszyński, *Pro Memoria*, vol. 4, entry from 14 December 1956, pp. 62–63.

⁹³ Although we should be surprised that some were mentioned only sparingly — for example, his brief references to the so-called events of Zielona Góra or the struggle for the cross in Nowa Huta in 1960. See Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7.

⁹⁴ Jan Żaryn, *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce 1944–1989*, Warsaw, 2003, p. 398.

⁹⁵ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1980–1981, entry from 10 February 1981, GAA. For a broader treatment, see Rafał Łatka, "'Bronić Solidarność przed wkraczaniem na tereny polityczne': Prymas Stefan Wyszyński wobec Solidarności", in *Stefan Wyszyński wobec oporu*, pp. 77–104.

complete edition of Wyszyński's notes, Paweł Skibiński has correctly observed that:

As regards the style in which the Primate's notes were written, it is worth mentioning that he very rarely used the words 'me' or 'mine'. Sometimes, he spoke of himself in the third person, as the 'primate of Poland'. It would appear that he was making every effort to ensure that his accounts of the events which he was describing were as objective as possible [...].⁹⁶

It is probably for this reason that *Pro memoria* contains so few references to his family; those that he did pen usually concerned his father, Stanisław Wyszyński.⁹⁷ He always recalled his mother, Julianna *née* Karp, who had died in his childhood, with great devotion and fondness.⁹⁸ His siblings, step-mother (Eugenia *née* Godlewska), stepbrother Tadeusz and stepsister Julia are seldom mentioned. These comments were not particularly comprehensive or insightful.⁹⁹

At this point it is worth citing a few entries in which the Primate speaks about himself in a more personal tone, and thus — among other things — shows the depth of his faith (these notes, although few and far between, are most revealing).¹⁰⁰ Particularly interesting is an entry concerning the selection of the bishop's coat of arms following his elevation to the position of Metropolitan Archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw on 9 February 1949:

In the morning I left for Jasna Góra. I was driven by Father Baraniak, PhD. I am now alone. It is my intention to go on a retreat and commit myself to the Most Holy Mother of Częstochowa for this new period of my life. I have decided that the Primate's coat of arms shall present the Mother of God of Jasna Góra, Queen of Poland — without a crown. Today, Poland is too poor for its Queen to wear a crown.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Skibiński, 'Wstęp', pp. XXI–XXII.

⁹⁷ He wrote about his father most often during the period of imprisonment, Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 3.

⁹⁸ More than once he stressed that his mother had been replaced in his heart by the Mother of God. For a broader treatment of the Primate's devotion to the cult of the Virgin Mary, see Anna Rastawicka, 'Maryja na drogach człowieka w nauczaniu kard. Stefana Wyszyńskiego', *Studia Prymasowskie*, 6, 2012, pp. 65–73; Robert Wyszomirski, 'Maryjna droga kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego', *Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne*, 34, 2015, 1, pp. 47–65.

⁹⁹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vols 1–8; Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1962–81, GAA.

¹⁰⁰ The spirituality of Primate Wyszyński still awaits to be researched. Interesting observations on the topic can be found in Anna Rastawicka, *Ten zwycięzca, kto miłuje: Życie i nauczanie prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, Warsaw, 2019.

¹⁰¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, entry from 9 February 1949, p. 30.

In November 1960, Cardinal Wyszyński had the following reflection on his ministry as primate:

Twelve years ago on this day, I was elevated to the capital of Gniezno and Warsaw by the Holy See. For this occasion, the Holy Father chose a day that is most solemn for Poland — that of the Blessed Polish Martyrs. [...] — I give to God, through the agency of the Mother of God of Jasna Góra, these twelve years of work, and ask for strength for further work. It was so very difficult throughout this time, as if I were being held by my throat and not allowed to breathe peacefully. The Power of the Lord is the strength of man, and the care of the Most Holy Mother — peace and hope [...].¹⁰²

In April 1961, the Primate gave a very personal account of the bonds connecting him with the Mother of God:

Today, full of internal solace, I trust that the Virgin Mary, without regard to human frailty, shall accept the humble commitment of the archdiocese as her chattel, into her hands. [...] There is not much I can do, but I can find it in my heart to act with humility. I am convinced as to my complete unworthiness — a poor servant weighed down by God's trust beyond my strength. It is this very awareness of my own inadequacy that causes me to accept with such willingness the suggestions of my children, who never cease telling me about the mightiness of the Mother of God, constantly seeking to release me from sadness and reinvigorate my faith in the power of the Mother of God. I trust that the acts of faith and love by which we commit ourselves to the Virgin Mary shall be received, and then rewarded by the gift of loyalty to God, Christ and the Church. — To you, o Virgin, to your glory, do I commit the capital of the primateship and the sacred Church of Gniezno.¹⁰³

It is characteristic that in his journal the Primate comes across as being stricter towards members of the clergy than towards laymen. At times, he even treated the persecutors of the Church with understanding, and tried to find explanations for their actions.¹⁰⁴ Obviously, though, this does not mean that he did not make any critical comments regarding the Communists, progressive Catholics, or even his own collaborators. Below I have given a few examples of notes from *Pro memoria* which show how he treated those with whom he interacted (I will not consider

¹⁰² Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7, entry from 12 November 1960, pp. 247–48.

¹⁰³ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 8, entry from 23 April 1961, pp. 78–79.

¹⁰⁴ Visible, for instance, in the Primate's attitude towards Bolesław Bierut. For a broader treatment, see Łatka, 'Czy prymas', pp. 575–76.

his discussions with Party leaders, as this topic has already been touched upon in the article).

An instructive example of how Wyszyński approached members of the clergy is his entry from 10 June 1952 regarding Father Jan Cymanowski, who at the time was vicar capitular at the diocese of Gniezno and performed the duties of ordinary bishop. In it, we see the Primate's strictness, accompanied however by a realistic assessment of the priest's abilities, elaborated in a spirit of objectivity, with an analysis of both strengths and weaknesses:

I am pondering the situation of the Church in Gdańsk. Father Cymanowski is a diligent priest, from the old school of Catholic orthodoxy, with a deep sense of churchly discipline. He has no greater talents, knows next to nothing about church administration, is slow in taking decisions, somewhat chaotic, and disconcerted and prone to anxiety. In moments of difficulty, however, he is able to take a position that is good for the Church. We can rest assured that he will not lead the priests astray. His simplicity and humility win the clergy over. He lacks established collaborators; the curia is particularly badly organized. Priests who arrive from other regions generally do not follow the pastoral programme, although they work with great zeal and dedication. The people here are a mix from all over Poland, clearly diverse in terms of religious awareness. In their adversity, however, they are all the more effective in seeking a connection with the Church, which to them provides anchorage and certitude.¹⁰⁵

Whereas on 15 May 1952, he gave a mild rebuke together with a robust assessment of the stance of Father Jan Zieja:¹⁰⁶

Father Jan Zieja has attempted to submit to me a scholarly work written by a certain lady from Warsaw. I asked him to spare me the obligation, for I am not a specialist, and moreover, I would first have to be released from my duties. The bane of our times are good men who think that a bishop can do everything and must always — by some miracle — find the time.¹⁰⁷

Pro memoria also allows us to verify the common (although frequently unsubstantiated) assessments of Cardinal Wyszyński's opinions of the people with whom he worked. An example would be the leader of the politically active Catholics, Jerzy Zawieyski, who has been described

¹⁰⁵ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, p. 247.

¹⁰⁶ For more information on this person, see Jacek Moskwa, *Niewygodny prorok: Biografia ks. Jana Ziei*, Cracow, 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 1, p. 217.

in topical literature as a friend of the Primate,¹⁰⁸ whereas the latter's personal notes seem to contradict the suggestion that they actually had such close contacts. Wyszyński treated Zawieyski with considerable kindness, although he was aware of his faults and indiscretions. Further, he thought that it would be best if the leader of the 'progressive' Catholics resigned from political activity and took up writing, for in his view Zawieyski was a naive politician but a talented author. The Primate's entry from 28 May 1960 is particularly revealing:

Jerzy Zawieyski came over to receive comfort. He has become the subject of a steady stream of complaints. [...] Others believe that Jerzy Zawieyski is using his situation to collect information at Miodowa Street, which, being a weak man, he then usefully shares. Despite persistent rumours and letters, I continue to treat Jerzy Zawieyski as if none of these things had occurred. [...] He is a man of good will, concerned for Poland and the Church. He would like to blunt the 'sharpness' existing between the state and the Church. [...] Zawieyski always says that the Church should be a bit more accommodating, as the state 'will not budge' [...].¹⁰⁹

Interestingly, Wyszyński's notes mention some very unorthodox interlocutors. Chief among them was Professor Jan Szczepański, a sociologist and close adviser to Gierek, and *Pro memoria* contains a detailed record of their discussions. In their course, Cardinal Wyszyński argued, among others, that it would be possible to conduct a moral rebirth within the Polish United Workers' Party, while Professor Szczepański remained strongly sceptical.¹¹⁰ Another meeting, held on 31 March 1979, ended with an exchange that showed how the Primate viewed his public role: Professor Szczepański: 'I consider the Primate of Poland to be the current Polish interrex'; Cardinal Wyszyński responded: 'I asked him to keep in mind that I think differently — I do not consider myself the interrex, although Mr Gomułka often imputed this. I prefer to remain a priest.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Andrzej Friszke, *Koło posłów 'Znak' w Sejmie PRL 1957-1976*, Warsaw, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7, pp. 136-37.

¹¹⁰ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1979, entry from 31 March 1979, entry from 17 October 1979, GAA; Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1980, entry from 28 March 1980, entry from 4 June 1980, entry from 20 June 1980, GAA. The Primate stated that the Polish United Workers' Party should be restored to health for geopolitical reasons — not because he supported it in any way, but because there was no other means of avoiding a military intervention by the USSR, Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1979, entry from 17 October 1979, GAA.

¹¹¹ Wyszyński, *Pro memoria* 1979, entry from 31 March 1979, GAA.

Instead of a Summary: The Value of *Pro Memoria* as a Source for Historians, Together with an Indication of the Most Important Directions for Research

The notes comprising *Pro memoria* are of immense value for researchers of contemporary Polish history; we may even say that they should change the viewpoint of historians on many of the events that played out in the years 1948–81. The work can be utilized first and foremost in analyses concerning the history of the Catholic Church under Communist rule. For this purpose, the Primate's journal is a source with practically unlimited potential. Using it, one can examine the internal mechanisms that governed the functioning of the Polish Episcopate, the episcopal curiae and the Secretariat of the Primate of Poland, as well as relations between individual bishops (particularly the highest ranking). *Pro memoria* is a crucial source for describing the history of the archdioceses of Gniezno and Warsaw in virtually all of its aspects, and will also prove helpful in research concerning the dioceses of 'people's' Poland. Furthermore, it cannot be omitted by authors working on the biographies of any of the ordinary bishops who held office in the years 1948–81.¹¹² Particularly noteworthy is the presentation of the Church's functioning in the Western and Northern Polish Lands, and of Cardinal Wyszyński's efforts to secure the consent of the Holy See to the establishment of permanent diocesan structures in those regions.

Other issues on which the journal sheds considerable light include changes in Polish religiosity, reforms of the Church — especially as regards implementation of the decisions of the Second Vatican Council (and among them those concerning the liturgy)¹¹³ — and the functioning

¹¹² With the reservation that some were mentioned more frequently, and others less so. A good example would be Father Czesław Kaczmarek, the Ordinary Bishop of Kielce: *Pro memoria* gives a clear and detailed explanation of why Wyszyński thought that the hierarch should have resigned from his position in 1960. For a broader treatment, see Rafał Łatka, 'Wstęp', in *Pro memoria*, vol. 7, pp. VII–VIII. Of key significance in this regard is the Primate's note from 15 March 1960: 'It is difficult for us to provide a defence. The bishop sometimes acts as if he thought that *l'Etat c'est moi*. We should keep in mind that, one day, the bishop will die, while the diocese will remain; the pope dies, but the Church remains', Wyszyński, *Pro memoria*, vol. 7, pp. 82–83.

¹¹³ Michał Białkowski has written extensively on the topic, and I have therefore decided not to touch on it in my analysis. For a broader treatment, see Michał Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych: Zbiór dokumentów 1962–1965*, Lublin, 2019. Cardinal Wyszyński's assessment of the Council (also with the use of notes from *Pro memoria*) has been touched upon by Ewa Czaczkowska, 'Prymas Polski Stefan kardynał Wyszyński na Soborze Watykańskim II', in *Studia Soborowe*, 2 vols,

of the Greek Catholic¹¹⁴ and Armenian¹¹⁵ denominations. The journal should also facilitate the development of research into relations between the Church and state in the Polish People's Republic, mainly at the central level. Specifically, *Pro memoria* is an important source for analysing the fluctuations in these relations and a *sui generis* calendar of repressions aimed against the clergy. New syntheses concerning these issues are necessary in order to help bring our knowledge up to date. In addition to *Pro memoria*, the potential authors of such performe potential works should also utilize Church sources gathered in the various diocesan archives (and primarily in WAA and the SPP), access to which is being systematically improved. Next, the journal is crucial for research into the eastern policy of the Holy See and the situation of the Church in other countries of the Soviet bloc, especially in their comparative aspects; to give but one example supporting this recommendation, the Primate made regular references to the fate of Cardinal József Mindszenty.

It is my stated opinion that *Pro memoria* will prove equally useful in researching issues of key importance for the history of the Polish People's Republic, and in particular the 'Polish months'. The Primate's reflections on these matters provide us with the opportunity of at least supplementing the version of events hitherto presented in historical works.

Further, the journal gives us a unique view of the problems of everyday life in postwar Poland as experienced by ordinary citizens. Importantly, this concerns not only the curtailing of the rights of Catholics by the authorities, but also the material standing of Polish families, and their access to education and culture. Last but not least, *Pro memoria* contains numerous interesting reflections on Communist propaganda and its effectiveness.

I can only agree with Paweł Skibiński's observation, and would like to extend it to the entire book. He observed that:

Clearly, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's notes from the years 1948–49 and 1951–52 can in many ways supplement and rectify our image of the social, cultural and religious life of Poles in the immediate postwar period, as

ed. Michał Białkowski, Toruń, 2013–15, vol. 1: *Historia i nauczanie Vaticanum II*, 2013, pp. 143–68.

¹¹⁴ Krzysztof Mikołajczuk, *Uprawnienia Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego wobec Kościoła Greckokatolickiego w archiwaliach Prymasa i Konferencji Episkopatu Polski*, Lublin, 2014.

¹¹⁵ Michał Białkowski, 'Prymas Stefan Wyszyński jako ordynariusz wiernych obrządku ormiańskiego: Szkic do dziejów religijnych diaspory Ormian polskich w latach 1957–1981', in *Biskupi w rzeczywistości politycznej Polski 'ludowej'*, ed. Rafał Łatka, 2 vols, Warsaw, 2020–22, vol. 2, 2022, pp. 32–52.

they allow us to look at the Church, Poland and Communism through the eyes of the most eminent spiritual authority — apart from John Paul II — of twentieth-century Poland.¹¹⁶

And on a final note: the value of *Pro memoria* for historians and other researchers of Polish history is further augmented by the authenticity of the Primate's reflections, his thoroughness in assessing events and people, and the sincere honesty that reveals itself in his notes.¹¹⁷

(Translated by Maciej Zakrzewski)

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¹¹⁶ Skibiński, 'Wstęp', p. XXVII.

¹¹⁷ As opposed to the journal authored by Mieczysław Rakowski (another diary often used by researchers of the Polish People's Republic), *Pro memoria* — as we have already observed — is free of any changes that could have been made subsequently by Wyszyński, and of interference by third persons. For more concerning the far-reaching 'corrections' introduced into the work of the last I Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, see Michał Przeperski, 'Anatomia reakcji: Przypadek *Dzienników politycznych* Mieczysława F. Rakowskiego', *Polska 1944/45–1989: Studia i materiały*, 18, 2020, pp. 223–54.

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