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## **The axiological diversity of the European far right in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

### **The right wing on the border between religion and politics**

The term right is one of the key concepts used to describe contemporary political thought (Tokarczyk, 2010: 32). The dichotomous division between the right and the left, used for over two hundred years to name contradictory political forces, allows for the classification of most political doctrines of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Godlewski, 2008: 19). As a result of intuitive division, right-wing groups are naturally opposed to left-wing groups, but despite the widespread perception of both concepts as antonyms, they are semantically vague (Polkowska, 2015: 19). Attempts to determine whether the definition of the right wing is controversial and the evolution of the concept itself and the ideological diversity of the right wing increase the definition difficulties, yet the creation of a doctrinal model of the right wing is helpful in the classification of political groups (Bojarowicz, 2013: 47). The division into the right and the left is characteristic of the traditional typology of political thought, which focuses on the doctrines created within the Western world, although thanks to the influence of the Western civilization model it is sometimes extended to other political cultures (Bäcker, 2004: 107). It considers the inability to separate political concepts from the moral, philosophical or ideological beliefs of those who use them to be one of the main problems related to political concepts (Heyewood, 2009: 16). It is particularly justified, considering the subject of the article, to consider the right as an orientation concerning the sphere of political axiology (Sokół, 1999: 237).

The issue of the axiological conditioning of right-wing political ideas allows us to look at them in a broader context than the sphere of politics. For this reason, right-wing political movements may be of particular interest for research on the borderline between social sciences and religious sciences. The political science of religion understood as a general study of the relations between the spheres of religion and politics proposes to determine the research fields in which this influence takes place. Among the designat-

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ed research fields, for the study of religious conditions of the right wing, it will be helpful to focus on the issues identified as:

- 1) teaching religion with direct political content and message (religion as the legitimization of power, political theology);
- 2) the attitude of politicians and political groups towards religion (implementation of religious principles in the sphere of politics);
- 3) issues occurring within a secular society, which do not have religious motivations, but nevertheless have an impact on the religious sphere (similarity of political movements to religion, ethnic mythology, tradition in a quasi-religious approach) (Michalak, 2014: 5-11);
- 4) relations between religious entities, when the dependencies concern the sphere of politics, so that these entities become *de facto* political actors.

The current dominant discourse defining politics as the management of people and resources by means of legal and political forms shaped by social contract seems to be insufficient to fully describe the issue. As Bogumił Grott notes, limiting the research horizon to strictly political matters, historical events and related state forms in isolation from the fundamental values for the formation of particular cultures makes it impossible to conduct exhaustive research on the political ideas of the right wing (Grott, 2015: 17). The dependence between axiology and politics is an issue that divides the movements of the far right, depending on the religious or philosophical values represented. Right-wing groups express the will to restore social institutions appropriate to the pre-revolutionary order, but adapted to current conditions (monarchist movements, integral nationalism, concepts of the New Middle Ages), or assuming the impossibility of returning to the old forms and irreversibility of social changes, they postulate the creation of new religious-philosophical and political forms that express what is always valid (integral traditionalism, conservative revolution). The question of the choice between one of these two paths seems to be the main axis differentiating the movements of the far right, which does not exclude the existence of political movements which, on this ground, constitute a hybrid of Christian and neo-pagan values.

The aim of the article will be to present the definition of the far right by establishing its conceptual core allowing for its inclusion in relation to the values and attitudes typical for the right and originating in the supra-political sphere. This will allow us to move away from the distant right wing by referring to specific historical ideologies or defining it as an opposition to modernity, expressed in anti-liberalism or anti-democracy. This approach will allow us to point out two axiologically conditioned, fundamental paths of development of far-right groups, which originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but which also allowed for distinguishing themselves in the contemporary political scene.

## **The definition of the far right and the conceptual core of the right in historical terms**

Ryszard Herbut introduced the concept of the far right in Polish science as a term for political groups which, appearing at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, questioned the logic of the democratic system. The adjective “far” referred to the systematics of John Huber and Ronald Inglehart, which defined in points the degree of leaning away from the center in the existing political space (Herbut, 2004). As helpful in defining the described notion, he points out related terms such as right-wing radicalism, right-wing extremism, populism, or anti-system party. Most of these terms are defined negatively, with emphasis on their antidemocratic or anti-liberalism, which leads to the reference to the category of far right groups created by Max Weber as having no ideology of their own, as a reaction to left-wing ideologies. Right-wing extremism is also translated as a reaction to the modernization of society, locating supporters of the far right as those who lose out on the changes taking place, as opposed to the ‘winners’, i.e. the initiators of these changes in the form of left-wing or “left-libertarian” parties. The parties of the far right, seen in this way, constitute a model for the concept of “anti-parties” introduced by Herbut. Based on the above assumptions, “nationalism, xenophobia, belief in the ideal of security and order and the postulate of a welfare (welfare) state” have been indicated as the core of the far right ideology, although its beneficiaries are to be only representatives of their own nation (Herbut, 2004: 108).

In her book *The New Extreme Right in selected Western European Countries*, Joanna Jankiewicz defined the title issue in the context of current politics and the parliamentary system. The role of a charismatic leader and the particular predisposition of the extreme right to exploit social moods, especially dissatisfaction with the politics of the establishment parties, linking the right with populism were emphasized. For a concise presentation of the essence of the extreme right wing movements, she points to a general definition as “a system of ideas whose utopian components contain a denial of the existing status quo”. This view is in line with the notion of the extreme right as an anti-party. Recalling Michael Minkenberg’s view (the so-called modernization theory), she described the new extreme right as an attempt to halt the social changes that began in 1968. In this respect, the core of the extreme right-wing ideology is “the myth of a homogeneous nation and the opposition to liberal and pluralist democracy” (Jankiewicz, 2007: 13-22).

Jacek Bartyzel’s deliberations, described as *An Attempt to theorize the notion of the right*, are helpful in systematizing the problem of the far right. Considering the frequency of the concept in everyday political discourse, it is not clearly defined and often its colloquial meaning, known from political journalism, is inaccurate or directly incorrect

in political sciences. Taking into account the moment in history when the term right wing appeared, the author emphasizes the importance of changes in the socio-political sphere and the resulting tendency to assign different meanings to the right wing, depending on the current circumstances. Bartyzel points to the following changes in the common meaning of the term right-wing:

- 1) reducing the original association of the right wing with aristocracy, feudalism and monarchy;
- 2) the tendency to associate the right wing with national (nationalist) movements, which has been emerging since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- 3) the attempts since the 1930s to identify the so-called extreme right wing with movements that constitute a synthesis of socialist and nationalist elements (fascism, national socialism);
- 4) tendency to define as right-wing any anti-communist view;
- 5) a tendency characteristic of Anglo-Saxon countries, also in Poland since 1989, to over-emphasize the notion of the right wing in economic matters, such as the defense of the free market and capitalism (Bartyzel, 2016).

Trying to identify the broadest concept, which takes into account different types of right-wing, Bartyzel pointed to such terms as the party of order or the conservative party. This term retains its meaning in countries whose socio-political system is characterized by elements worth preserving from the point of view of the traditional counter-revolutionary right-wing. On the other hand, in countries where, as a result of political or industrial revolutions, the traditional social order has been destroyed, these terms lose their validity and are replaced by seemingly contradictory terms such as conservative revolution or revolution from the right.

The notion of the right, defined as an antinomy to the left, in the context of the parliamentary democracy system, reflects the conflictual nature of politics, finding confirmation in the empirical political reality. In such an approach, it is difficult to indicate the substantive meaning of both terms, but it reflects their location in the existing political sphere. In view of the above, it is assumed that the concepts of the right and the left are contradictory and that the political movement cannot be both right and left (Bobbio, 1996). Dyad right-left is described in science in the horizontal and vertical dimension. Describing a horizontal approach, one can place the antithetical notions of the right and left on a horizontal axis located in the political sphere behind Norberto Bobbio, which leads to the transformation of the dyad into a triad (left, centre, right) and a pentad (extreme left, left, centre, right and extreme right), as well as further distinctions. Vertical, as a criterion, indicates the form of government that is exercised “from bottom to top” or “top to bottom”, which makes it possible to distinguish between a hierarchical and egalitarian vision of social and political order. As an argument for vertical differentiation, Bartyzel points to the antique “archetypes” of the right and left, i.e. Greek aristocrats and democrats, or Roman Optimates and Populares (Bartyzel, 2016: 26).

The above definitions of the concept of the right wing have a classification value within a specific political reality, but do not answer the question about the features common to successive historical incarnations of the right wing. The criterion of attitude towards the French and industrial revolutions indicated by Andre Siegfried is helpful, as it gives the possibility to separate the right, the center and the left from the Western civilization. The emergence of new types of right wing, such as the conservative revolution or integral traditionalism, has made the classical distinguishing features insufficient and has led to the emergence of ideas in the empirics of political life that could be classified as right-wing and left-wing in different ways.

At this point, it is justified to recall three levels of identification of right-wing ideas, occurring together, i.e. in the metapolitical, strictly political and socio-economic dimension. The metapolitical dimension can be defined directly after Aleksander Bocheński, as political mysticism (Bocheński, 1989), recognizing movements proclaiming the “primacy of the spirit over matter”, the metaphysical source of power and social order, or the legal-natural foundation of the state and law as right-wing movements. For this reason, the distinguishing feature of the right wing at the metapolitical level is the creation of a positive political theology and the reference to a specifically understood tradition (Bartyzel, 2016: 26). In the political sphere, which focuses on authority and the goal of power, these distinguishing features will be especially: the inbounding of the sovereign’s decisions by public opinion and the mechanism of direct democracy, the non-interference of power in the pre-political sphere, the principle of subsidiarity, or the opposition of the idea of government to the limited idea of the all-encompassing Leviathan. Despite the great diversity of right wings in socio-economic terms, we will take the defense of private property against all kinds of collectivism, in the form of extreme communism or moderate communism, social democracy and the welfare state as our determinant.

Based on the above findings, taking into account the diversity of right-wing ideologies, or recognizing the multiplicity of right wings (Remond, 2008), it is considered impossible to describe the right wing as a coherent political doctrine. After Bartyzel, the method of establishing the main motif, a kind of core linking the historical incarnations of the right, can be adopted. Taking into account the variability of the political and socio-economic sphere, the metapolitical sphere, i.e. what, being above politics, influences the conditions in which politics itself functions, should be considered authoritative. The essence of right-wing thinking is the defense of the traditional social order, as given “from above” and based on the axiological foundation of religion or tradition established by the historical development of society. Therefore, the counter-revolutionary right, represented by Joseph de Maistre, as the first chronologically, exemplary and full incarnation of the right should be considered as representative in the light of the above mentioned distinguishing features (Bartyzel, 2016: 40). Further clarification of the concept of far right requires a definition of how this far right should be understood. Hence, the far right category includes political movements whose agenda includes el-

ements of the ideological core of the right and is radical in demanding the restoration of traditional socio-political institutions without compromising on political ideologies based on egalitarian philosophy.

### **Representative types for the far right**

Bearing in mind the original nature of the right wing, as a political formation defending the monarchy and the hierarchical structure of society, its basic type can be described as counter-revolutionary movements, referred to as the “traditionalist extreme right of right wing” (Bartyzel, 2016: 41). The representatives of traditionalism, steadfastly defending dynastic legitimacy and the mystical concept of royal power, were the hardest core of the counter-revolution throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As an example of the further evolution of this far-right trend, one can point to the Spanish Carlism, which saw its aim in the restoration of a legitimate monarch and the organization of the entire state life on the basis of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The ideological movements of this trend operated under conditions of gradual loss of their natural social base, which was the aristocracy, yet dynastic legitimacy was held by its representatives throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Due to the aim of the article, more attention should be paid to far-right groups, which, acting in the post-revolutionary reality, tried to adapt old political forms to the conditions of modernity. Assuming that the legitimacy of the right wing sought to re-establish the pre-revolutionary order, subsequent groups wanted to preserve those elements that allowed them to adapt to the changing world. The concept of nation sovereignty or nation state became a reference point for modern politics, thus pushing out of current politics the traditionalist right wing, considered extinct by some researchers (Remond, 2008: 61).

An example of the described changes was the process of integrating the notion of the right wing with ideas of a national character, which progressed at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nationalism, despite its revolutionary provenance, attempted to adapt the monarchist idea and the social teaching of the Church as a necessary consolidation for the postulated political order. Early nationalist thought was imbued with the spirit of positivism, taking the form of so-called scientific nationalism. The expression of this process on Polish soil was the transition of the National Democracy from positions expressed in works such as *Egoizm narodowy wobec etyki* (Eng. National Egoism towards the Ethics) by Zygmunt Balicki or *Mysli nowoczesnego Polaka* (Eng. Thoughts of a Modern Pole) by Roman Dmowski to 1927 and Dmowski's work, *Kościół, naród i państwo* (Eng. Church, Nation and State) and the later formula of Catholic totalism.

Over time, the influence of Catholic social teaching on the shape of national and right-wing ideas has reached an unprecedented level. The most complete example of this type of ideological formation is French integral nationalism, whose main ideologist was

Charles Maurras. The process of adapting the integral institutions of the monarchy to the needs of nationalism, as a form of power best suited to the French nation, is interesting. Maurras did not see the possibility of France's existence without a king and ruling dynasty, which were to be the best glue of the nation state. The goal was not to restore the monarchy, but to rebuild the French power through the monarchy. This approach to the problem of the monarchic system on the basis of French nationalism was called royalism. The monarchy, as a form of government, was to serve the national interest, because according to Maurras, everything that he considered valuable and worth preserving for the nation, without a system in the form of a hereditary monarchy, disappears and over time loses its meaning completely. The formula of integral nationalism was a development of nationalism in its general form, which in a sense was an incomplete ideology, forced to rely on the institutions of republicanism or parliamentary democracy. The political formula of Action Française assumed that royalism combined with the postulates of nationalism complements them, hence the term integral nationalism (Bartyzel, 2016: 123-124). The ideology shaped by Action Française exerted a decisive influence on the formation of the whole ideological formula defined as Christian nationalism. The importance of the Maurrasian school for the subject of the article is emphasized by the division described by Aleksander Trzaska-Chrząszczewski (Bartula, 1995), who divided the movements of the 1920s and 1930s right wing into the Maurrasian branch and the Nietzschean-Pareto-Spenglerian branch, which was inspired by vitalistic naturalism and the concepts of Pareto, Spengler or Sorel. Trzaska-Chrząszczewski in 1939 emphasized the axiological duality of anti-democratic movements, which epitomized the "outflow of ideology" (Trzaska-Chrząszczewski, 1981). Action Française is an example that strong religious motivations do not have to go hand in hand with obedience to the Church hierarchy and religious dogmas. In the case of Maurras and Action Française, the most eloquent issue is the excommunication of the leader and supporters of Action Française by Pope Pius XI (Wielomski, 2006).

The question of the interdependence of religion and politics was different in Germany. Polish science refers to the achievements of Leon Halban, an eminent researcher of the religious determinants of the German political idea, who in his analysis went far back in the history of Germany in order to look for sources of religious and philosophical views that were to be the foundation for later forms of German nationalism (Grott, 2015: 11). He noted the existence of an uneven German culture, expressed in the humanistic and universalistic values of the Spirit of Weimar and in the expansionist and chauvinistic tendencies known as the Spirit of Potsdam (Grott, 2006). He treated the new religious forms as a response to the still visible unevenness of Germany with the Protestant majority and a significant Catholic minority. A significant role in the creation of new forms of German religiousness was played by references to old religious forms, especially Germanic beliefs. The Volkisch movement itself acted in two ways, on the one

hand trying to Germanize Christianity, on the other hand shaping ideas that rejected it completely and referred directly to pagan myths.

Paul de Lagarde is considered to have had the greatest influence on the formation of Volkism (Mosse, 1972). Drawing on the pre-Christian beliefs of the Germanic peoples, he realized the process of so-called paganization of Christianity. Based on the assumption that religions are created through revelation and not through free creation, de Lagarde believed that the task was not to create a new religion, but to pave the way for a national religion by adapting Christianity to the needs of the German national spirit. The new form of German religion was not to be Protestant (reformed) or Catholic, that is, universal, because it was to serve the spiritual unity of Germany (Grott, 1999: 28), so it had to lead to a departure from orthodox Christianity in favour of neopagan ethics. De Lagarde himself, departing from conservatism, opposed liberalism, and considered the form of the political system best suited to the German soul monarchy, especially in the Prussian version (Bugajska-Moskal, 2012). *Deutsche Christen*, described as deformed Christianity (after Halban), became a characteristic form of religiousness.

Another of the ideologists of Volkism, Friedrich Lange expressed his views on the axiological determinants of German politics in a work entitled *The True Germans. Outlines of the national view* issued in 1904. Based on the assumptions about the harmfulness of the denominational division of Germany, the harmfulness of Catholic universalism, as well as the loss of social influence by Protestantism, he formulated the thesis of the need for a supra-confessional form of Christianity in Germany. Specific to the general Volkism was the view that Christianity was dying, yet Lange did not anticipate the need for a radical break with this religion. The essence of this process is better defined by the title of one of the main works of Lange *From Christianity to Germans*, reflecting the main motive of Volkism, which was “deepening Germanism” which was to unite Germany spiritually, to the same extent as Great Britain or France. Over time, elements taking into account social issues and postulating the nationalization of workers’ parties began to appear in Lange’s work, which opened the Volkist right to the concepts of Prussian socialism or Nazism (Grott, 2016). Within Volkism, there were also factions that were completely diverging from Christianity. As part of the neopagan trend, the Viennese writer, poet and journalist Guido List, the creator of the so-called Armenianism, referring to Old Germanic beliefs, pointed to the special historical role and special racial features of Germanic peoples (Mikoś, 2006).

### **The avant-garde of the far right**

The movements that can be described as representatives of naturalistic vitalism in the light of the definition of the far right are of particular importance in the light of the adopted definition of the far right. The political movements of this trend, based on the assumptions of Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy, rejected the possibility of a return to

religious, political or social forms from before the changes initiated by the revolution of 1789, which they saw complemented in the order shaped after 1918. Among the representatives of the distant right wing who were attached to the hierarchical structure of society, the new post-war reality was the cause of a revolt against the changes taking place, which was expressed in opposition to the social and political reality of the time.

A good example of this ideological attitude is the movement called the German Conservative Revolution. It was not a uniform ideology, more like a collection of ideas that opposed the bourgeois division between the right and the left, the liberal and conservative worldview. Nevertheless, in the light of the accepted elements of the ideological core of the far right, it is its clear representative. It proclaimed the need for a political order beyond Marxist socialism and democratic liberalism, which, despite their opposition to each other, were essentially the expression of the nineteenth-century revolutionary dialectic (Gabiś, Kunicki, 1999). The Conservative Revolution did not seek to create political structures or mass character, it was an intellectual movement in the sphere of metapolitics, creating ideas that were to become the basis for future forms of the German state.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of the Conservative Revolution, it is only possible to define a set of common features characteristic of the representatives of this trend. Definitional difficulties led to the definition of the whole idea of the Conservative Revolution as modern attitudes forced to last temporarily within the framework of the bourgeois order shaped by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Edgar Julius Jung's view, the conservative revolution consists in a return to respect for elementary laws and values which, by expressing a bond with God and nature, allow to build a true order. Instead of equality, it proposes a just social hierarchy, and instead of state coercion, responsible self-management. A characteristic feature of the thoughts of the conservative revolutionaries were anarchic attitudes, unheard of on the right, which on the one hand were an expression of individualism and individual power, and on the other hand a form of opposition to the bourgeois reality characterized by the domination of materialism over an idea.

Wojciech Kunicki described the Conservative Revolution as a collection of ideologies whose common feature was the opposition to the modernization that was taking place in German society at that time. Leaving aside the consideration of the Conservative Revolution by reference to nationalism or liberalism, Kunicki proposed to put at the center the issue of the relation to technology (civilization acceleration), treating liberalism, socialism or nationalism as a tool of this acceleration, working quantities which, after a number of alliances, were negated by conservative revolutionaries. For the generation of creators of the described political movement, the forming experience was the World War I, which through the massing of warfare and new means of fighting made them aware of the superiority of technology over man, making it impossible to return to the reality of the pre-industrial world. According to revolutionary conservatives, the experience of participating in material battles was a kind of selection, which led to the emergence of the elite of the new state, and with it a model of hierarchical bond, which,

being outside the order based on a free social contract, pointed to relationships that were impossible to denounce and absolutely binding. This experience was supposed to shape the trend of new nationalism, defined over time, mainly by Armin Mohler, as a Conservative Revolution (Gabiś, Kunicki, 1999).

The political ideal of the conservative revolution was the form of the new Reich. The very slogan "Third Reich" appeared as part of the journalism of the Conservative Revolution. With regard to democratic ideals, the very postulate to try again the "metaphysically conditioned political form of the Reich" (Gabiś, Kunicki, 1999: 36) was a complete opposition to the reality of the Weimar Republic. The idea of the Reich in the view of the conservative revolution was a 'superstate', a form of rule that was above nationalities, leaving them untouched and recognizing the identification of nationalities with the state as a feature of thinking in national-democratic categories. The Conservative Revolution, due to its economy and communication, demanded large territorial units, but due to the civilizational and technical development of the division of labor characteristic of economically differentiated imperial creations, which were the opposite of centralized nation states.

The Conservative Revolution is divided into a nationally revolutionary, revolutionary and reforming (Volkist) trend and the so-called Young Conservatives. Apart from the above, as part of the Conservative Revolution, the phenomenon of youth associations, popular at the time in Germany, is placed. This division largely corresponds to the internal differentiation in the sphere of axiological legitimacy of particular trends of the Conservative Revolution.

The national revolutionaries wanted to see their movement as a kind of new nationalism, unrelated to monarchism, conservatism or patriotism of the past era. This trend did not focus on the biological concepts of the nation. On the grounds of axiology, they rejected the theological foundations of power. This was not due to the rejection of metaphysical elements in politics, which was due to the focus on the then emerging modernity, expressed in the form of a worker's existence, described by Ernst Jünger in the manifesto of new nationalism *Total Mobilization*, and then specified in the treaty *The Worker* of 1932. Jünger did not want to see the Worker in the light of the 19<sup>th</sup> century categories as a representative of the new state (Jünger, 2010). In the form of a worker's existence, he saw more of the incarnation of the principle of work proper to modernity, a manifestation of elementary power, indicating the worker's form of existence as an entity intended to rule over modern society. Characteristic of the national revolutionary trend was the idea of going beyond the right, taking the form of Prussian Socialism or National Bolshevism created by Ernst Niekisch.

Within the framework of the Conservative Revolution, the Volkist trend, despite its size, was an expression of the then widespread popularity among Germans of ideas referring to the pre-Christian Germanic heritage. Against the background of other trends in the conservative revolution, the Volkists were characterized by a racist opposition to

the Prussian tradition, resulting from the adoption of racist theories, as conditioned by the ethnically diverse composition of Prussia.

Young conservatives clearly referred to Christian theology, both Catholic (Carl Schmitt) and Protestant (Wilhelm Stapel). Due to its position in the world of politics, this trend is considered to be the most influential within the conservative revolution. Schmitt's work has had a significant influence on political theory, especially in the field of axiological conditioning of power, which seems to be a great example of an overlap between the spheres of religion and politics. Schmitt considered the Catholic Church, both as a historical entity and as an administrative apparatus, to be a continuator of Roman universalism. He pointed to the political power of influence of Catholicism, which was difficult to grasp in the teachings on the state. He gave the fullest expression to this when he described the issue of political theology and wrote directly that: "All significant concepts of modern state science are secularized theological concepts". In his work, Schmitt referred to classics from the far right such as Louis de Bonald, de Maistre or Juan Donoso Cortes. He referred to the theory of the German lawyer Erich Kaufmann, who saw legal and political issues as having their source in "the unity that binds all the spiritual forms of expression of a given epoch" (Schmitt, 2000).

The ideology of integral traditionalism, initiated by René Guenon and developed by Julius Evola, has similar significance for the question of the far right as the Conservative Revolution. Evola is one of the most expressive figures of the Italian far right and his work and his relations with the fascist regime have given rise to controversy. He gained fame as a dadaistic painter, a representative of futurism, with time he moved his activity to the field of philosophy. For his philosophical inspirations, Zbigniew Mikołajko points to Carlo Michelstaedter<sup>1</sup>, creator of the concept of the so-called persuasion and rhetoric, Otto Weiniger and Nietzsche (Mikołajko, 1998: 50-53), which allows to assign Evola to the trend of naturalistic vitalism.

As fundamental issues for his metapolitics concepts, Evola considered the issue of counter-revolution, as well as specifically understood Primordial Tradition, to be fundamental. As the main determinant of belonging to the counter-revolutionary trend, he considered the complete rejection of all ideas and groups that originated in the ideals of the revolutions of 1789 and 1848. Evola considered the very phrase "counter-revolution" to be imprecise, and instead proposed the phrase "reaction" (Evola, 2014: 84). Explaining the seemingly contradictory concept of a conservative revolution, Evola referred to the original Latin meaning of the word *re-volvere*, which defined the revolution as a return to the original point. Evola's vision of the state must be based on spiritual values that are beyond the sphere of economics. In such an approach, "for authentic conservative revolutionaries, what really counts is fidelity not to past forms and institutions, but to the principles whose forms and institutions were specific expressions, ade-

<sup>1</sup> The figure of Carlo Michelstaedter, a philosopher from Gorizia, was described by Claudio Magris in his novel *A Different Sea*. Michelstaedter committed suicide at the age of 23.

quate to a particular epoch” (Evola, 2014: 84). On the grounds of evolving axiology, the main role is played by the concept of Tradition, which according to its “true meaning is not a servile adaptation to what was, nor a fixation of what was in the present” (Evola, 2014: 87). For Evola, Tradition is meta-historical and dynamic at the same time; it is revealed in the order which constitutes the expression of “principles given from above”. He regarded the empire, authority, hierarchy, social classes and, above all, the primacy of the political element over socio-economic issues as the axioms of a revolutionary-conservative attitude. The racial theories developed by Evola, in contrast to the prevailing tendency at the time, focused mainly on spiritual issues, Renzo de Felice treated Evola’s work on this ground as rejecting racism conditioned only biologically (Mikołajko, 1998: 81).

## Conclusions

The presented approach to the far right, by going beyond the political sphere, pointing to its conditionality in religion, philosophy, or metapolitics, allowed to indicate a catalogue of common features, independent of specific historical realities. This allowed us to depart from the frequent interpretation of the idea of the far right as neo-fascism or populism. The far right, defined as a political formation that adheres to the primacy of the spirit over matter, defending the order “given from above”, whether in the form of religion, monarchy, specifically understood tradition or hierarchical vision of society, radically rejected all ideas based on egalitarianism, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries expressed in the ideas of liberalism, socialism or parliamentary democracy.

Such a definition made it possible to distinguish two fundamental varieties of the far right, on the one hand movements that postulate to base the political and social order on the values characteristic of the pre-revolutionary reality, and on the other hand ideas rejecting the possibility of returning to the old political or religious forms, referring to the specifically understood Primordial Tradition, postulating the creation in the conditions of modernity of forms that express values that remain valid regardless of a specific moment in history.

The first of these varieties, which can be described as the Maurrasian branch, as already mentioned, and which is expressed in the formation of Christian nationalism, which is still popular today, especially in Catholic countries, is seeking inspiration in the social teaching of the Catholic Church. As a result of social and moral changes, which are reflected in the gradual reduction of the social and political influence of the Church, it seems to lose its dynamics, especially noticeable in the period of shaping integral nationalism.

The second variety, described by reference to the category of Nietzschean-Pareto-Spenglerian branch, expressed in the conservative revolution and integral traditionalism as a result of the historical events of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had no chance of being fully resonant. The advent of the National Socialists in Germany in the case of the

Conservative Revolution, or the Fascists in Italy in the case of evolving traditionalism, did not allow for the free formation of movements of this trend. Total regimes adapted certain elements of these ideologies to their needs, including representatives of the described ideas, such as Schmitt or Evola, who occupied exposed positions within the aforementioned regimes. Although it should be stressed that Evola or Jünger with time expressed their opposition to the populist, mass character of Nazism and fascism<sup>2</sup>. After the end of the World War II, the above-mentioned authors were pushed to the margins of political life for their cooperation with total regimes or for their ideological inspiration of fascism and national socialism.

Despite this, the ideas shaped in the avant-garde of the far right, as opposed to the Maurrassian branch by early rejection of traditional religious or political forms retained the ability to adapt to modernity. This was expressed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the influence of the Conservative Revolution or Evola on the radical right wing in Europe, especially in Italy or France (Mikołajko, 1998: 185-205). The French New Right, whose main ideologist, Alain de Benoist, considered the right wing to be “inclined to perceive the diversity of the world and, consequently, inequality as a necessary product and at the same time as a good, despite the progressing homogenization of the world, as proclaimed and implemented for two thousand years by egalitarian philosophy” (Wielomski, 2002: 169), was a particular expression of the influence of the ideas described above. Therefore, de Benoist did not consider the defense of tradition, but anti-egalitarianism, to be the essence of right-wing thinking. Guillaume Faye, inspired by both the conservative revolution and integral traditionalism, also came from the New Right and, when creating the concept of archeofuturism, referred to the concept of vitalistic constructivism, proclaimed the need to reconcile traditionalism understood as a return to the forgotten roots of Europe with futurism (Bielawski, 2018).

Nowadays, an example of views characteristic of the far right is Daniel Friberg, who, in his book *The Return of the True Right*, predicts the end of half a century of marginalization of the idea of the traditional right wing. In his work, he refers to both the traditionalism of Evola and the later environment of the New Right (Friberg, 2017). The publishing house Arktos Media, of which he is a co-founder, has so far published a significant part of Evola's works, representatives of the Conservative Revolution (Oswald Spengler, Ernst von Salomon, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck) or theorists of the French New Right. The trend reflected in the action of the political movements of the far right, such as the environment centered around Friberg or the French identitarian movement, which gains supporters all over Europe, may determine the return of ideas described as the avant-garde of the far right, which is conditioned by the weakness of European Christianity.

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<sup>2</sup> In Jünger's case, the novel *On the Marble Cliffs* (Ger. *Auf den Marmorclippen*), published in 1939, which is a cult work in the anti-Nazi opposition circles, becomes a symbol.

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**Abstract:** The subject of the article is the issue of axiological diversity of political movements of the far right, understood on the basis of metapolitics, i.e. religious, philosophical or civilizational values. The far right considered on this ground allows us to define the so-called ideological core, i.e. the characteristics of this political trend. The fundamental features of the far right in this approach are the primacy of spiritual values over material ones and radical social and political anti-egalitarianism, expressed in opposition to subsequent ideologies referring to the egalitarian ideals of the Enlightenment. The opposition to modernity, in its real form, was common to all the factions of the far right. The difference is visible, however, between the supporters of the restoration of old socio-political institutions and those who, under the influence of nihilism, rejected the possibility of returning to the past institutions, postulating the creation of new forms expressing the eternal traditional principles. From this point of view, it is possible to indicate the fundamental paths of development of the far right, which began in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet still retain their cognitive value in relation to the contemporary movements of this trend.

**Keywords:** far right, political axiology, political science of religion, conservative revolution, nationalism

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