

Daria Mazur

PAX and Socialist Realism: A Marriage of Convenience?

The term 'socpaxist realism'¹ defines works by authors associated with the milieu of Bolesław Piasecki² in the years 1949–1956 (the so-called movement of socially progressive Catholics) and with the *Dziś i Jutro*³ weekly that it published. The specificity of these works stemmed from the attempts at reconciliation of a religious world-view with full acceptance of the Stalinist course taken by the authorities. Socpaxist authors keenly tapped into the concept of Catholic realism.⁴ The postulate of describing the reality in its material and spiritual aspects was, however,

-
- 1 Socpaxist realism: a term describing a phenomenon specific to Polish literary life at the time of Stalinism consisting in the combination of the doctrine of socialist realism with the Catholic world-view. It is external to the discourse of the era and pejoratively loaded. See: Daria Mazur, 'Realizm katolicki' [Catholic realism], in: *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego* [Dictionary of socialist realism], Zdzisław Łapiński, Wojciech Tomasiak (eds.), Kraków: Universitas, 2004, p. 245–256; eadem, 'Realizm socpaxowski – próba charakterystyki (refleksje nad "krytyką syzyfową")' [Socpaxist realism – an attempt at characterization (reflections on "Sisyphian criticism")], in: *Socrealizm. Fabuły – komunikaty – ikony* [Socialist realism. Storylines – communications – icons], Krzysztof Stępnik, Magdalena Piechota (eds.), Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2006, pp. 547–560; eadem, *Realizm socpaxowski* [Socpaxist realism], Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, 2013. Michał Głowiński was the one to apply the term 'socpaxist' in reference to Zygmunt Lichniak, a leading critic from *Dziś i Jutro*. See: idem, 'Powieść na miarę naszych czasów (Obywatele Kazimierza Brandysa)' [A novel for our times ("Citizens" by Kazimierz Brandys)], in: idem, *Rytuał i demagogia. Trzyнадцать szkiców o sztuce zdegradowanej* [Ritual and demagoguery. Thirteen sketches on degraded art], Warszawa: Open, 1992, p. 52.
 - 2 *Editors' note*: Bolesław Piasecki (1915–1979), politician, activist of pre-war extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic organizations. After the war, he cooperated with the communist authorities as the organizer and leader of the PAX Association.
 - 3 *Editors' note*: *Dziś i Jutro* (Today and Tomorrow) was published in the years 1945–1956. In 1955, it was entered on the list of press publications banned by the Catholic Church.
 - 4 See: Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze* [Introduction to literary studies], vol. 1, Warszawa: PAX, 1954, p. 109; eadem, "'Literatura katolicka" jako termin w nauce o literaturze' ['Catholic literature' as a term in literary studies], in: eadem, *Studia i szkice literackie* [Literary studies and sketches], Warszawa: PAX, 1953, pp. 9–20; eadem, 'Zagadnienie oceny literatury katolickiej. Próba ujęcia zagadnienia' [The issue

pushed to the background, while the main emphasis was on the assumption that a literary vision should express a critical attitude to systems that abused social classes, nations or races.⁵ The crystallization of this trend was fundamentally aided by the doctrine of socialist realism.⁶ It was the doctrine of choice in specifying the tasks of literature, the social role of writers, the choice of themes and motifs. Socialist realist poetics moderated the creations rooted in the concept of co-existence of spiritual and Marxist world-views (what was called 'plurality of world-views'⁷) as the attitude sanctioning the political position of Piasecki's group.

The activities of the circle led after 1945 around the pre-war leader of the radical right (ONR Falanga)⁸ were geared toward participation in the economic and political life and contributing to shaping the binding model of culture. The deal that Bolesław Piasecki struck with an NKVD general Ivan Serov following his arrest in 1944 obliged him to full cooperation with the communists, aiding the disintegration of the Polish Catholic Church and elimination of the underground independence movement.⁹ The consent of communist authorities to the publication of a magazine and to the establishment of a lay Catholic association came then at a price of nudging the clergy and the Catholic community to cooperate with the regime, of debilitating the AK¹⁰ circles and of propagating the alliance with the USSR.¹¹ The view put forward in *Dziś i Jutro* (a weekly published from

of evaluating Catholic literature. An attempt at definition], in: *Studia i szkice literackie*, op. cit., pp. 21–47.

5 See: Stefania Skwarczyńska, 'Zagadnienie...' op. cit., p. 38.

6 See: Daria Mazur, 'Realizm katolicki', op. cit.; eadem, 'Realizm socpaxowski...' op. cit.

7 Bolesław Piasecki, 'Zagadnienie znaczenia katolików we Froncie Narodowym' [The issue of significance of Catholics in the National Front], in: idem, *Kierunki. 1945–1960* [Directions. 1945–1960], Warszawa: PAX, 1981, p. 158. See: *ibid.*, pp. 134–136.

8 *Editors' note*: Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny Falanga (National Radical Camp Falanga), an illegal organization established in 1935, following the split of the National Radical Camp, whose leader was Bolesław Piasecki. It propagated a fascist programme.

9 See: Andrzej Friszke, Andrzej Paczkowski, "'Chcę współpracować'. Bolesława Piaseckiego memoriały więzienne" ['I want to cooperate'. Prison memoirs of Bolesław Piasecki], *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 15, 2007, p. 18. *Editors' note*: the same issue contains a collection of materials from the archives of Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (The Institute of National Remembrance) concerning Bolesław Piasecki, selected by the Editors of the current volume. The title of the article is 'Z teczki Piaseckiego' ('From Piasecki's file').

10 *Editors' note*: Armia Krajowa (the Home Army) was the largest underground Polish military organization during World War II. Its allegiance was to the Polish Government-in-Exile based out of London.

11 Barbara Fijałkowska, *Partia wobec religii i Kościoła w PRL* [Party vis-à-vis religion and the Church in People's Republic of Poland], vol. 1, Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski,

November 1945 by Piasecki's group) was dominated by the element of political agitation; the religious factor played a secondary role. It is difficult to find in the socpaxist works any traces of the declared intent to christianize the socialist system, a mission which, besides the alleged role of a mediator between the Party and the Church, was keenly cited by the leader of this movement as a justification of his ambiguous position.¹² This attitude guaranteed communist concessions to the group, which dubbed itself a movement of socially progressive Catholics – this term was meant to inflate their influence and to emphasize compliance with the trend of progressivism (one of the sources of the Stalinist concept of a new man). Piasecki's representatives (three deputies) entered the Sejm following the 1947 elections and, from March of that year, commenced the publication of the *Słowo Powszechne*¹³ daily. 'Field units of the editorial office, as well as the economic background in the form of INCO-Veritas manufacturing enterprises, were subsequent steps on the road toward the establishment of the PAX Association, finally constituted in 1951'.¹⁴ Piasecki's group was involved in the seizure of the Caritas Association¹⁵ from the church in 1950, and participated in the witch-hunt for priests charged in Stalinist show trials, 'which lent credibility to the communist repressions of Catholics'.¹⁶ Following the 1953 takeover of the *Tygodnik Powszechny*¹⁷ weekly, which had been

1999, pp. 83–85; Andrzej Friszke, *Przystosowanie i opór. Studia z dziejów PRL* [Adaptation and resistance. A study of the history of PRL], Warszawa: Biblioteka Więzi, 2007, pp. 42–49; Zygmunt Zieliński, *Kościół w Polsce 1944–2002* [The Catholic Church in Poland 1944–2002], Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2003, pp. 74–80; idem, 'Komu służył PAX?' [Whom did PAX serve?], in: *Komu służył PAX?*, Warszawa: PAX, 2008, pp. 51–92.

12 See: Barbara Fijałkowska, op. cit., pp. 84–85.

13 *Editors' note: Słowo Powszechne* (Common Word) was published in the years 1947–1997. It declared itself a Catholic publication, although it was never officially acknowledged by the Church authorities as their mouthpiece. It played a heinous role in the anti-Semitic persecutions of 1968.

14 Zygmunt Zieliński, *Kościół...*, op. cit., p. 75.

15 *Editors' note:* The Caritas Association is an international Catholic charity organization. In Poland, it was controlled by the communist authorities from 1949.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

17 *Editors' note: Tygodnik Powszechny* (The Catholic Weekly), published in Krakow since 1945. In 1956 it was reclaimed by its legitimate editorial team. It enjoyed great authority in Poland, as the most prominent magazine independent of the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland. It has consequently represented the moderate, 'open' fraction of Polish Catholicism.

shut down by the authorities, the PAX Association monopolized the publication of Catholic or, better said, paxist press.¹⁸

The ideological and political marriage of Catholics from Piasecki's group with Marxists might appear contradictory. However, opinions voiced by journalists close to the ONR¹⁹ in the 1930s attest to a congruence of their world-views and methods with elements of ideology and practice Marxists exhibited in Poland after World War II. Jan Józef Lipski²⁰ distinguishes the ideological and political assumptions of *Katolickie państwo narodu polskiego* ('The Catholic state of the Polish nation') postulated by Bepists (this name derives from the initials of their leader):

- 1) full concentration of power, both in state and social life; 2) wielded by the state authorities; 3) steered by the monoparty (Political Organization of the Nation [Organizacja Polityczna Narodu]); 4) hierarchically organized to model military organizations, with a chief at the helm; 5) availing itself of state coercion; 6) with a binding economic and social plan; 7) legitimizing itself with the only right ideology and the historical mission of the nation; 8) with the support of the nation.²¹

It is clear that this concept corresponded with the political and social reality that prevailed in Poland of the Stalinist times. One of the significant features of Bepists' attitude was their approval of various totalisms. They accepted the 'nationalistic, hierarchical tendency with a hinge of anti-Semitism'²² of Stalinism. They praised Hitler's state as one that was 'modern, future-oriented, based on dogmatic ideology and violence, hierarchical, nationalistic, anti-Semitic, imperialistic'.²³ Totalitarianisms, of the Soviet and Hitler's breed, were based on the authoritative, anti-capitalist, anti-liberal, anti-Semitic elements and on the collectivist ideology.²⁴ François Furet brings up the common denominator that was the object of particular fascination of the Bepists who strove to introduce a *iunctim* between the Church and politics:

18 See: *ibid.*, p. 80.

19 Editors' note: ONR (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny – National-Radical Camp) was an extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic organization established in 1934. Banned by the authorities of pre-war Poland.

20 Editors' note: Jan Józef Lipski (1926–1991) was a literary historian, publicist, political activist. One of the most prominent figures of Polish anti-communist opposition after 1956 and a successor of the Polish non-communist leftist traditions.

21 Jan Józef Lipski, *Katolickie państwo narodu polskiego* [The Catholic state of the Polish nation], London: Aneks, 1994, p. 27.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 40. See: Szymon Rudnicki, *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny. Geneza i działalność* [National Radical Camp. Genesis and activity], Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1985, pp. 264–265, 328.

24 See: Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, p. 16.

'Bolshevism and National Socialism shared a religion of power, the most openly professed in the world. To conquer and retain power, any means were good [...]'.²⁵

The issue of power, however, does not constitute a separate, autonomous thematic thread in the works produced in the vein of socpaxist realism; it is, on the other hand, used contextually in reference to such vital matters as work or combating the class enemy. Literary examples of depicting these phenomena represent three thematic spheres. The first two fit into the concept of paxist bequests to the communist regime, whereas the last attests to the political aspirations of the *Dziś i Jutro* milieu and to the laying of foundations for the acceptance of its representatives by the authorities. The first thematic sphere feeds into the vision of reality largely founded upon the 'security officials'.²⁶ Watching over the socialist order is the role of Security Office (UB) and members of the militia. These tropes were most often taken up in socpaxist prose (*Cierpkie Winogrona* ('Sour grapes') by Mateusz Żurawiec (real name: Zygmunt Lichniak); *Plebania z magnoliami* ('Presbytery with magnolias') by Stanisław Grochowiak; *Na przełaj* ('Running free') by Irena Sobocka; *Dzieci i bagaże* ('Children and luggage') by Zbyszko Bednorz). The second thematic sphere furnishes the negative images of emigration and of the discredited London government, so as to diminish the authority of émigré leaders in the Polish society, which was a feature typical also of socialist realism. Janina Kolendo's novel *Szukając drogi* ('Searching for the way') exemplifies this tendency. The main heroine, a Catholic named Lena, during her stay in London goes through the process of acquiring ideological consciousness and grows to understand the necessity of a cooperation between Catholics and Marxists in building socialism. Works of poetry, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with shaping the vision of Western states as synonyms of the enemy and of evil, in line with the rhetoric of a 'fight against imperialism'.²⁷ The third thematic sphere has to do with 'partyness' as a constitutive component of the socialist realist doctrine and as an element imbued in the contemporary depiction of authorities rendered in

25 François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Deborah Furet, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 191. See: Jan Józef Lipski, op. cit., pp. 81–111.

26 Wojciech Tomasiak, 'Towarzyszy z Bezpieczeństwa obraz' [The image of comrades from security], in: *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, op. cit., p. 360.

27 Włodzimierz Bolecki, 'Emigracji obraz' [The image of emigration], in: *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, op. cit., p. 58. These motifs are present in the poetic works of authors such as Mateusz Żurawiec, Waław Olszewski, Zdzisław Łączkowski, Maciej Józef Kononowicz, Józef Szczawiński, Mikołaj Bieszczadowski. See: Daria Mazur, *Realizm katolicki*, op. cit., pp. 254–255.

literature. Prose of the socpaxist trend reveals the authors' inclinations toward certain modifications of the category of partytyness, as manifested by introducing Party-affiliated characters who are characterized and act in such a way as to suggest links with the *Dziś i Jutro* circles and with its characteristic political attitude. Such literary devices influenced the protagonists of such novels as Janina Kolendo's *Szukając drogi* or Mateusz Żurawiec's *Cierpkie winogrona* and of the short stories by Wanda Chylicka (for example *Antyki* ('Antiques')). These protagonists represent the new intelligentsia – vigorous professionals who give work their best and who, at the same time, are ardent propagators of the 'plurality of world-views' of the socialist system.

The scene in which two officials of the Security Office pay a visit to Father Lubinia's presbytery in the 3rd part of Żurawiec's triptych entitled *Cierpkie winogrona*, which takes place shortly after the war in the Recovered Territories, contains a series of elements ascribed to the stereotypical image of Security Office functionaries in socialist realist works. In line with the convention, the author covers all tracks which could lead the reader toward the drastic associations with the apparatus of repression through which the new system was violently implemented. The officials, who have arrived in search of a secretary of German background by the name of Boszke, are depicted as good rangers, enforcing the law with patience, without any negative emotions. 'The image of "security comrades" is built using one of two methods in the literature of 1949–1955. The first consists in discrediting the stereotypical snoop/thug',²⁸ whereas the latter is on constructing an image which could radically change the society's attitude by being likeable. In these works, negative preconceptions about law enforcement are confronted with portrayals of its representatives as immaculate people devoted to their tough jobs, which are to build social trust and to strengthen the message that the commonly held pejorative opinion of Security Office officials is mistaken.

Żurawiec availed of both these methods in *Cierpkie winogrona* – he emphasized the cool politeness, the fear, the emotional anxiety and sadness of people who happened to witness the visit at the presbytery (Father Lubinia and his housemaid). The priest is afraid that it is him who is going to be arrested. However, one short conversation with the visitors dissipates his fears. The author thus attempted to discredit the prejudices and to propagate the thesis that the innocent must not be afraid of the punishing hand of the People's authority. Functionaries in Żurawiec's novel exhibit features which are typical of this type of characters in works of socialist realism but, similarly to other works of the Stalinist period – they are not

28 Wojciech Tomasiak, op. cit., p. 361.

central figures. Wojciech Tomasiak writes about the socialist realist renditions of comrades from the Security Office:

these are people whose faces reflect exhaustion (yellowish complexion, sunk-in cheeks, wrinkle-ridden foreheads), yet this does not dull their charm [...]. There are some young people across all ranks, but experienced Party activists, for whom employment in Security is a complement of their exemplary biographies, dominate.²⁹

And so Boszke, who collaborated with Werwolf and is the father of Lukaszek, leader of a diversion and sabotage gang, is being searched for by two Security functionaries of different ages. They are both characterized by restraint, patience, efficiency, focus on the task and politeness toward Father Lubinia, whom they address smiling. The narrative commentary: 'the younger one flashed a sharp, strangely experienced smile'³⁰ is to emphasize the burden of responsibility carried by the functionaries of the system and the importance of the cases they handle. In socialist realist literature, employees of the Security Office are, 'akin to miners, shipyard workers or peasants – participants of the social distribution of tasks. Even more, they are the people entrusted with the most difficult jobs'.³¹ Literary creations suggest that functionaries of the Security Office are not privileged as representatives of the authority, but rather are the guards of the system, who bear a heavy and dangerous burden. This feature is also highlighted by Irena Sobocka in her novel *Na przelaj* ('Running free'), set in the Recovered Territories. The character of a young militiaman, who is killed during the arrest of looters, is a telling example of a Promethean sacrifice. His death initiates the internal transformation of Honorata, an ideologically unconscious village girl who, after changing social circles, becomes a shock worker. The literary embodiments of the representatives of Security Office fuse a certain missionary element with the portrayal of their activities as hard daily labour, so widespread in the socialist system. In *Cierpkie winogrona* Żurawiec employed a lexical device that was popular in socialist realistic literature, namely: he used a euphemism to describe the investigative operations carried out by the Security Office (search of Boszke's room). The phrase: 'Formalities were taken care of by the younger one'³² suggests these actions were no different to an office job. Wojciech Tomasiak wrote that the manner of speaking of the characters representing the Security Office in socialist realist works of literature as well as the lexical resources

29 Ibid., pp. 362–363.

30 Mateusz Żurawiec, 'Cierpkie winogrona' [Sour grapes], in: idem, *Cierpkie winogrona*, Warszawa: PAX, 1954, p. 297.

31 Wojciech Tomasiak, op. cit., p. 362.

32 Mateusz Żurawiec, op. cit., p. 298.

relating to their job reveal a tendency to value them positively; 'the reader is given a clue that the institution of violence belongs to the sphere of normality',³³ which is associated with the semantic field of work.

Infiltration and disintegration of Polish émigré circles was a significant target of the communist intelligence services. These were accompanied by propaganda actions in the country, which aimed to discredit the government in exile. It was proclaimed that its members were

fascists from the [National Party], ONR and Sanation, extreme reactionaries, American spies, former collaborators. All of them, in the name of hostility toward new Poland, get involved with reactionary forces in America, forces that crave a new war and that want Poland to lose Western Territories. They are also ready to cooperate with neo-Hitlerism in Germany.³⁴

The image of the exiles that the main character of *Szukając drogi* encounters in Great Britain is constructed upon the fixed repertoire of communist propaganda. Janina Kolendo informs the readers that a ministerial job in the government in exile is a lucrative position, that the younger generation is losing touch with their Polish roots and that skilled workmen, instead of supporting their fatherland in restoration, prefer demeaning jobs in England. Two episodes in this book served the purpose of accumulating negative assessments of the leaders in exile. The first is Lena's conversation with her former history teacher, which suggests that she visited her ex-pupil as a Western spy, to wheedle information about Poland out of her and to convince her to stay abroad. At this point Lena reminisces about her imprisonment at the concentration camp and makes a reference to the threat of imperialism, in the face of which the status of an exile means, in her opinion, approval for pushing for war:

Did you know that small children scream horribly when they are burned? And did you know that these screams are not identical? You can tell voices apart. Listening to them can be an occupation you just cannot escape. You have to listen, you have to hear. Do you understand? There are some who want to force new people to keep listening. And others, who want to help them. But others do not.³⁵

The second episode meant to put the London government into disrepute is the conversation between Lena and general Wiśniowski, Anders's³⁶ chief of staff. The heroine

33 Wojciech Tomasiak, op. cit., p. 363.

34 Andrzej Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji* [The political life of émigrés], Warszawa: Biblioteka Więzi, 1999, p. 222.

35 Janina Kolendo, *Szukając drogi* [Searching for the way], Warszawa, 1952, p. 58.

36 *Editors' note*: Władysław Anders (1892–1970), Polish general and politician. Creator and Commander-in-Chief of Polish Armed Forces in the USSR. After the war, one of the leaders of Polish émigré circles.

accuses the émigré circles of fuelling the activities of the armed underground in the country and of involving young, politically unaware people in crime: 'It comes at a price, for sure, but not a high one, since the money is not theirs and the lives are not theirs, they're of a certain number of people whom they call hicks'.³⁷ Discrediting the post-Yalta emigration and what the communist propaganda referred to as 'self-appointed' government came hand in hand with ascribing all kinds of pathologies to it. 'The West – from the point of view of communists – was a grave, contagious disease, and so each return required a lengthy process of "treatment"'.³⁸ This is why Kolendo portrays Lena's stay in London as destructive to her health, as contacts with the exiles give her fever and weaken her. Return to Poland, on the other hand, marks the beginning of her recovery. The author of *Szukając drogi* also employed a motif connected with the figure of Stanisław Mikołajczyk (Deputy Prime Minister and minister in the Provisional Government of National Unity) who, following falsified elections in 1947, at risk of imprisonment, was forced to flee to the USA. The comment of one of the characters in the book 'He messed up big time and ran off'³⁹ corresponds with the image of this leader of the Polish People's Party (PSL), who opposed the regime, proliferated by the official propaganda that portrayed him as a traitor and coward.

The socpaxist trend, similarly to socialist realist works, articulated 'instrumental understanding of tendentiousness and engagement of literature',⁴⁰ but it does stand apart for its characteristic modification of the postulate of partyness, imitated after the Soviet theoreticians. Melania Kierczyńska professed: 'Party orientation is exhibited by every writer whose works serve these objectives (i.e. objectives of the working class)'.⁴¹ Some of the socpaxist works demonstrate not only that their authors followed the socialist realist doctrine in their understanding of the educational function of art and that they exhibited the ideologically correct attitude revealed in presenting the battle between the new order and the old, but also that they tried to further the particular interests of the *Dziś i Jutro* group with the aid of the category of partyness. The issue of power and of the new political system gives rise to the domination of a specific type of character, who had typically an intelligentsia profession, such as writer (Mateusz Żurawiec *Cierpkie winogrona*; Jerzy

37 Janina Kolendo, *ibid.*, p. 62.

38 Włodzimierz Bolecki, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

39 Janina Kolendo, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

40 Dorota Tubielewicz Mattsson, 'Partyjność' [Partyness], in: *Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

41 Melania Kierczyńska, *Spór o realizm. Szkice krytyczne* [The realism controversy. Critical essays], Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1951, p. 188.

Krzysztoń *Portret rewolucjonisty* ('Portrait of a revolutionist') and *Śmierć Czajld Harolda* ('Death of Childe Harold'); Jan Dobraczyński *Drzewa chodzące* ('Walking trees'), artist – sculptor and art historian (Janina Kolendo *Szukając drogi*), journalist (Stanisław Grochowiak *Plebania z magnoliami*, Mateusz Żurawiec *Cierpkie winogrona*), doctor (Jan Dobraczyński *Drzewa chodzące*), teacher (Zbyszko Bednorz *Dzieci i bagaże*; Danuta Kucharska-Zarzycka *W krakowskiej kamienicy* ('At a tenement house in Krakow'), engineer (Jerzy Krzysztoń *Śmierć Czajld Harolda*, Irena Sobocka *Na przełaj*). These characters deviate from the standard conceptions of a hero for the new times – of a worker – and yet they fit right into the convention of presenting the so-called new intelligentsia, constitutive of socialist realism. Socpaxist works operate with a vision of proletariat's dictatorship, in which representatives of this social group take a prominent place. An important role within this trend is played by tropes related to role models, which are clear allusions to the representatives of the PAX circle. The protagonists of *Cierpkie winogrona* by Mateusz Żurawiec or of *Szukając drogi* by Janina Kolendo, as intelligentsia embodiments of the so-called socially progressive Catholics, were designed to sow the seeds of beliefs held by the group linked to *Dziś i Jutro* in the minds of their readers and to legitimize the political line pursued by Bolesław Piasecki. These characters share the biographical model of Catholic intellectuals which, following the period of pre-war youth marked by the lack of awareness of social and political matters (this was to efface the undesirable connotations of the PAX group with the interwar ONR Falanga), then goes through a trying time of building experiences in the fight against the occupant, and finally reaches the stage of ideological development, ripe with understanding for the need to get involved in systemic transformations on the side of Marxists.

This is the biography of Bogucki, the main character of *Antyki*,⁴² from Wanda Chylicka's collection of short stories entitled *Splątane korzenie*. He embodies the political aspirations of the *Dziś i Jutro* milieu; as an employee of the Ministry of Culture and Art he represents the new authorities. The short story was to present the postulated cooperation between Catholics and Marxists. The trope of mutual interest of two Ministry employees relates to the romantic background of the novel *Szukając drogi*. The author concentrates on the convergent elements of life attitudes exhibited by this pair; she indicates two equally valid personal role models – Bogucki, a religious, progressive intellectual of peasant origins and Marta Jules, who broke all connections with her native bourgeois environment (she rejected an inheritance) and who, as a young working widow involved in building the new

42 Wanda Chylicka, 'Antyki' [Antiques], in: eadem, *Splątane korzenie* [Tangled roots], Warszawa; PAX, 1953, pp. 130–149.

system, believes in Marxist dialectics. The couple is marked by altruism, enthusiasm, youthfulness and zeal for collective work.

The creation of the world presented in short stories from Chylicka's collection *Splątane korzenie*, whose core are themes related to intelligentsia, is devoid of the element of partyness, so constitutive of socialist realism, in the sense that Stalinist literary criticism gave to this category. The narrator does not mention Party activists, councils or meetings. The reader is unable to tell with certainty whether any of the positive characters is a Party member; they express views which are compliant with Marxist ideology and they act as if Party membership determined their choices, but nominally they are not characterized as representatives of the Party. Could this be negligence on the author's part? This lack reveals the source of the mechanism of creation referred to as replacement, employed by Chylicka. She performed a double manipulation in painting the literary picture of the intelligentsia. She adopted the socialist realist tactic of unmasking this group as hostile toward the system or as ideologically immature and, at the same time, she shaped the vision of the reality in such a way that the role of catalysts of change fell to those characters which the reader could associate with the intelligentsia environment of *Dziś i Jutro*. Dropping 'progressive' Catholic intellectuals into the new society, suggesting their ideological positions identified with Party representatives, was to win real strategic space for Piasecki's camp within the dictatorship of the proletariat. These works served, similarly to the works produced by socialist realism, the objective of damaging the intelligentsia ethos while, at the same time, propagating the attitude of 'licensed Catholics'.⁴³ The negative elements of the intellectuals' image, juxtaposed with the advantages of the educated specialist – a socialist builder, fit into the socpaxist strategy, the ideological and political battle for participation in power. The manipulation which consisted of presenting the so-called socially progressive Catholics as the dominant group, of putting them in the role of those spearheading the system changes, was a result of the ambition that was typical to the environment of *Dziś i Jutro* – the ambition to act as ideological leaders and the political elite, whereas in Poland this position had been traditionally occupied by the intelligentsia.

Antoni Dudek and Grzegorz Pytel diagnose the political position attained by the leader of PAX as follows:

43 The term employed by Andrzej Micewski in reference to his former colleagues from PAX Association. See: idem, *Katolicy w potrzasku. Wspomnienia z peryferii polityki* [Catholics entrapped. Memoirs from the peripheries of politics], Warszawa: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, 1993, p. 26.

Piasecki's tragedy was that both at the beginning and at the end of his life he was just as far from the fundamental tool of turning his plans into reality, that is from power. [...] On his deathbed, Piasecki could only be certain of one thing – he had managed to build an empire. It was not a state empire, indeed, but it would not be an exaggeration to call PAX, along with its numerous annexes, a state within a state. PAX was a unique phenomenon not only on the Polish scale, but also on the scale of the entire communist camp.⁴⁴

Transl. Maja Jaros

44 Antoni Dudek, Grzegorz Pytel, *Bolesław Piasecki. Próba biografii politycznej* [Bolesław Piasecki. An attempt at a political biography], London: Aneks, 1990, pp. 323–324.