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Pope John Paul II discourses and Poland's national symbols during the political transition (1978-1989)

Discursos do Papa João Paulo II e os Símbolos Nacionais da Polônia durante a transição política (1978-1989)

Marcos Alan S. V. Ferreira[1]
Renan Honorato[2]

Abstract

This paper aims to show how the then new pope John Paul II represented an important factor in the downfall of the Communist regime in Poland using as tools his charismatic discourse, knowledge of Polish national culture and the powers granted to him by the Roman Catholic Church. In order to do this, it will resort to analysis of Wojtyła's speeches during the time, connecting them to the aforementioned cultural aspects. The final years of the Cold War introduced a range of new actors that contributed to the American preponderance in the international system after the demise of the USSR. In such context, the Vatican influenced political change in some Communist countries in the end of 1970s. The oldest diplomacy in the world was able to be among the high players in the system once again, mainly in the home country of the then Pope John Paul II. The paper arguments that Karol Wojtyła played an instrumental role during the Polish political transition and that was possible because of what he represented to the Poles and the way he used the cultural aspects of the country on his favor.

Keywords: Religion; Poland; Vatican, Culture; Foreign Policy.

Resumo

Este artigo pretende mostrar como o então novo papa João Paulo II representou um fator importante na queda do regime comunista na Polônia, utilizando como ferramentas seu discurso carismático, o conhecimento da cultura nacional polonesa e os poderes que lhe foram concedidos pela Igreja Católica. Para dar cabo a este objetivo, a pesquisa utiliza-se da análise dos discursos de Wojtyła

[1] Professor Adjunto III da Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB). Foi Pesquisador Visitante no Departamento de Pesquisas para a Paz e Conflitos da Univ. de Uppsala (Suecia) em 2014. Doutor em Ciência Política pela Unicamp (2010) e Mestre em Relações Internacionais - Programa Santiago Dantas (UNESP/UNICAMP/PUC-SP) (2006).
[2] Pesquisador Associado ao Grupo de Pesquisa Influência da Religião nas Relações Internacionais (CEPIR).

durante o período, conectando-os aos aspectos culturais acima mencionados. Os últimos anos da Guerra Fria introduziram uma série de novos atores que contribuíram para a preponderância americana no sistema internacional após o desaparecimento da URSS. Em tal contexto, o Vaticano influenciou a mudança política em alguns países comunistas no final dos anos 70. A diplomacia mais antiga do mundo pôde estar entre os grandes jogadores do sistema mais uma vez, principalmente no país de origem do então Papa João Paulo II. O artigo argumenta que que Karol Wojtyła desempenhou um papel instrumental durante a transição política polonesa, o que era possível por causa do que ele representava aos poloneses e da maneira como ele usava os aspectos culturais do país a seu favor.

Palavras-chave: Religião; Polônia; Vaticano; Cultura; Política externa.

Introduction

This article aims to show how the then new pope John Paul II represented an important factor in the downfall of the Communist regime in Poland using as tools his charismatic discourse, knowledge of Polish national culture and the powers granted to him by the Roman Catholic Church. In order to do that, he had to change the *Ostpolitik*[3] implemented by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI and find the balance between the aggressive rhetoric needed to motivate his fellow countrymen and the diplomatic speech that was expected from him. For that, he resorted to the use of the Polish national heritage in order to touch the Poles and make them act against the government. Specifically, this paper aim to link important Polish cultural elements to the speeches of Wojtyła during that period and argue that they were among his main tools for influencing the political transition in his native country. Since this was one of the first goals of the new pope, the period studied by this article takes place from the rise of Wojtyła to the top of the Catholic hierarchy – October, 1978 – to the fall of the Communist regime in Poland in 1989.

[3]This policy sought to promote dialogue between the Vatican and the Communist states at different levels to prevent the persecution of Catholics in these countries (Bernstein and Politi 1996: 16).

On the 16th of October, 1978, Karol Wojtyła succeeded Albino Luciani as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, becoming Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope in 455 years (Weigel 2005: 3). Wojtyła was the first pope to originally come from the Eastern side of the Iron Wall, a region of the world where religion was clashing with local governments because of communism (DRAGADZE, 2004, p.141-150). In a period marked by the Cold War, this fact would prove very important in the unfolding of the conflict between the USSR and the USA, especially in the pope's homeland: Poland.

Our idea in this study is not to provide a new discussion about the process of democratization of Poland. There are extensive studies on that field covering the historical process of this matter (BERNSTEIN and POLITI, 1996; WEIGEL, 2005; TARLTON, 2012). Instead, we will analyze the discourse as a method that Wojtyła used in his endeavor to undermine Polish communism. Poland has a rich culture and an intense history that happens to be connected to the Catholic Christianity itself. Therefore, it was possible for the Pope to use this historic heritage in order to amass a huge number of followers to the Solidarity movement.

Besides this introduction, this work is divided into three parts, with the second describing our research question and theoretical references; the third, consisting on a description of the cultural elements with additional analysis on how the Pope used them in his discourses directed to Polish people; and our fourth and last part, which will include our final remarks on the subject.

Research question and theoretical reference: ideas and religion in Holy See Foreign Policy

Our research question emerged after our exploratory readings indicated that Wojtyła managed to influence the outcome of the regime change process in his country not only through his speeches to the nation during his pilgrimages

there, but also by making use of national Polish icons and symbols linked to the cultural heritage of the country.

It was through an exploratory analysis of theories of foreign policy and works on the importance of symbols in political discourse that we found a research question for an interpretative analysis. While the methodological process will be better explained later, our research question, raised from our initial exploratory analysis of the bibliography, is:

> Q^1 → Did Karol Wojtyła take advantage of the national Polish cultural heritage in his speeches directed to weaken the Polish government, mainly during the 1980s? If so, how did he use these ideas and under which circumstances?

The question is evaluated because there is no evidence of Wojtyła intervening directly in the process, but through charisma and discourse influence. His role, we argue, was not of a direct negotiator (except during the period when Solidarity was illegal), but of an influencer. He showed the people of Poland that they should not be afraid of fighting the regime and that made the local anti-Communist movements more powerful.[4] Later, he would help with the popularization of Solidarity, making references to it and implicitly showing that the trade union was a viable option for the Poles to fight a good fight in a righteous way, all this through the careful use of cultural elements.

Before getting to the theories used on this research, it is important to mention that this work was essentially interpreted as a foreign policy analysis exercise. Wojtyła, even though born as a Polish, was essentially a head of state during his time in Poland after the second 1978 conclave. The Communist government saluted him as they would a foreign leader and he would always

[4]Even though we claim Wojtyła was aiming to strengthen Solidarity, we, unfortunately, cannot make it one of our hypothesis, as there would not be space to discuss this matter along with our main hypothesis. Also, Solidarity itself was not a Catholic movement. As stated by Szwarc (2013: 3), the trade union represented a secular movement.

behave as so, even though he always referred to himself as a Pole.[5] Therefore, we felt the need to do the same and treat him as a head of state discoursing in other country and putting in practice a foreign policy strategy as would any other man or woman in his position.

In order to achieve the goal of analyzing Wojtyła's role in the regime change process, a bibliography on foreign policy analysis theories was used (Warner and Walker 2011; Goldstein and Keohane 1993), also focusing on the importance of symbols in a society (WOLF, 1958; SZWARC, 2013; ORTNER, 1973) and about Polish history and culture (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990; ŁUKASIEWICZ, 2009; DAVIES, 2005a; 2005b; 2001). It was necessary a different approach in order to identify what cultural and historical factors Wojtyła may have taken in consideration in his efforts during the decline of Communism in Poland.

Also important was the fact that the Vatican and the Holy See are both ruled by men who may be from different origins. That fact made it necessary for us to make use of a methodology that would enable us to discern very different cultures from one leader to the next and how they would impact a country's foreign policy. It is important to note that when we refer to the notion of ideas in foreign policy, we are mainly talking about the impact of cultural values of a society in its foreign policy. Taking into consideration the fact that the Vatican and the Holy See are largely personified by the pope, and the fact that he is a man elected from any country in the world, we argue that, in the case studied here, Polish culture was the one that prevailed and managed to affect the foreign policy of the Holy See.

There are many foreign policy analysis theories that recognizing the importance of culture in decision-making (WARNER AND WALKER, 2011; VLAHOS, 1991; BREUNING, 2007; HUNTINGTON, 1996). However, the

[5]This is very clear when he salutes the authorities and refers to Poland as his homeland, as he did during his speech at the welcoming ceremony in Warsaw in 1979 (John Paul II 1979a).

approach made by Keohane and Goldstein fits better for this interpretative research.

Warner and Walker (2011: 3) use religion in order to demonstrate how an individual may affect the foreign policy of a state. According to them, religion affects foreign policy decisions as individuals constitute the vortex and domestic organizations are the pathway by which this vortex moves to influence political decisions. In other hand, Michael Vlahos (1991) follows an anthropological approach in which he affirms that there are cultural zones around the world and that states are inclined to follow certain trends and to develop relationships based on these cultural traits shared among states, even though it does not mean that cultural similarities bring countries together. For him, 'patterns of thought and behavior are shaped by culture' (VLAHOS, 1991: 62), as also understood by Breuning (2007).

The model designed by Keohane and Goldstein (1993) was chosen among the others, because they take into consideration different cultures that may be clashing among the decision makers. That way, it was possible for us to observe Wojtyła's culture being predominant during the process and biasing it towards his will, as well as him applying the Polish culture and values on many of his speeches.

Keohane and Goldstein (1993) analysis argues that ideas have considerable weight in the decision making process. According to them, these theories claim that the interest of the actor and structural limitations caused by the system form the most important elements in the analysis, whereas ideas serve only as an instrument in an attempt to limit the restrictions imposed by the system to the actors or to legitimize their ultimate goals (GOLDSTEIN and KEOHANE, 1993: 4-6). The same authors argue that ideas can be considered beliefs shared by a large number of individuals about the nature of their worlds that have implications for human action. Such beliefs can range from moral principles to

the agreement on a method of application of scientific knowledge (GOLDSTEIN and KEOHANE 1993: 7).

The author also affirm there are three types of beliefs that can affect decision-making: 1) world views; 2) principled beliefs; and 3) causal beliefs. Among these, the first is the one that interests us the most, as it will be used in this work. World visions are embedded in the symbolism of a culture and profoundly affect the ways of thinking and discoursing in a society. This concept is directly entwined to an individual's identity conceptions, evoking strong emotions and loyalties. Major religions, according to the authors, help form world views (GOLDSTEIN and KEOHANE 1993: 8).

In this case, the ideas involved in the decision making will be part of the Polish national cultural heritage and they will mainly influence Wojtyła's foreign policy strategy for the Holy See. In addition to that, we argue that by using those ideas – and also by being the head of the country's most popular religion – he also influenced the Poles' decisions regarding the regime change process. Additionally, the opposition movements – specially the Solidarity Trade Union – were strengthened by the Pope's speeches, which were favorable to them and encouraged the Polish people to fight for change.

Cultural Symbols and the Rhetoric of the Pope

Regarding the rhetorical/discourse analysis made here, Ornatowski approach fits in our research question. Commenting on his theory, the author states that papal visits as a whole represent an adjustment of the specific Church message to the specific society where it is being proffered (ORNATOWSKI, 2009: 104). He adds:

> This adjustment is expressed through a specific theme for each visit, a theme that represents a deliberate engagement with the specificity of the locale, often an adjustment of the dominant scriptural message, through the use of symbols comprehensible to the audience and appropriate to conveying the papal message,

> and through moments of spontaneity that represent both a response to and an orientation toward, the specificity of particular settings, audiences, and times (ORNATOWSKI, 2009, p. 104).

Wojtyła's visits to Poland need to be analyzed carefully given each context, as we do in the further sections. Everything in the country, from its traditions, to its people, its government, the locale turmoil and, obviously, the fact that Wojtyła was the first Polish pope, added expectations involving the pontiff. Besides the spiritual guidance, a certain degree of political engagement was expected, mainly due to the importance of the Catholic Church in that country (ORNATOWSKI, 2009: 105).

In addition, the discussion regarding national symbols are central for this work. Wolf states that nations must 'possess cultural forms or mechanisms which groups involved in the same over-all web of relationships can use in their formal and informal dealings with each other' (Wolf 1958: 34). These forms are developed historically alongside other processes that culminate in the birth of nations. Only where such forms exist there can be communication and coordinated behavior among groups within a society. That happens because they provide the cultural idiom of behavior and ideal representations that will serve as models for different groups of that same society in the pursuit and manipulation of their fates within a coordinated framework (Wolf 1958: 34).

It is important to state that we took in consideration the five indicators of cultural interest described by Ortner: 1) The natives affirm that X (with X being the cultural aspect analyzed) is important; 2) The natives seem positively or negatively aroused about X, not indifferent; 3) X comes up in many different behavioral or systemic contexts, in many different kinds of action situation or conversation or in many symbolic domains (myth, ritual, art, etc.); 4) There is a higher amount of cultural elaboration[6] surrounding X, if compared with other

[6] E.g., elaboration of vocabulary or details regarding the nature of X.

similar phenomena; 5) There are great cultural restrictions regarding X, be it the number of rules or sanctions of any kind regarding its misuse (ORTNER, 1973: 1339).

Before our analysis, it is important to state that it is not our goal to trace a direct correlation between the Roman Catholic Church and Poland or the birth of the Polish state. Instead, can be said that there is a connection between both, mainly in the use of Roman Catholic symbols in Polish culture, and, most importantly, Wojtyła used it on his efforts.[7]

In our analysis in the following paragraphs, it is provided a brief description of the subject at hand (the cultural element/aspect *per se*), followed by an analysis of how Wojtyła used it during the period in order to touch his fellow countrymen and women, be it through his acts or his speeches.

The section is divided into four subsections: Saint Stanislaus, Our Lady of Częstochowa, the Christ of Nations and the Partitions of Poland and Wojtyła's efforts to make the Polish government seem foreign to the eyes of the Poles. The first one will be about Saint Stanislaus, one of the most popular, traditional and venerated saints among Poles. Being the patron saint of the country, his relevance has to be counted in a work that emphasizes cultural factors such as ours. Subsequently, it will be explained how strong Polish elements, such as Our Lady of Częstochowa and the idea of the Christ of Nations, were used in discourse of John Paul II in order to promote a political transition in his fellow country.

Additionally, we will introduce a brief discussion on how Wojtyła made an effort to make the Communist government seem like an alien being to the eyes of the Poles. This represented an important part of the regime change process, as an individual will not accept a government that he or she does not believe represents him or her. It is important to state that we do not aim to affirm that

[7] One example of such connection is the fact that the celebrations of the millennium of Poland were held in 1966, the year that also marked the millennium of Christianity in the country. Therefore, the foundation of the state and introduction of Catholicism are occurred simultaneously (Jakubowska 1990: 12).

this only happened because of Wojtyła: a large part of this was due to the actions of the government itself; the Pope only emphasized the differences and supported to undermine the regime.

Polish National Symbols and their use in John Paul II rhetoric

Saint Stanislaus

Being a mostly Catholic country, it is natural for Poland to count a few patron saints. Among them, is Saint Stanislaus of Krakow, a man who lived during the XI century. His birth is hailed as a miracle due to the fact that his parents had advanced ages when he was conceived (they had been married for thirty years) (Butler 2015; Mershman 2015).

Stanislaus, even though from a rich family, always tried to work for the poor, helping them during most of his life. His devotion to God was widely recognized in Krakow and once he became bishop in 1072 he was among the only people to publicly defy one of the most terrible monarchs Poland had faced until then: King Bolesław II the Cruel. Renowned for his acts of tyranny, lust and injustice, the king was always hearing critics from the then Bishop Stanislaus and always seemed to repent his doings, only to start all over again later (BUTLER, 2015).

That kept happening until one day the king kidnapped a woman, raped her and kept her by force. Stanislaus was the only one who fought the king, threatening him of excommunication in case he did not stop such acts. Bolesław did not react positively to this threat and planned revenge against Stanislaus. At first, the king planned to charge the bishop of never having paid for a piece of land that he had bought from a man named Peter – who was dead by then – a few years back. The nephews of the man were paid to accuse the bishop, affirming that he had never paid for the premises.

The case was pleaded before the king and everything seemed to point to Stanislaus being guilty. However, the bishop spent three days in prayer and, after opening his grave, brought Peter back to life and walked him to the court, where he declared that Stanislaus had paid for the land. After that, the saint walked the man back to the grave and he returned to his former state (Butler 2015).

After that, the succeeding acts of the tyrant kept causing clashes between the two men to the point in which the king threatened to kill the bishop. The holy man, after seeing no remedy to the situation, excommunicated the king. The monarch then ordered his guards to kill the bishop, who had retired to a chapel near Krakow. Every man sent refused to do the deed affirming he had seen a light coming from the sky. Calling his men cowards, the king himself killed the bishop and ordered his men to cut the body into pieces that were scattered on the fields surrounding the city. However, no creature touched his body, which was fiercely guarded by eagles until canons from his cathedral gathered the pieces and buried him before the chapel where he was murdered (BUTLER, 2015; MERSHMAN, 2015).

During the next centuries, the popularity of Stanislaus only kept growing to the point where he was canonized – 1253 – and became a symbol of the struggle of the Polish people, as well as one of the patrons of Poland (BUTLER, 2015). Therefore, Saint Stanislaus represents the struggle against tyranny without resorting to its methods. The patron did not fight the king with arms in hand, but openly challenged him to the point where he became a real annoyance to the monarch and a symbol of hope to the Poles of Krakow.

It was during the 900th anniversary of Saint Stanislaus demise that the Pope meant to go to Poland. However, John Paul II could not use the image of Saint Stanislaus the way he primarily thought to do, since the Polish government did not allow for his first trip to his homeland to occur during the celebrations in name of the patron saint, fearing that it would cause stirring due to the symbolism of the date (BERNSTEIN and POLITI 1996: 274). But it did not stop

him from celebrating a mass in honor of Saint Stanislaus when he finally got to visit Poland on June 10th, the last day of his first trip to the country a crowd of more than one million people arrived at Błonie to hear the Pope's words at the historic mass. There, he said:

> You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters. You must be strong with the strength that comes from faith. You must be strong with the strength of faith. You must be faithful. Today more than in any other age you need this strength. You must be strong with the strength of hope, hope that brings the perfect joy of life and does not allow us to grieve the Holy Spirit. […] There is therefore no need for fear. We must open the frontiers. There is no imperialism in the Church, only service. There is only the death of Christ on Calvary. […]This year of Saint Stanislaus would be a year of special historical maturity in our nation and in the Church. In Poland, a year of a new and knowledgeable responsibility for the future of our country and of the Church in Poland—this is the vow that I desire today, here with you my venerable and dear brothers and sisters, to make, as the first Pope of Polish stock, to the Immortal King of the ages, the Eternal Shepherd of our souls and of our history, the Good Shepherd! (JOHN PAUL II 1979c)

It is possible to notice how Wojtyła used that gathering – which was probably the most important of that pastoral visit, due to the celebrations – to make some kind of call of duty to his countrymen. "In Poland, a year of a new and knowledgeable responsibility for the future of our country and of the Church in Poland" he says, followed by "this is the vow that I desire today, here with you my venerable and dear brothers and sisters, to make, as the first Pope of Polish stock, to the Immortal King of the ages".

By reading those words, it is possible to notice that the Pope was implicitly asking the Poles to guarantee the future of the Catholic Church in Poland. In fact, it was during the first period of legal existence of the Solidarity Trade Union that the Catholic discourse regained its cultural authority, which had been lost by the discourse of the Party-state (SZWARC, 2013: 1). Also important to note is that all

"oppositional groups recognized Catholic Christianity as the highest moral authority and constructed their discourses on its foundation" (KUBIK, 2010: 103).

Even though he had been late for the proper celebrations, John Paul II still used Saint Stanislaus image as an inspiration for all Poles: he had faced enormous adversity, but had been able to overcome it and prosper, even if at great cost, and, which was most important for Wojtyła, without resorting to violence. That was the message that he meant to pass to every single Pole at Błonie and beyond. Also, we can say that Wojtyła took advantage of the enormous popularity of Saint Stanislaus in order to make his message reach a greater number of Poles.

Our Lady of Częstochowa

Also known as the Black Madonna, the painted image of Our Lady of Częstochowa is connected to the Polish state through myths about miracles during times of great need, even when it was under siege. It is thirteenth to fourteenth century Byzantine in form and style, which led to the creation of the popular belief that says it was painted by Saint Luke, although there is no proof of that (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 11).

Venerated as "The Queen of Poland", a popular myth claims that the painting arrived at Częstochowa after moving from place to place following the shrinking and expansion of Polish borders until the Black Madonna herself appeared on the dreams of a Polish King and commanded him to place it on Jasna Góra (the Bright Mountain) in the town of Częstochowa in 1382, where a monastery was built (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 11-12).

From there, the painting endured many events that are shrouded in mystery and myths, but due to space limitations we will focus on only two of them. In 1430, the monastery was attacked by the Hussites and the painting was struck twice, but the man who slashed it ended up dying immediately after the second strike. Others tried to flee the monastery carrying the painting on the back of a mule, but the animal refused to move beyond the sacred location. The

invaders then dumped the painting and left. At the location where it was found, a fresh water spring appeared and the scars on the Madonna's face remained on her face and came to symbolize survival and ultimate victory over the invaders (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 11-12).

The next tale about the Black Madonna occurred in the 17th century during the Swedish invasion of Poland. The monastery of Częstochowa was one of the last remaining Polish fortresses still standing as it withstood a six weeks siege by the enemy forces. At the end of this period, the Swedish withdrew from the siege and their retreat was considered by the Poles as a miracle performed by Our Lady of Częstochowa, which was still guarded at the location. That event was the turning point of the war and from then on the Black Madonna was to be venerated as "The Queen of Poland" (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 11-12).
About this event, Chrostowski writes:

> For the first time most of the territory of the country fell prey to an invader, whose actions were directed against the national identity and religiousness of the Poles. The Swedes behaved like enemies of the Catholic religion. They destroyed religious symbols, killed priests, and in fear of them the nuns fled to the south, often across the border. The invaders failed to take the monastery on Jasna Gora, which from then on begins to play the role of a national sanctuary. The defense of Jasna Gora and the vows of God, laid a solid foundation under the Marian cult. (CHROSTOWSKI, 1991: 2)

From there on, the Black Madonna became even more of a national symbol, being carried into battle, crowned in 1717 and even being recognized as so by the Constitution of 1764, when the Catholic Church was proclaimed as the national church and Our Lady of Częstochowa as the national protector and guardian of Poland. To the Poles, Jasna Góra became a place of peregrination and the Madonna became one of the most common images around the many parishes in Poland. That happens because the image has the power to represent 'multiple

meanings in different contexts and serves as a unifying symbol for widely divergent elements of culture' (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 12).

According to Jakubowska:

> Of the many holy images displayed in the chapels and shrines by the country roads the Black Madonna is probably the most common. The veneration of the Black Madonna extends also into the domestic sphere. Its painting adorns nearly every household. Since 1957, a copy of the painting, accompanied by a procession, circulates around every parish in the country, staying in each house for a day and handed from neighbour to neighbour. At the domestic level the cult is especially popular among women; it symbolizes motherhood and devotion. Unlike other saints and holy figures, which frequently administer to more specialized audiences, the Black Madonna is an all-purpose icon. It appeals to vastly divergent social and professional groups: pilgrims who assemble at her shrine in Częstochowa come from among teachers, intellectuals, students, peasants, craftsmen, miners, etc.

It is obvious that Wojtyła knew about this connection. During his second peregrination to Poland during the period studied, he visited the monastery at Jasna Góra. A crowd of one million people attended the mass where the Pope would tell the Poles to continue fighting peacefully for their rights. Facing the Black Madonna, John Paul II said: "you have been given to us by Providence for the defence of the Polish nation, accept this call of Polish youth together with the Polish pope, and help us to persevere in hope". (John Paul II in Bernstein and Politi 1996: 558) He proceeded:

> Man is called to victory over himself […] It is the saints and the beatified who show us the path to victory that God achieves in human history [and to achieve such victory, there is the need for] living in truth […] It means love of neighbour; it means fundamental solidarity between human beings […] making an effort to be a person with a conscience, calling good and evil by name and not blurring them […] developing in myself what is good, and seeking to correct what is evil […].(JOHN PAUL II in Bernstein and Politi 1996: 558)

At this time, not only John Paul II affirmed that the end of Communism was something that had to be achieved,[8] which caused a great impact on the Polish people, but also made them recall the recent past, when Communism was being fought against by Solidarity.[9] Also, they witnessed the example of the pope himself: after concluding the homily, Wojtyła suspended over his head the clerical girdle he was wearing on the day he suffered the injury during his assassination attempt and offered it to the Black Virgin. John Paul II had fought Communism, suffered a grave injury, but still did not react violently, using only words to fight the evil that was plaguing Poland, as he considered Communism. It is also possible to notice that Wojtyła used the sentence "calling good and evil by name and not blurring them". This could be a direct reference to Ronald Reagan's speech a few months before the Pope's visit, in which the American President called the USSR 'The Evil Empire'. Therefore, Wojtyła's speech could be in line with Reagan's, with both using the same words to refer the USSR and Communism as a whole.

The Christ of Nations and the Partitions of Poland

Divided in three efforts by its neighbors, the Partitions of Poland occurred on the years of 1772, 1793 and 1795. It is not our aim get into details as how the entire process happened, but it will be outlined. The partitions were born out of the fear of Russia, led by Catherine the Great and Prussia, under the leadership of Frederick II. This fear came out of the new reforms that were being thought at the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the leaders were afraid that it might cause a big change on the *status quo* of the region if the feeble state became

[8] Wojtyła was saying that the Poles should have faith and fight communism, not remain silent. Also, it is important to note that Wojtyła was repeating what Reagan had spoken a few months earlier, when he referred to the USSR as an 'Evil Empire'.

[9] This speech took place during the Pope's second visit to Poland, in 1983. Solidarity was considered illegal by the Communist government by then.

a powerful one through these reforms (DAVIES, 2001: 271; CARTER, 2006: 189-190).

However, the two leaders, but specially Catherine, did not want to change the balance of power in a drastic way, which led for the agreement between the powers in the region, which included both states mentioned plus Austria, led by Maria Theresa at the time. That way, all of them would benefit of Poland's weakening, which meant that they would get territorial compensations out of the reforming state (DAVIES, 2001: 270-271). The treaties were signed in 1772 and the Polish king was persuaded to put them into effect in 1773 (DAVIES, 2001: 271). Russia managed to incorporate 93,000km² on this first partition, while Austria got 81,900km² and Prussia 36,300km²,[10] which totalized almost 30% of the entire Polish territory (DAVIES, 2005a: 394).

The partitions would not end at that point. The shock of the immense loss was such that the reforms the Russian and the Prussian leaders were trying was carried out on the following decade, at the 'Great Parliament', over a four-year period that went from 1788-1792 and gave birth to a new constitution. However, it did not last long as the powers were not amused at the sight of a Poland on its way to recovery. Catherine was not fond of the idea of a new constitution, which led to the invasion of Poland by Russian troops, aided by some Polish and Prussian allies, in 1792 and the Polish-Russian War of 1792, a conflict that did not last a full year (DAVIES, 2001: 271-273; CARTER, 2006: 192).

As the Austrians were hesitant about taking this action, they did not receive any part of Poland after this partition. However, both Prussia and Russia took larger territories this time. The former annexed 57,100 km² of Polish territory, while the latter got 250,200 km². Therefore, at the end of this second partition, a little over 70% of the Polish territory had already been taken by the foreign powers (DAVIES, 2005a: 394; DAVIES, 2001: 271-273; CARTER, 2006: 192).

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A third rebellion would still happen in the country in 1794. Born out of Krakow, this rebellion was short-lived, mainly due to the brutal response from the Russian troops in a battle at Warsaw. After that conflict, the rebels accumulated many defeats until 1795, when the Polish king was deported and told to abdicate and the three foreign powers divided the rest of Poland. After that, for all intent and purposes, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth formally ceased to exist (DAVIES, 2001: 271-273; CARTER, 2006: 192-193). To emphasize the importance of the partitions in the history of Poland, Davies stated:

> As in so many areas, the real change in Polish patriotic attitudes was provoked by the Partitions. As all the modern nations of Europe were inventing their flags, their emblems, and their national anthems, the Poles were being told that all the symbols of their own nationality were illegal and subversive (DAVIES, 2001: 236).

One might think that, after such terrible losses, a Christian nation might have thought that God was dead, that He does not exist or that for some unknown reason He had abandoned 'His nation'.[11] However, secular answers were not viable alternatives in this case. The explanation for that question was not drawn in the religious field, but on Polish romantic literature. These poets and writers drew heavily from the Bible, the New Testament, more specifically (Chrostowski 1991: 5). Chrostowsky tells us that:

> The tragedy of the nation was explained in categories of a struggle between the forces of good and the powers of darkness. Poland […] is a place of especially brazen attacks of evil, but she was made fit for martyrdom by special favors. Just as it suffices to be a Christian to expose oneself to persecution (Matthew 1 0: 1 7-33; 24:9), so it suffices to be a Pole to suffer various torments.

[11] Among other reasons, Poland was considered by the Poles to be God's Nation due to the fact that they always defended the purity of the Christian faith by being among the biggest Catholic nations in the world by then (CHROSTOWSKI, 1991: 5).

> Participation in the suffering and Passion of Christ is expressed in the sufferings of Poles. In the first half of the 19th century specific analogies between the lot of the Savior and Poland became part of the Polish religious mind […]. (CHROSTOWSKI, 1991: 5)

The entirety of Poland's history is filled with tales about unjust accusations, betrayal by those who seemed to be friends, silence as a form of defense, everything about the Eastern European country seemed to be linked with the history of Christ. Following that line of thought, it was easy to argue that the partitions had been the death of Poland as the crucifixion was the death of Christ: the country would serve as a martyr for all the nations just as Christ served for all of humanity. And obviously, like its biblical counterpart, Poland would resurrect and lead every nation for a new life (CHROSTOWSKI, 1991: 5-6).

This idea became strong after the works of three Polish poets: Zygmunt Krasinski (1812-59), Juliusz Slbwacki (1809-49) and Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), the one who we will focus on at this analysis. Although all of them were born after the third partition (therefore, in a time in which Poland did not officially exist), they wrote some of the most intense and nationalist plays of Polish history and came to be known as the three bards of Poland (*wieszcz*). It is also important to note that their works also have a strong religious bias, given the Catholic identity of the Poles (GEROULD, 1980: 381).

Mickiewicz, in his play 'Forefather's Eve' (*Dziady*, published in four parts between 1823 and 1832), which became the national sacred drama in Poland, celebrates the martyrdom of his homeland. The play makes use of an extremely mythical basis, using not only Earth but also heaven and hell as scenarios. The story is told from the point of view of a man surrounded by supernatural creatures with great power and fighting for his own survival (GEROULD, 1980: 381).

Mickiewicz writes in 'Forefather's Eve' the story of a Polish man living in the divided Poland, much of the criticism being directed at the three powers that shared the Polish territory, especially to Russia, which held about 66% of Poland. Gustaw, the protagonist, traveling across his homeland, reports abuses of Russian authorities to his countrymen. According to him, the suffering of the Polish people makes that Poland might be interpreted as the Christ of Nations, his agony compared to the crucifixion of Christ himself (GEROULD, 1980: 381-382).

Renamed Konrad, as a sign of spiritual metamorphosis, the protagonist challenges God and accuses Him of injustice for leaving the Poles to suffer such cruel oppression. Even though he committed such blasphemy, Konrad is still saved by angels sent by God at the end of the play and the play ends with a messianic prophecy telling of a man who will lead Poland and the entirety of humanity to a better future (Gerould 1980: 382). In another book, 'The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims (*Ksie˙gi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*, 1832), Mickiewicz captured the essence of the Christ of Nations idea and turned it into words:

> In the beginning, there was belief in one God, and there was Freedom in the world […] But later the people turned aside from the Lord their God, and made themselves graven images, and bowed down […] Thus God sent upon them the greatest punishment, which is Slavery.
> And the Kings, renouncing Christ, made new idols which they set up in the sight of the people, and made them bow down […] And the nations forgot that they had sprung from one Father. Finally in idolatrous Europe, there arose three rulers, a satanic Trinity—Frederick whose name signifieth 'Friend of Peace', and Catherine, which in Greek signifieth 'Woman of Purity', and Maria Theresa, who bore the name of the immaculate Mother of our Saviour. Their names were thus three blasphemies, their lives three crimes, their memories three curses. And this Trinity fashioned a new idol, unknown to the ancients, and they called it POLITICAL INTEREST.
> But the Polish nation alone did not bow down […] And Poland said, 'Whosoever will come to me shall be free and equal for I am

> FREEDOM.' But the Kings, when they heard it, were frightened in their hearts, and they crucified the Polish nation, and laid it in its grave, crying out 'We have slain and buried Freedom.' But they cried out foolishly […].
> For the Polish Nation did not die. Its Body lieth in the grave; but its spirit has descended into the abyss, that is into the private lives of people who suffer slavery in their own country […] For on the Third Day, the Soul shall return again to the Body; and the Nation shall arise, and free all the peoples of Europe from slavery (MICKIEWICZ in DAVIES 2005b: 7).

Finally, it is important to note that all these notions were engraved in Wojtyła's mind when he became pope. Polish romanticism was common in his life since his father had read to him the trilogy of Henryk Sienkiewicz, an author famed for being a popularizer (Weigel 2005: 33-34). Also, before becoming a cleric, Wojtyła studied literature and philology at the Jagielonnian University in Krakow, where he would take a heavy course load on subjects such as medieval Polish literature and eighteenth century Polish drama (BERNSTEIN and POLITI, 1996: 66-71). This contact with Polish romanticism was also strengthened by his years in high school through his acting on local theater stages.

Wadowice, his hometown, was proud of its reputation as a regional bastion of literary culture, which included amateur and civic theater, and Wojtyła was more than eager to help his city hold that reputation (WEIGEL, 2005: 36). It is possible for us to argue that during this time he was influenced by these currents of thought and it is possible to notice it during his struggle against Communism in his country. However, it is important to state that Wojtyła did not use these elements explicitly neither extensively, leaving them to the vague realm of ideas, which ended up causing a sort of 'shortage' of quotes by him on this topic.

During his first visit to Poland, John Paul II used passages of Mickiewicz's epic poem 'Pan Tadeusz' on his sermon at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Częstochowa (WEIGEL, 2005: 309). He would evoke the Christ of Nations idea again in his farewell speech, in which Wojtyła identified himself to the masses

not only as the Polish pope, but as a Slavic pope, who should bring the union to the European people through Christ. According to him: 'Is it not Christ's will, is it not what the Holy Spirit disposes, that this Polish Pope, this Slav Pope, should at this precise moment manifest the spiritual unity of Christian Europe?' (JOHN PAUL II, 1979d).

In 1987, during Wojtyła's third trip to Poland as pope, he made a speech at the birthplace of the Solidarity trade union – at the Lenin Shipyards, more specifically – in which he seemed to think himself as the unifier of Poland and the other countries of the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain. He said:

> I pray for you every day in Rome, I pray for my motherland and for you workers. I pray for the special heritage of Polish Solidarity […] I'm glad to be here, because you have made me captain […] There is no struggle more effective than Solidarity! […] I'm very happy. Now even a fool can understand that finding a passage in this labyrinth […] requires Solidarity. This is the only road. (JOHN PAUL II in Bernstein and Politi 1996: 664-665)

By saying 'you have made me captain', can be noticed that Wojtyła was actually thinking of himself as a sort of hero similar to the one from Mickiewicz's poems, plays and books, as the man who could help unite Poland and free that country and others from tyranny, which was represented by Communism and the USSR at that time.

Additionally to this theory, the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 can be seen as a fourth partition of Poland[12] and 78% of Poles, up until the turn of the century, believed their country to be historically victim of injustices more often than others (Misztal 2009: 121). It is also important to highlight that Poles still see themselves as the nation that gave the world a pope and that rid the Western world of Communism once and for all (GORSKI, 2006: 153).

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Therefore, it is possible to assert that Wojtyła used the notion of a country torn apart by foreign powers on his struggle against Communism in Poland and beyond. By evoking these ideas, Wojtyła linked Communism to the centuries old problem of Polish self-identity and sovereignty, which touched his countrymen and women. Also, by implicitly making Communism the contemporary version of the three foreign powers of old, the Pope managed to fortify the idea of the ideology as being alien to Poland.

Turning the enemy into an alien

These actions that Wojtyła took during this period helped to solidify the regime change process in the country. The fact that there was a huge Catholic majority[13] made it possible for the Pope to intervene in that process.

Being a Catholic priest and having lived his entire life in Poland until the moment he became Pope, added to the fact that he was a talented amateur actor during his youth, Wojtyła knew how to win the approval of Poles and he intended on doing just that. It is possible for us to affirm that becoming pope made it easier for him to be heard by all of Poland and made it viable for him to spread his message.

This message was to be very specific: Poles would have to fight for the regime change to occur, for the imperialism to end, but he did not want the fight to be violent in any way. Instead, he wanted them to persevere and act in a peaceful way. In order to do that, he used the strong cultural heritage that traced back to the creation of Poland. Through that, he identified his efforts – and those of the opposition, like Lech Walesa's Solidarity – as native, while the government's propaganda was seen as more and more foreign by the population (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 10).

Besides alien, the Pope's messages also made the government feel evil to Poles. People are afraid of whatever tries to suppress them and, by having

[13] 80% of Poles were churchgoing Roman Catholics (Gascoigne 1977: 290).

someone implying that such a thing is alien to you, the government ended up seeming evil to the major population. Church sermons from then on would constantly evoke a battle of evil vs. good,[14] which made people even more inclined to join opposition movements. A statement from a worker who participated in a strike in coal mine helps illustrate this feeling that would be spread through the nation: "I saw when the special unit of ZOMO [militarized police] emerged from the armored cars. I saw one of them up close. He was wearing a black uniform, gloves with spikes, there were spikes on his back and chest, and a helmet with a visor on his head. I even thought - he can't be Polish" (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990: 10). Wojtyła even showed Poles that there was no need to separate the realms of religion and work as the Communists affirmed:

> The Cross cannot be separated from man's work. Christ cannot be separated from man's work. This has been confirmed here at Nowa Huta. This has been the start of the new evangelization at the beginning of the new millennium of Christianity in Poland. We have lived this new beginning together and I took it with me from Krakow to Rome as a relic.
> Christianity and the Church have no fear of the world of work. They have no fear of the system based on work. The Pope has no fear of men of work. They have always been particularly close to him. He has come from their midst. He has come from the quarries of Zakrzowek, from the Solvay furnaces in Borek Falecki, and then from Nowa Huta. Through all these surroundings, through his own experience of work, I make bold to say that the Pope learned the Gospel anew. He noticed and became convinced that the problems being raised today about human labour are deeply engraved in the Gospel, that they cannot be fully solved without the Gospel. (JOHN PAUL II 1979b)

With these words, the Pope criticized the radical secularization that Communist states practiced. For him, there was no need for socialism to distance itself from religion, it was caused by an exaggeration from the government. It is also worth to note that the sanctuary where he made that statement was located

[14] As stated before, Wojtyła himself used those terms during his second visit to the country.

near the town of Nowa Huta, where the Communist presence was considered strong due to the presence of the biggest steel mill in the country. Built in the 1950s by the Communists to house such steel, Nowa Huta did not have a church,[15] which caused the bishops of the region to pressure the government throughout history for the construction of a church there (Barnes and Whitney 1999). In addition to that, he released the encyclical letter '*Laborem Exercens*' (On Human Work), a papal document that would be known as 'The Gospel of Work' in the future, for it emphasizes the rights of workers, especially the right to form syndicates, and discusses the worker's dignity.

Finally, the crowds that the Pope attracted also helped the Polish people realize that many of them were discontent with the government. Zbigniew Bujak, one of the future leaders of Solidarity, once said: 'Both the fears we had when we began our struggle against the totalitarian system and our concern over future developments now disappeared [...] We saw that there were many of us. This was very important and put our doubts to flight' (Bernstein and Politi 1996: 12). In addition, Radosław Sikorski, an anti-Communist teen who would eventually become Minister of Foreign Affairs of his country, once said: 'We realized for the first time that "we" were more numerous than "them"' (CARYL, 2009).

It is important to state that the mere nature of the Communist government – most importantly, aspects as anti-religious propaganda and the attempts to suppress the Roman Catholic essence of the Polish people, as was done at Nowa Huta, for example – was already alien for most Poles. However, Wojtyła's speeches, coming from the most important figure from the Roman Catholic faith, emphasized this in a way that touched a great part of the Polish people.

[15] The city represented the idealization of a Communist community and, therefore, it was considered that there was no need for a church there (Barnes and Whitney 1999).

Final Remarks: Ideas, National Culture and the Foreign Policy of the Holy See

It is possible for us to see that as Wojtyła grew up in Poland he came in touch with ideas that were not part of any other pope before him. The fact that a Pole now ruled the state that represented the biggest faith in the world had no precedent and we have to take into consideration not only the impact that it had on the new pope's homeland, but also the impact it had on the foreign policy of the Holy See.

As in any other state, when there is a shift on the Vatican's leadership, changes in the many policies carried out by the Holy See are many times expected. In the case analyzed here, there is a drastic change, as this was the first time in 455 years that the pope was not an Italian man and the first time a Slavic would sit on the chair of Saint Peter (CARLETTI, 2012: 155), which brings a new element to the theory used here, as Goldstein and Keohane did not expect or account to leaders from different nationalities ruling over the same country.

Applying these authors' method, it is possible visualize how important this change was. It is obvious that all men who became pope share the same religion, but Wojtyła has the differential of being the only Polish pope and, as mentioned before, the first non-Italian since Adrian VI. It implies that he had a very different world view from that of his predecessors, an important factor for us to take into consideration here, especially if we remind ourselves that the foreign policy carried out by the Holy See is heavily influenced by the pope (CARLETTI, 2012: 40).

John Paul II had a whole different experience when growing up. He was a priest in a country where religion had many restrictions (STARON, 1969) due to Communist and Soviet influence. The shift in the *Ostpolitik* occurred mainly because of this difference in his world view.

As world views are entwined to one's identity, the fact that Wojtyła kept his Polish passport even after becoming pope helps us notice how strong his

connection was to his homeland. It is difficult to affirm that he saw himself as the hero from the old Polish poems, but it is possible to affirm that he saw his origins as a sign of Providence (BERNSTEIN AND POLITI, 1996: 273). Therefore, we argue that all the cultural factors mentioned on this work helped shape Wojtyła's world view and, consequently, the Vatican foreign policy during his pontificate.

It is not our intention to affirm that the regime change process only occurred due to the Pope's interference. However, it is clear that Wojtyła had some degree of participation in it and, which is more important to us, he did so by using cultural elements of Poland. Being the first Polish pope of history helped him on his task thanks to the identification of the Poles with the Catholic religion and, through the use of the cultural heritage, he demonstrated them that it was possible to fight for the end of the Communist regime without having to resort to violence.

Thanks to the decision making process adopted by the Vatican and the Holy See, Wojtyła managed to secure all of his positions within these organizations. These positions were strongly influenced by his own life experience as a Pole, which made him adopt a strategy completely different from those adopted by his predecessors. As Keohane and Goldstein's theory affirms, his unique world view ended up affecting the foreign policy carried out during his pontificate.

The use of Polish national cultural heritage – especially those analyzed in part 3 – was essential for the Pope to get closer to his countrymen. His position already got Wojtyła to be cherished by the Poles, but by using his speeches to connect his ultimate goal to the strong Polish culture and emphasizing the importance of the opposition movements, he managed to become a kind of lobbyist to these entities, especially to Wałesa's Solidarity.

His efforts to make Communism be seem alien were all delivered through a non-aggressive policy based on arguments entrenched in the religious Polish Catholic culture and symbols, a method that he kept from the beginning of his

papacy to the end of the Communist regime in his country. Through the use of cultural elements he managed to strengthen the opposition movements that would eventually make the change the Pope deemed so necessary in his country.

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