

## Reviews. Reports

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Recenzje. Sprawozdania

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*Review of: Kazimierz Czapiński. Socjalizm a komunizm i faszyzm. Wybór pism, wyboru dokonał i wstępem opatrzył Piotr Kimla, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Wydział Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2023, pp. 288*

The publication is part of the series “Polish Studies on Totalitarianism”, published by the Centre for Political Thought and the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the Jagiellonian University, which is dedicated to the reflections of Polish political thought on totalitarianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The series has previously included publications on totalitarianism by representatives of Polish political thought, including Aleksander Bocheński, Mirosław Dzielski and Roman Dmowski. The publication contains a selection of publications by Kazimierz Czapiński (1882–1941), an activist of the Polish socialist movement.

The author of the Introduction is Piotr Kimla, who also selected and compiled Kazimierz Czapiński’s texts. Professor Piotr Kimla is a renowned Polish scholar, a graduate in political science and philosophy, a researcher at the Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Jagiellonian University. He is the author and editor of numerous scientific works (monographs, chapters in edited volumes, scientific articles in Polish and foreign-language periodicals) devoted to the problems

of the history of political and strategic thought, in particular to the issue of realism in politics in the Polish and European-American dimensions. The author's main publications include *Kiedy czas staje i czas nie ma końca. Idee polityczne w esyście T.S. Eliota* [*When Time Stops and Time Has No End. Political Ideas in T.S. Eliot's Essay*] (Kraków 2003), *Historycy-politycy jako źródło realizmu politycznego* [*Historians-Politicians as a Source of Political Realism*], (Kraków 2009), *Political Realism – Theory and Practice* (Kraków 2018).

The publication is divided into two main parts: Introduction and a selection of Czapiński's writings and statements published between 1921 and 1939. The Introduction is divided into three parts: Biographical sketch, Czapiński towards Communism and Czapiński towards Italian Fascism and Hitlerism. The author's content structure is logical and justified. It shows the main axes of Czapiński's interest in relation to the issue of totalitarianism.

The first part of the Introduction presents a biography of Czapiński, focusing on his political and journalistic activities after his arrival in Kraków, which was then the main centre of Polish socialist activity. The research carried out by the author makes it possible to sketch out Czapiński's profile in several key areas: as a socialist activist, as a parliamentarian involved in the work on the constitution and on the relationship between the State and the Church, but above all as a great scholar and fluent polyglot who spoke the main European languages. As Piotr Kimla notes, "this brings us to the essence of Czapiński's vocation, which was to educate people who needed enlightenment. Czapiński's position was simply that, in order for socialism to prevail, an enormous amount of cultural and educational work had to be done on the level of knowledge and consciousness of the workers in general" [p. IX]. This activity was accompanied by journalistic work, consisting of a dozen or so pamphlets and about 6,000 articles, mainly published in the "Naprzód" and "Robotnik" magazines.

The second part of the Introduction contains Czapiński's reflections on communism. As the author points out, the fact that Czapiński was born in Minsk, studied in St Petersburg and had a knowledge of the Russian language and culture, made him a natural choice to comment on the development of the communist movement. Despite the passage of time, the changes within the communist movement and the lack of temporal distance, many of the findings of the author of *Socjalizm czy komunizm?* [*Socialism or Communism?*] still make an important contribution to Polish analyses of the communist movement. Czapiński's accurate diagnosis of the USSR's inability to build a socialist economy should be noted. The political changes that took place in the USSR in the 1930s would eventually lead Czapiński to revise his views on the effectiveness of a centrally planned economy and its superiority to capitalism, as well as on the durability of the NEP (New Economic Policy) and the maintenance of private property in agriculture.

The third part of the Introduction characterises Czapiński's views on Italian fascism and Hitlerism. In this respect, Czapiński was influenced by the publications of the Austrian socialist Otto Bauer. For the author of *Faszyzm współczesny* [*Modern*

*Fascism*], fascism and Hitlerism appear as the reaction of the bourgeoisie to the possible loss of its dominant position in society. As Piotr Kimla notes, “Czapiński’s basic thesis on both Italian fascism and Hitlerism is that these movements represent a desperate, perhaps final, attempt by the big bourgeoisie to maintain its dominant position in society. They are the armed dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. They are a brutal attack on the democratic system, because this system favours – through a quantitative criterion – the gaining of supremacy by the workers and peasants (who constitute the majority of society). Therefore, the socialist parties representing the working class, while maintaining the democratic system, must in time gain the upper hand and carry out political and social reforms in the spirit of socialism. Such a scenario poses a mortal threat to the big capitalists” [pp. XIII–XIV]. It is also worth noting that Czapiński quickly began to see similarities between communism and fascism. This observation referred to several aspects: the widespread use of terror against political opponents and ordinary citizens, the hierarchy in access to promotion, the hostility towards democracy or the struggle for existence transferred to the state level.

The second main part of the publication is a selection of Czapiński’s writings. From a rich body of literature, 25 publications of various kinds published between 1921 and 1939 have been included in the volume.

Noteworthy are the preface to Karl Kautsky’s book *Od demokracji do niewolnictwa państwowego. Odprawa Trockiemu* [*From Democracy to State Slavery. A Briefing to Trotsky*] (Lwów 1922) and the pamphlets: *Bankructwo bolszewizmu* [*Bankruptcy of Bolshevism*], *Faszyzm współczesny, socjalizm czy komunizm?* [*Modern Fascism, Socialism or Communism?*], *Czy socjaliści mogą walczyć razem z komunistami (kwestia międzynarodówki i „jednego frontu” proletariatu)* [*Can Socialists Fight Together with Communists (the Question of the Comintern and the “One Front” of the Proletariat)*] and *Co dał komunizm robotnikom, chłopom i krajowi* [*What Communism Gave to Workers, Peasants and the Country*]. In addition, the volume included texts published in “Robotnik”, “Oświata”, “Czerwone Światła” and “Lewy Tor”. These are respectively: *Rozłam wśród hitlerowców* [*The Split among the Nazis*], *Socjalizm a bolszewizm* [*Socialism versus Bolshevism*], *Próby ocalenia* [*Attempts at Salvation*], *Trzydziestolecie bolszewizmu* [*Thirty Years of Bolshevism*], *Współczesny ruch robotniczy a oświata* [*The Modern Labour Movement versus Education*], *Istota faszyzmu* [*The Essence of Fascism*], *Dziesięć lat bez Lenina* [*Ten Years without Lenin*], *Piętnaście lat „Kominternu”* [*Fifteen Years of the “Comintern”*], *A Hitler zbroi się...* [*And Hitler Armed Himself...*], *Szkolnictwo w Rosji Sowieckiej* [*The School System in Soviet Russia*], *U źródeł wojny* [*The Cause of the War*], *Zagraniczna polityka Hitlera a sytuacja międzynarodowa* [*Hitler’s Foreign Policy and the International Situation*], *Nowa konstytucja ZSRR* [*The New Constitution of the USSR*], *„Kultura” faszyzmu* [*“The Culture” of Fascism*], *Hitleryzm – to wojna* [*Hitlerism – It is War*], *Azja, Azja* [*Asia, Asia*], *Świat na wulkanie* [*The World on a Volcano*], *Słowa a czyny* [*Words versus Deeds*], *Istota hitleryzmu* [*The Essence of Hitlerism*]. It is therefore worth highlighting Czapiński’s meticulous research of the literature,

from the wealth of which texts strictly devoted to the issue of totalitarianism have been extracted. The reviewed publication is a broader view of his perception of the issue of totalitarianism.

It is worth noting the clear division of content and the high quality of the analyses carried out, which testifies to the excellence of the research workshop.