

Stefan Wyszyński – életrajz [Stefan Wyszyński: Biography].
By Rafał Łatka, Beata Mackiewicz, and Dominik Zamiatała.
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Following the original Polish edition, and thanks to the cooperation of the Polish Institute in Budapest and the National Remembrance Committee, the book was published in Hungarian in 2022, edited by Ewa Dulna-Rak and translated by Dániel Borzon. The dedication for the book was written by the heads of the two institutions, Director Joanna Urbańska and President Réka Földváyryné Kiss. The authors, Rafał Łatka, Beata Mackiewicz and Dominik Zamiatała, shed light on Wyszyński's decisions, giving an insight into his intellectual and spiritual world and his struggles for his nation and his Church.

In their works, the three authors often include quotations from the Cardinal, thus nuancing and enriching the biography. Most of them add to the message of the book. The documents listed at the end of the volume attest to the fact that the authors have made extensive use of the archival records of the archbishop in addition to the literature. The biography has been written with a monographic approach, which historians will certainly be able to expand on in the future through further research. It is clear that, in addition to the scientific aspects, the authors had the aim of disseminating knowledge and that they intended to give the reader a comprehensive picture of this outstanding figure in 20th-century Polish history. The book is enriched with a number of photographs of the Cardinal's life. Structurally, they have managed to do this in a well-constructed and readable way. In nine chapters, they cover the different stages of Stefan Wyszyński's life, from his birth in 1901 to his death in 1981, through his childhood and youth, his pastoral and seminary teaching, his episcopal, archbishop and primate ministry, and how he is remembered in Poland.

Dubbed the “Uncrowned King of Poland” on his funeral wreath, the biography of the Archbishop gives an accurate portrayal of his personality and great influence on the life of the Polish nation. Over the decades, he became an inescapable moral

authority despite covert and overt attacks by the state, not only in his home country but also internationally. In addition to his family background, his studies, and the development of his vocation, we can learn about his public writings and his attempts to become a young priest increasingly involved in public life. The authors also give a comprehensive picture of Wyszyński's social sensitivity. The reader will be aware of the priest's extensive knowledge of communist ideology. His social outlook was based on the social teaching of the Catholic Church, to which he adapted his life in the world. He tried to make use of the experience he had gained during his study trip to Europe in 1929/30. He gave many lectures and speeches to various social groups as a priest and later as a high priest. He was particularly attentive to the situation of workers and peasants and often spoke on their behalf. He criticised the evils of both the communist and the capitalist worldviews, as well as his opposition to national socialism. He was also involved in the rescue of Jews (during the German occupation, he was forced into hiding, as he was wanted by the Gestapo for his earlier statements).

He was in charge of the reopening of the seminary in Włocławek just after the war when he was appointed Bishop of Lublin (1946–48). Although he did not consider himself qualified for this position, he finally accepted it in obedience to Pope Pius XII (1939–58), as well as later the Archbishoprics of Warsaw and Gniezno, and during the latter became Primate of the country. The volume provides a comprehensive overview of Wyszyński's approach to the archpastoral 'role' and the methods he used to govern his dioceses. The chapters on the practical implementation of the archpastoral approach are also noteworthy from the point of view of diocesan history and provide an insight into the Polish ecclesiastical governmental milieu. Here, we can also gain insight into the development of Polish diocesan organisations (initially, of administrations) in the post-war western and northern regions.

Understandably, his struggles with the communist state leadership as the Primate of Poland are particularly well discussed in the book, and his ordeal during his years in prison (without trial) between 1953–56 is also thoroughly described. This also gives an insight into his opinions on certain communist leaders (Bierut, Gomułka, Gierek) and how the state tried and failed to discredit him. In the eyes of Poles, he was increasingly seen as an inescapable authority, widely listened to, and seen as someone who really spoke for them. The volume gives an insight into the relationship between the systemic 'patriotic clergy' and the 'reactionary' church led by Wyszyński. His work at the Bishops' Conference is also described, as is his relationship with his fellow bishops. The 1966 millennium celebrations of Polish Christians, etc., also feature prominently in the book.

Although he could not always obtain a passport, he was able to travel to Rome often, he actively participated in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), and he

maintained good relations with both John XXIII (1958–63) and Paul VI (1963–78). He had several disagreements with certain members of the Roman Curia. He was able to attend all the conclaves after he was appointed a cardinal in 1953. His good relationship with Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Archbishop of Krakow (1964–78), was particularly enhanced by the latter's election as John Paul II (1978–2005). His international esteem was also further enhanced. The pope was receptive to the Primate's opinions, and although their views differed, he always treated him with great respect and until his death in 1981, their relationship was characterised by a father-son type of friendship.

He tried to distance himself from politics. While acknowledging the power of the current state leadership, this never prevented him from speaking out on social issues and giving guidance to the faithful and to the Polish people in general. Łatka and his two co-authors discuss all this comprehensively in their book, as well as how he sought—with greater or lesser success—to prevent his speeches from being exploited and used for political purposes. His statements on the Solidarity Movement should also be understood in this light, as should the advice he gave trade unions to combat social vulnerability, in line with the Church's social teaching.

With this book, the reader will get an interesting overview of the “Primate of the Millennium.”

