but within a strict vertically directed definition of Catholicism.” According to Gutiérrez, who applauded John Paul’s emphasis on solidarity with workers and the poor, John Paul’s personal experience led him to exhort the entire Church “to commitment, to a fight for justice, and to practical action.”

KAROL WOJTYLA’S PRE-PAPAL THOUGHT CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS

Earlier in his life Karol Wojtyła endured experiences such as forced labor during the Nazi occupation of Poland and witnessing the slaughter of many of his friends and colleagues during World War II. Approximately 2 million of his compatriots were deported to the Siberian death camp Kolyma after the war. Pope John Paul explicitly acknowledged his thinking and writing about the need to protect human dignity and human rights were shaped by these experiences, long before John XXIII’s watershed encyclical. Evidence of this can be found in one of Karol Wojtyła’s earliest writings, *Katolicka etyka społeczna*, which is an unpublished transcript of some of his lectures as a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin. It is interesting to examine

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108 See Fr. Karol Wojtyła, PhD, *Katolicka etyka społeczna. Wykłady*, parts 1-2 [Kraków 1957]. (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.)
109 I am grateful for a copy of this manuscript from Professor Charles Clark of Saint John’s University. This manuscript has caused some controversy in recent years. There is considerable disagreement about the origin and significance of this text. For example, some scholars believe that it does not contain Wojtyła’s own original material; he simply elaborated on lectures prepared by the Catholic ethicist Fr. Jan Piwowarczyk, who was well-known in Poland. For this view, see Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, 130-1, 288. I have also corresponded with staff at the Centrum Myśli Jana Pawła II in Warsaw and the Instytut Jana Pawła II at the Catholic University of Lublin. Based on their opinions, I conclude that while Karol Wojtyła may have based many of the ideas found in the manuscript on Piwowarczyk’s work, he adapted them and added his own intellectual imprint for a text that he used as his own, thus confirming his approval of the ideas. For debates about the status and meaning of this text, see John M. Grondecki, *Social Ethics in the Young Karol Wojtyla: A Study-in-Progress*, http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=3905; Jonathan Luxmoore, “Letter to the Editor and Response on ‘How an Unknown Text Could Throw New Light on John Paul II’s Views on Economics,’” *Catholic Worker,*
what the future Pope says in this manuscript because it is little known and adumbrates much of his later advocacy of human rights as pope. For example, in this manuscript Wojtyła begins his defense of human rights with the freedom of conscience, which according to him both natural law and revelation establish as the most fundamental of all human rights. He writes: “The principle of freedom of conscience defines most fundamentally the true good of the human person which must not be violated by the society. Implementation of this principle in particular socio-economic conditions of human existence requires a definition of an entire range of other human rights.”

Wojtyła approvingly cites the list of human rights advanced by Émile Chénon in his 1922 book *Le rôle social de l’Église,* which include the right to work (which “fosters the growth of the human person and ensures obtaining the basic material necessities of life”), the right to private property, the right to association, the right to freedom of speech and writing “within the general boundaries of the demands of morality.” The realization of such rights can be temporarily postponed in exceptional circumstances, such as war or natural disasters, for the sake of the common good. However, the pursuit of these human rights must be quickly resumed after this “temporary situation” because they are “necessary for the true good of the human person.” Elsewhere in this work, the future Pope describes the rights given to the human person by the Creator. Among them he includes the right to own those things necessary for meeting one’s basic material needs and develops a lengthy, nuanced discussion of the right to private property. Wojtyła also includes an entire section on the rights of workers, arguing for the right to work *per se,* and that this right gives rise to a “host of


110 Wojtyła, *Katolicka etyka społeczna,* part 1, 33. This claim later became a leitmotif of his papal teaching on human rights (see Héhir, “The Modern Catholic Church and Human Rights,” 289).


112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 See ibid., part 2, 12-14.

116 See ibid., part 2, 15-34. Given the space constraints of this article, and the fact that a copy of this unpublished manuscript I am working with is illegible in certain places, I cannot treat this issue at length.
other socioeconomic rights.” First among them is the right to a just wage. In addition, workers should ideally have a share in ownership and management of the company and “the freedom to choose their form of work, that is to take up the line of work they choose according to their capabilities and passions.”

Because workers’ rights flow from the principle of social justice, the state should protect them, including the eight hour workday limit, the right to rest on holidays, the physical, mental, and moral well-being of workers, and myriad other rights aimed at promoting the well-being of workers. Wojtyła also defends the right of workers to belong to unions that promote the principles of justice and fairness. Labor unions are necessary to protect the interests of workers against injustices of capital. He also affirms, with certain qualifications, the right to strike. Succinctly stated, this manuscript foreshadows John Paul II’s later defense of a panoply of workers rights’ in his encyclical 1981 Laborem Exercens, where he states, among other things, that the problem of just remuneration is the key to social ethics in the area of work.

Cardinal Wojtyła also boldly spoke of the rights of the human person in homilies while he was Archbishop of Kraków from 1964-78. In his most important pre-papal treatise, Osoba i czyn [The Acting Person], he argues that each human person has the right to engage in acts that contribute to her becoming the person that she was created to be, i.e. in fulfilling her destiny. In other words, Wojtyła insists on the right to participation in the common good as the right and duty of all, which only solidarity among human beings can ensure. Much of his other pre-papal writing underscores the right to participation as the precondition to and justification for all other human rights. Space precludes an examination of these writings here. Given my constraints in this article I will now turn to his papal thought.

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117 Ibid, part 2, 57.
118 See ibid., part 2, 57-60.
119 Ibid., part 2, 61. See also ibid., part 2, 59-60.
120 See ibid., part 2, 61-3.
121 See ibid., part 2, 63-6.
122 See ibid., part 2, 64-6.
125 See ibid., 301-5.
John Paul II advocated human rights in far too many writings and venues during his pontificate for a complete review here. He defended all the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights found in *Pacem in Terris* and elsewhere in modern papal social teaching. However, he also devoted sustained attention to particular rights in his writing. I will limit myself here to a few of the most important, original, or currently relevant themes in his human rights legacy.

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN A CHRISTOLOGICAL KEY**

John Paul II affirmed the natural law basis for human rights, which was most fully elaborated by John XXIII. Human rights are, in John Paul II’s words, “connatural with man” (*Laborem Exercens*, no. 16). A “correct view of the human person” enables us to recognize that rights “flow from” her “essential dignity” (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 11). However, John Paul II added his own distinctive theological, biblical, and philosophical accents to the Catholic human rights tradition. In his first papal encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* of 1979, John Paul II established that while human rights flow from human dignity and the very nature of the human person, Jesus Christ is ultimately the foundation

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