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SPIRITUAL PEACE AND NEW MEDICINE: IMPULSES OF JULIAN ALEKSANDROWICZ

Abstract

The social thought of Julian Aleksandrowicz is closely linked to the concept of 'prevention of wars'. He examined the issue of war from the perspective of potential suffering and the threat of extermination, not only of the human world but also of both animate and inanimate environments. Aleksandrowicz believed that peace is as essential for the proper development of humanity as health is for individuals. He emphasised that, in contrast to the 'scientific-technical' revolution, which is responsible for crises, the 'scientific-ethical' resolution plays a fundamental role in preventing wars. His concept clarified that the focus should be on the prevention of war in general, enabling humanity to overcome the limitations of anger, hatred, aggression, and destruction[1].

Keywords: health, peace, New Medicine, prevention of war

[1] Extended and corrected study: Jagiełłowicz, Alina. 2011. 'New medicine'. Vision of Julian Aleksandrowicz. In: Alina Jagiełłowicz, *Juliana Aleksandrowicza 'poszukiwania filozofii ochrony zdrowia'*, 223-229. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Lena.

Introduction

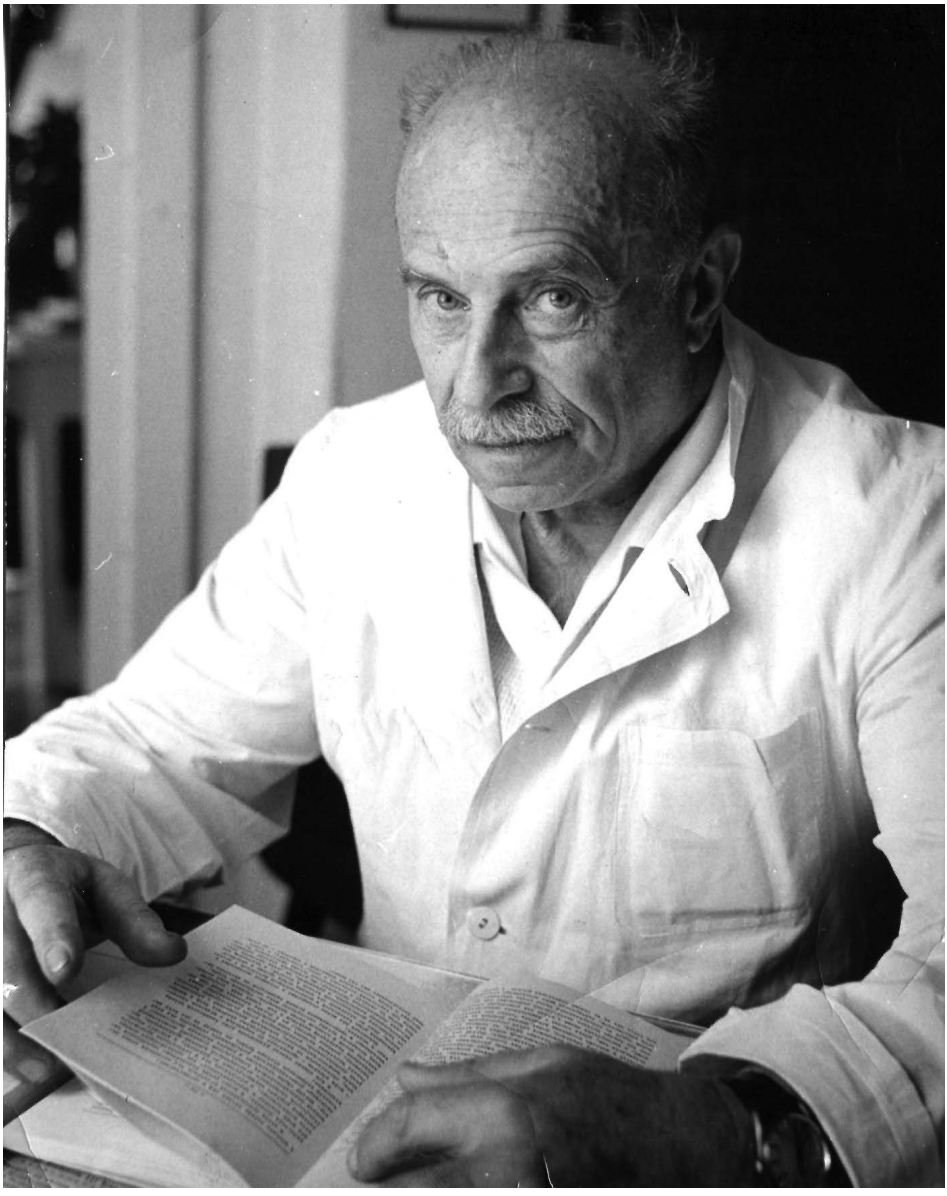
Julian Aleksandrowicz, in his philosophy of health protection, advocated for a systematic, holistic approach to reality and active engagement from individuals threatened by harmful working conditions and pathogenic interpersonal relationships. He organised the 'Year of Kindness' in 1960. His social thought is closely associated with the expression 'prevention of wars'. He examined the issue of war from the perspective of potential suffering and the threat of extermination, not only of the human world but also of both animate and inanimate environments. Together with Abdul Hameed, Aleksandrowicz formulated disjunction, according to which humanity faces a crucial choice: to continue its march towards self-destruction or find a path for survival and further development (Jagiełłowicz 2011, 75-102).

Julian Aleksandrowicz expressed concern over the low interest in the issues of war and peace in the medical community. He claimed that at the heart of the sciences entrusted with the care of health, lies a focus on protection, traditionally assigned to medical practice and reinforced by the ethical code referring to humanistic values. Citing the principles of Hippocratic science, he regarded preventive actions as a physician's duty. Aleksandrowicz contended that specialist divisions in medicine are artificial and useful for administration or education, but that medicine should address life (and the Universe) holistically. He viewed preventive action as a responsibility of the medical community, provided it is understood as safeguarding the structures and functions of our organisms against harmful (including military) factors (Aleksandrowicz 1987, 172-174, 183-185).

Julian Aleksandrowicz promoted knowledge about the conditions and methods for maintaining social and individual health, as well as prolonging human life and preventing destructive actions. In response to a report by U Thant, which called for the regulation of lingering conflicts and a global initiative to halt the armament race (Meadows et al. 1973, 37), he, along with the team from the former III Department of Internal Diseases at the Medical University of Krakow, sent an open letter to the United Nations in 1969 in the form of a memorial. He asserted that the prevention of contemporary civilisational diseases requires the prevention of wars, i.e. the protection of peace (Aleksandrowicz 1987, 173).

1. Biography of Julian Aleksandrowicz

Professor Julian Aleksandrowicz
Photo: Archive of Clinics of Hematology, Collegium Medicum of the Jagiellonian University.



Julian Aleksandrowicz was born on 20 August 1908 in Krakow. He completed his secondary education in 1927 at Tadeusz Kościuszko Gymnasium in the Podgórze district, not having succeeded in the entry exam to medical school. Interestingly, he began studying philosophy while simultaneously earning credits at medical school and expanded his education through lectures by Leon Chwistek—a philosopher, mathematician, and artist. Ultimately, he graduated from the Medical Faculty at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. During the pre-war period (1933–1939), he worked as an assistant at St. Lazarus Hospital in Krakow, studying methods of blood preservation. During World War II, as a lieutenant doctor under the alias 'Twardy', he served as a physician for the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Legion Infantry and later, from 1 September 1944, as a doctor for the 1st Battalion of the 172nd Regiment of the Home Army 'Jodła' of Radom-Kielce Concentration. Between 1950 and 1970, he was a professor at the Medical Academy in Krakow and Director of the 3rd Clinic of Internal Medicine, and from 1971 to 1978, he led the Hematological Clinic. He served as Chairperson of the Health Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and of the Krakow branch of the Hematological Society and Mental Hygiene Society and was a Vice-President of the World Academy of Art and Science. He was honoured with the 2nd Class State Award in 1950, the 'Drożdże' prize in 1977 from 'Polityka' magazine for his creative contributions to the country's intellectual development, and the New York award from the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation for his research on the role of microelements and mycotoxins in the pathogenesis of leukaemia and tumours (Aleksandrowicz 2001; Jagiełłowicz 2011, 23).

The primary field of Julian Aleksandrowicz's expertise was ecological prophylaxis of leukaemia and civilisational diseases, evidenced by an extensive body of scientific publications (approximately 500). I would like to mention some of the texts as instances: 'Blood-forming Organs Diseases in Biopsy Diagnostic Assay' (1946), 'Electron Microscope Analysis of Blood Cells' (1955), and 'Blood and Blood-forming Organs Diseases' (1960). He also authored several philosophical essays, including ' Scientific-Humane Revolution' (1974), 'Knowledge Nurses Hope' (1975), 'Ecological Conscience' (1979), and 'There Are No Untreatable Patients' (1982). He co-authored 'On the Threshold of Tomorrow's Medicine' (1988) with Harry Duda and 'Cooking and Medicine' (1979) with Irena Gumowska. Additionally, he wrote memoirs from his wartime experiences titled 'Pages from the Diary of Doctor Twardy' (1962) (Jagiełłowicz 2011, 24-27).

While emphasising the legitimacy and theoretical coherence of Aleksandrowicz, who opted for an open, flexible, and non-dogmatic approach to medical thought, it is important to note his use of music (particularly relaxation music) in therapy, as well as his collaborationin practical treatment with poets and philosophers (such as Wisława Szymborska, Halina Poświatowska, Harry Duda, Jan Izydor Sztaudynger, and Włodzimierz Sedlak) (Jagiełłowicz 2011, 28-34).

Julian Aleksandrowicz passed away on 18 October 1988 in Krakow. His memoirs, recorded by Ewa Stawowy, were published posthumously in 1992 under the title 'This much is a man worth…' (Jagiełłowicz 2011, 27).

2. Julian Aleksandrowicz's voice on peace

Despite the negative trends observed in consumerist developing societies, Julian Aleksandrowicz advocated for 'an ideal doctor, who is not a cold pragmatist but a conscious individual of true vocation who serves health and thus who serves good' (Wojtaszek 2008, 39)[2].

This vital force in this 'curing' intellectual, who did not hesitate to inject himself with the blood of a patient suffering from chronic lymphatic leukaemia to prove the role of the functioning immune system in curing the disease (Metelska and Winnicka 2008, 31), compelled him to defend his arguments, which were rooted in the great humanistic standards of philosophical tradition. In this context, even the idealistic view of reality, which often renders the psycho-social structure unrealistic and is revealed through his writings, cannot be an obstacle. There is at least one reason to defend Aleksandrowicz's utopian vision of new medicine: directed against neo-positivism and reductionism in medicine and their cognitive minimalism, it can inspire a fascinating movement of needs and motivations for a better life and challenge the resistance of social alienation processes. The premises of this vision of reborn and axiologically valuable life, infused with ideals of superhuman heroism, liberate a scientist from the fossilised assumptions of orthodoxy, conservatism, and conformism, revealing a vast a humane perspective on the issues being analysed. By exposing the axiological-ethical dimension of existence, they make it possible to dream of transcending human capabilities (Aleksandrowicz 1979).

The intellectual attitude represented by Julian Aleksandrowicz in the realm of pragmatics regarding the power of raising hopes and realising dreams deserves respect. There are neither outdated social patterns rehashed nor monuments erected to himself. Are the pains of existence and noble conduct sufficient to elevate the surrounding utopian vision of healthcare, which implies a positive transformation of modern societies into a philosophical appellation (Aleksandrowicz and Hameed 1989, 11-15)?

It must be stressed that in the discourse on healthcare, we are dealing with a 'matter' of significance both for the Universe itself, encapsulated in the categories of the wholeness of all-being, and for individual and collective subjects, who are entangled in a web of various relations and thus extremely difficult to perceive. On the one hand, the ambiguous category of 'health; is subject to cultural determinants and is

[2] Scientific Symposium organized on the hundredth birth anniversary and twentieth death anniversary of professor Julian Aleksandrowicz, 12 September 2008 in Collegium Novum of Jagiellonian University in Kracow.

therefore defined in various ways (Aleksandrowicz 1972, 79-83; Jagiełłowicz 2011, 37-74). On the other, the protection of this category appears to be a random function of a shifting system of forces (including antagonistic ones) and the overcoming of blocks (for instance, intellectual ones) and barriers (such as weakness, pain, recurrent diseases, fears, and inhibitions), rather than suppressing them. If we accept that target protection is health, understood as a perfect module of existence, we must adopt, according to Aleksandrowicz's concept, a dynamic perspective of action for a positively evaluated life in the axiological-ethical sphere, thus authentic in the dimension of fulfilment and responsibility. In this perception lies the essence of healthcare and its functional purpose. However, the former definition, the effect of health protection, is unstable, and perplexed between various states of internal existence 'in health' and 'in sickness' on both social and individual levels. It is also influenced by external random elements, natural environmental factors, and universally understood culture (Aleksandrowicz 1978).

Julian Aleksandrowicz classified health determinants as follows: cosmosphere (heliosphere, magnetosphere, atmosphere, climate, geosphere, Earth's surface, hydrosphere, and biosphere) and anthroposphere, referred to as the noosphere or 'mind sphere' (comprising the sociosphere, psychosphere, culturesphere, and technosphere). All components are related to the infosphere or sphere of information. According to Aleksandrowicz, without this connection, complex systems (such as biological ones), especially if grouped into higher-level systems (societies) and connected with the oversystem (global society), cannot function effectively (Aleksandrowicz 1971; Aleksandrowicz et al. 1977; Aleksandrowicz and Duda 1988, 31-50).

It is difficult to resist the impression that in social pragmatics, given the permanent effect of the aforementioned internal and external determinants, healthcare must necessarily be far from ideal. As depicted, health undergoes a stochastic process; it is ordered in time and set in random space, thus constituting a function of protection, whose values are random occurrences. Considering the network of random factors affecting individual and social health, its protection must be assigned to an open system of human activity that accounts for elements of coincidence, improvisation, dynamics of action, and the risk of embracing the 'unknown.' In this perspective, on one hand, protection would relate to a rebellion against orthodoxy and conformism, which are currently regarded as priority values. Notably, patterns of convenient, fossilised, effort-free existence are particularly dangerous for modern medical models. They threaten the paradigm of breaking the resistance of entrenched health habits, the magic of medicine, therapeutic nihilism, and reductionism. On the other hand, the protection would involve care: nurturing and enhancing the sparks of forthcoming health, which indeed have the opportunity to reveal their highly individualised character. Oscillating between these two opposing types of tensions—rebellion and care—the notion of protection, along with its theoretical burden and philosophical implications,

contradicts therapeutic nihilism and the monolithic paradigms that unify the diverse health situations of the contemporary world (Aleksandrowicz and Skotnicki 1983, 5-7).

Pertinently, in his conceptualisation of 'new medicine', Julian Aleksandrowicz does not conceal his respect for Western cultural roots. Being in stark opposition to ignorance, the foundations of truth, beauty, and goodness—supporters of an intricately constructed concept—he continued to explore the pristine environment of ancient Greece. Thus, any trace of the origins of great humanistic thought, which reveals itself even at the linguistic level, is distinctly marked by him. He spoke of these thoughts as being assimilated and processed only 'by healthy brains, i.e. not contaminated by ecological factors. A sick brain bears sick thoughts, words, and deeds leading to the antinomy: 'falsity—ugliness—evil; (Aleksandrowicz and Duda 1988, 19). The matter is that, in the time of progressing technologisation of life across various levels and fields, the consciousness of the beginnings of humanism is obscured, particularly 'in the minds of people living in pure nature, by the crystal waters of the Aegean Sea, clean air and people consuming uncontaminated fruits of fertile soil' (Aleksandrowicz and Duda 1988, 19).

Julian Aleksandrowicz was captivated by the thought of home (oikos), which is still in a utopian phase. According to him, the home has a chance to exist 'eutopically' through the philosophy of ecologism, rooted in ancient Greece from the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., and thanks to a permanently transformed way of thinking—thanks to spiritual peace. Aleksandrowicz identified the origin of ecological thinking in ancient Greece: ' This is a Greek word oikos, which meant home, apartment, but also surrounding environment. It formed the name for such modern science as ecology' (Aleksandrowicz and Duda 1988, 19). At this stage of consideration, it is essential to emphasise that, according to encyclopaedic definitions, the term ' ecologism' is associated with current ethical reflections, often described as an ecological label that characterises the actual and desired nature of human relations with the natural environment. The history of philosophy indicates that ecological philosophy (along with ecological movements) was created in response to the demands of modern culture; in this context, there was an idea of nature understood in categories of values (Sztumski 1996, 128-129).

The doctor/humanist perceived the main cause of the tragedies of our times as stemming from a drastic ecological-ethical crisis. The 'dystopian' way of thinking he described and critiqued, along with the fundamental moral degradation of humanity, results from the 'atrophy of ecological conscience', a metaphor for contemporary consumerist culture (Aleksandrowicz 1979). Aleksandrowicz was convinced that, from this cognitive perspective, the only creative method capable of bringing about a qualitative change (i.e. transforming a pathological state of existence into a healthy life) is a scientific-humane revolution carried out alongside the scientific-technological revolution. By abandoning the hypocrisy of orthodox science, he grounded his concept of

a reborn medical reality on the Platonic triad of ideals: 'I worked out the model of the clinic based on Plato's concept. The way to happiness which is health is marked out by ethics and aesthetics. To bring closer reality to the ideal we established in our clinic the Friends of Patients Association with people of good will who tried to help the sick. It has a sense to the walls of a hospital with our care, to reach patient's home, work where anomalies leading to disease could be found' (Wojtaszek 2008, 38).

In his quest to address various fields of expertise in hopes of discovering pathways to the development of a healthy humanity, Julian Aleksandrowicz engaged with the issues of reforming medical education, the scientific-humane revolution, the integration of scientific disciplines, and health care prognosis. He hoped that cooperation among diverse fields would cure the world by restoring ecological conscience (Aleksandrowicz 1979).

In Julian Aleksandrowicz's philosophical sketch, There Are No Untreatable Patients; the ideas gained distinctive meaning and substantiation due to the emergence of numerous controversies surrounding medicine, social expectations regarding healthcare, and even attempts to enforce it. Unfortunately, the postulate of introducing effective medicine is exceedingly challenging to fulfil. Even on a theoretical level, the notion of 'health' eludes universal principles. In social pragmatics, its designatum is flexible, thus determined not only by the laws governing biological machines but also by the political-economic, social, and cultural realities of time and space. A correct reconstruction of the notion of 'health' necessitates a rigorous theoretical discipline of explicitness, as its character is shaped by institutions (often manifesting as authorities exerting social pressure) that define health policy. It can be agreed that political hierarchies in historically drawn situations can provide the tools, patterns, and rules essential for negotiating contentious issues. A reading of Julian Aleksandrowicz's works allows us to conclude that he was far from accepting mechanistic limitations, reductionism, and the authoritarianism of medicine that they imply. In the aspects of the problems he pondered, however, we can discern a crack revealing the germ of a new morality. According to him, intuition, imagination, and creativity (in the broadest sense) were to open a space for interpersonal relations, activity, and reality transformation. Therefore, I suggest that the philosophical essays of Julian Aleksandrowicz gained popularity due to their inherent humanistic message, which is distinctly different from the outdated paradigms of medicine, promoted with conviction and determination as a continuation of Greek ideals expressed in the notions of 'truth,' 'good,' and 'beauty'. Aleksandrowicz managed to link antiquity emanating with the freshness of Greek wisdom, morality, and aesthetics with contemporary Western culture, which is often tainted by degeneration and ignorance. He proved how these historical yet still relevant values, which balance precariously like fragile elements, can change their character. It is not difficult to imagine the desire of the doctor/humanist who, on his deathbed, hoped that

'in a thousand years, mankind would be free from the curses which haunt it from its own fault' (Wojtaszek 2008, 39).

It must be explicitly stated that today's mega-technological development enables a positive influence on natural processes. Unfortunately, the fragmented understanding of the wholeness of systems, coupled with the moral breakdown leading to an ecological crisis cause, a generally negative impact on natural relations through the degradation of the environment. In Julian Aleksandrowicz's texts, this thesis must be emphasised as crucial, linking his life's work as a whole. Ewa Stawowy writes about the Master in a brief reminiscence: 'Professor would say – We must remember that the ecological crisis is caused by an ethical crisis' (Aleksandrowicz and Stawowy 1992, 7). The interpretation of the quoted and frequently paraphrased Hippocratic aphorism 'the philosophising doctor is equal to the gods' (*iatros filosofos isetheos*) seems to confirm that this great doctor and humanist of our times was aware that in a deep comprehension of this thought by the successors of 'the father of medicine,' there would be not only hope; its essence was a categorical imperative, which bounded with ethical dictates for specialists from various fields (not only physicians) to liberate their will to 'defend the wisdom of mankind from results of their own stupidity' (Aleksandrowicz 1987, 15).

Summary

Julian Aleksandrowicz was convinced that peace is essential for the proper development of humanity, just as health is for individuals. He stressed that contrary to the 'scientific-technical' revolution, which is responsible for crises, the 'scientific-ethical' resolution plays a fundamental role in preventing wars. Julian Aleksandrowicz established an open system of health protection. His concept clarified that the focus should be on the prevention of wars in general, enabling humanity to regain strength beyond the limitations of anger, hatred, aggression, and destruction.

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