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## CRITICISM OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE THOUGHT OF NATIONALIST PARTIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Nationalism is usually defined as an “ideology based on the premise that the individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests.”<sup>1</sup> Nationalisms in different European countries and regions vary not only in terms of recognition of primacy of a single (one’s own) nation over other nations, and a special role of that nation in the history of the continent, but also in terms of genesis of nationalisms, periods of their development, historical conditions, including periods when those nations possessed states of their own, the degree of development and industrialization, type of culture, international situation in which the nation-state functions, and ethnicity of the country.

The support of political parties whose programs are based on nationalist thought varies from state to state. In Western Europe, France’s National Front is something of a phenomenon, whereas in the South, the Greek Golden Dawn achieved a significant electoral success; as concerns Eastern Europe, Hungarian nationalist parties have their representatives in the parliament – the Jobbik party is the third political force in the country, and in Ukraine, the Svoboda party considerably influences formation of the political system. In most states, however, nationalist parties are marginal from the point of view of their influence on political systems. It should be noted, nonetheless, that nationalist ideas are sometimes adopted by other parties, right and left, and they are thus implemented.

One of the program elements distinguishing nationalist parties in Central and Eastern European countries from nationalist parties existing in other states, is the critical discourse about Western civilization. It is based on a conviction that contemporary Western civilization is contaminated by materialism, consumerism, secularity, and “confusion” of nations, races and religions that underpin the degeneration of Western civilization and may lead to self-destruction of European nations, that it is being “Americanized”, that Western societies are falsely convinced of their perfection and superiority, and they seek to achieve primacy over the rest of the world. In order to verify that hypothesis, programs of nationalist parties from selected countries – Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia was analyzed. Moreover, an analysis

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism*, 21.01.2009, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nationalism> (8.02.2017).

of other political enunciations was carried out, including international documents and musical lyrics promoting nationalism. The aim of the article is to systematize the knowledge about the attitude of nationalists from Central and Eastern Europe towards Western civilization.

#### THE IMAGE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN POLITICAL PROGRAMS OF POLISH NATIONALISTS

One of the political groups shaping contemporary Polish nationalism is National Rebirth of Poland (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski). As a political movement, it was founded in 1981.<sup>2</sup>

One of programming documents of that party is entitled *Ideological principles of nationalism (Zasady ideowe nacjonalizmu)*. The very first sentence of that document states that the party shall act in accordance with principles resulting from teachings of the Catholic Church, as God is the absolute purpose of human life.<sup>3</sup> In another document, entitled *Programming principles (Zasady programowe)*, the National Rebirth of Poland declares that it shall strive to reinstate a nation-state order based on the Latin civilization. It claims political and economic decentralization, generalization of private property instead of its concentration under state ownership and anonymous capital; it also wanted Poland to become independent from external decision-making centers, such as European Union or NATO.<sup>4</sup>

National Rebirth of Poland's stance towards European civilization has been most explicitly defined in the document entitled *Modern nationalism (Nowoczesny nacjonalizm)*. The text stipulated that European civilization should be defended from anti-Christian, secular and materialist tendencies. The goal of the party was to rebuild the Europe of Free Nations, that is to say a Europe composed of nation-states, independent of transnational authorities which create their own, imaginative world inconsistent with best interest of Europeans. For that party, the real Europe is a continent of sovereign countries, guided by best interest of their nations, states build on foundations of ancient principles of Christian civilization. Europe without Christianity is, according to nationalists, nothing but a crucible of petty interests impossible to resolve, easily controlled by forces seeking to destroy all proof of national identity: faith, freedom, honor, and pride. It is Christian civilization that shaped modern nations, instilled universal ethics in them, gave strength to the institution of family, provided economic and social freedom to the entire European community. Christian Europe is as strong as its nations, not the corroded system of pseudo-Christian philosophy that turns people into a mindless crowd, compliant to leaders of the new world order. According to the

<sup>2</sup> M. Lewandowski, *Na szlaku idei. Nacjonalizm Narodowego Odrodzenia Polski w świetle publikacji pisma "Szczerebiec"*, Warszawa 2014, s. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, *Zasady ideowe nacjonalizmu*, <http://www.nop.org.pl/zasady-ideowe-nacjonalizmu/> (2.12.2016).

<sup>4</sup> Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, *Zasady programowe*, <http://www.nop.org.pl/zasady-programowe/> (2.12.2016).

National Rebirth of Poland, history proves that whenever Christianity was trampled on, national rights and freedom were also trodden down.<sup>5</sup>

In other enunciations, activists of the National Rebirth of Poland emphasized the role of family in survival and development of states, thus contesting such phenomena and processes typical for Western civilization as acquiescence for abortion and euthanasia, tolerance for homosexuality and leniency towards drug use. They also opposed to the multicultural policy of Western Europe that was perceived as leading to extinction of nations.

Similar arguments were raised by another Polish group known as the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny) association founded around 2005.<sup>6</sup>

The association, in its declaration from 2010, called for:

– “Rejection of liberal democracy as a regime hostile to European civilization, considering the will of the majority, whose motives are mostly low, as the ultimate measure of truth”;

– “Foundation of notions of Justice, Morality, Conscience and Honor in the doctrine of Christianity as the revealed religion, and therefore exclusion of the ideology of human rights formulated in the Enlightenment, becoming a sort of secular religion and a source of many absurd claims of societies, in particular the so-called discriminated minorities”;

– “Restoring the basic rights to the family as the most precious part of national community, and the exclusive authority to decide on the education of its youngest members that is currently usurped by the social-liberal system trying to make the relationship of a man and a woman equal to that of homosexual couples.”<sup>7</sup>

Different reasons inspired a political group called Polish National Community – Polish National Party (Polska Wspólnota Narodowa – Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe) to include anti-Western claims in its program. The peak of activity of that party were the 1990s, but the group itself was founded a dozen years before that.

The party’s program can be described as anti-German, anti-American, and anti-European. Its sympathies lay with Russia and other Slavic countries. It suggested creation of a community of Slavic states which would be an alternative to European Union and the Americanized Western-European civilization.<sup>8</sup>

Besides parties and associations, nationalist ideas were promoted in Poland in other forms. Marches of Independence, taking place on 11 November each year in Warsaw, are one of the occasions to do so. One of those demonstrations, in 2015, hosted Basti, a Polish rap-rock musician. His songs evoke nationalist ideas proclaimed by nationalist groups, especially the National Radical Camp. One of Basti’s songs is

<sup>5</sup> A. Gmurczyk, *Nowoczesny nacjonalizm*, <http://www.nop.org.pl/nowoczesny-nacjonalizm/> (2.12.2016).

<sup>6</sup> A. T. Witczak, *ONR – powrót na scenę? Rekonstrukcja radykalnego skrzydła formacji narodowo-katolickiej?*, w: B. Grott, O. Grott (red.), *Nacjonalizmy różnych narodów. Perspektywa politologiczno-religioznawcza*, Kraków 2012, s. 319-334.

<sup>7</sup> Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, *Deklaracja ideowa*, <https://www.onr.com.pl/deklaracja-ideowa/> (2.12.2016).

<sup>8</sup> P. Malendowicz, *Kwestia rosyjska w narodowo-słowianofilskiej myśli Polskiej Wspólnoty Narodowej na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, w: A. Lewandowski, W. Wojdyło, G. Radomski (red.), *Rosja w polskiej myśli politycznej XX-XXI wieku*, Toruń 2013, s. 209-231.

entitled *Europe is dying (Europa umiera)*. Below we present its excerpt that, in its bluntly expressed message, reflects the attitude of young Polish nationalists towards the Western culture and policy implemented by the European Union:

“Europe is dying, falling on its knees  
 Attack after attack, pain, suffer, human drama, traumas  
 This is not a movie - it is happening here and now  
 Reality changes right before our eyes  
 Truth hurts a lot - the blood of the innocent is spilling  
 And the politicians keep acting helplessly  
 So tell me! How many more corpses? Heads? How many bombs does it need?  
 For us to start defending our home  
 We do not want war, but we already have it  
 Crazy people brought us Jihad in Allah’s name  
 European governments with their leftist politics  
 Against radical Islam with its ambitions for a Caliphate  
 They hate us - Democracy is alien for them  
 They do not respect our laws - they want Sharia everywhere  
 Through the weakness of Christianity they grow in strength  
 The murderers of the Islamic State are rubbing their hands  
 That is how this pseudo-tolerance is ending  
 This Political Correctness - this emotional extortion  
 The victims are wearing muzzles - the truth is being shrouded  
 Propaganda is omnipresent - the invasion has long started  
 Let us not look at the West, because the West is already ending  
 We need to wisely reign in our place  
 They will not manage it - they will not win this war  
 This is the beginning of the end - they will be flooded by Islamic hordes (...).”<sup>9</sup>

Basti is one of many musicians in Poland who promote nationalist ideas. His lyrics are a manifestation of frustration resulting from young people’s situation and contestation of the mainstream politics. Young people accuse migrants of their failures and see migration as a threat to European civilization based on the existence of multiple separate nations.

#### CRITICISM OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN HUNGARY, LITHUANIA AND UKRAINE

The biggest nationalist party in Hungary is Jobbik – the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom), founded in 2003.<sup>10</sup>

In the document entitled *Founding Charter*, Jobbik evokes values shared by its members and underlying the contemporary Hungarian nationalism:

<sup>9</sup> Basti, *Europa umiera*, [http://www.tekstowo.pl/piosenka,basti,europa\\_umiera\\_ft\\_toony.html](http://www.tekstowo.pl/piosenka,basti,europa_umiera_ft_toony.html) (9.04.2017).

<sup>10</sup> Jobbik – the Movement for a Better Hungary, *A short summary about Jobbik*, 3.05.2010, [http://jobbik.com/short\\_summary\\_about\\_jobbik](http://jobbik.com/short_summary_about_jobbik) (18.04.2017).

“Our party is a Christian, value-centered movement so the source of our words, actions and each element of our operation is our faith in divine laws and universal human values. As conservatives, we believe that human life possesses an inherent dignity and that the reason and purpose of all activities – including politics – is the preservation and handing down of this legacy. For us, these are the values that limit the room for a compromise necessary for daily political activities. We believe that our nation cannot strengthen morally unless such improvement is based on the teaching of Christ, and we wish to employ our means as a political party to contribute to the accomplishment of this goal. Our Christian churches and communities shall have a key role in this renewal since they have proven for centuries, in good times and in bad, that they can serve as the final spiritual, mental and cultural strongholds of our nation. In our view, national identity and Christianity are inseparable concepts.”<sup>11</sup>

In the document, Jobbik also criticized globalization and consumerism. It considers globalization as a process seeking to abolish the notion of nation.<sup>12</sup>

Arguments raised by Jobbik in the criticism of Western civilization are similar to those used by Polish nationalists. Jobbik collaborates with Polish nationalists, mainly with the National Radical Camp. An example of that collaboration is regular presence of Hungarian nationalists during Marches of Independence in Warsaw and visits of Polish nationalists to Hungary.

As concerns Lithuania, in 2011, the Nationalist Union (Tautininkų sąjunga) was established. In their 2016 document entitled *Framework program*, the party emphasized the significant role of family in the survival and development of the Lithuanian nation. Hence their abhorrence towards phenomena typical of Western civilization, such as violence, alcoholism, drug dependency, promiscuity and consumerism. Family was defined by the party as a marital relationship between a man and a woman, as well as parents, children and siblings living together as a community. In the party’s program, homosexuality was described as a deviation whose public promotion should be forbidden. According to Lithuanian nationalists, abortion, except for special cases, should be prohibited, and artificial insemination should only be permitted where there is a medical obstacle preventing a couple from having children. Prostitution and pimping was condemned. Promotion of homosexuality, pedophilia and other deviations are considered a serious offence; the so-called gender reassignment was considered as charlatanism, crime against humanity and violation of individual rights, and the word “mistake” appeared in the program next to the notion of “genderism.”<sup>13</sup>

Ukrainian nationalists united e.g. under the banner of the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” party (Всеукраїнське об’єднання „Свобода”), founded under a different name in 1991. Similarly to Lithuanians, Ukrainian nationalists, in their program

<sup>11</sup> Jobbik – the Movement for a Better Hungary, *Founding Charter*, 24.10.2003, [http://jobbik.com/manifesto\\_0](http://jobbik.com/manifesto_0) (18.04.2017).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> Tautininkų sąjunga, *Bendroji programa*, <http://www.tautininkai.lt/programos/bendroji-programa-2016-m/> (19.09.2016).

entitled *Program for the Protection of Ukrainians* from 1995, considered the survival and development of their nation conditional upon liberation of its members from the influence of the degenerated West. The document includes several stipulations whose implementation was deemed crucial:

- “Implement long-term state program to promote healthy social life, including the promotion of mental and physical health, fighting drug addiction, alcoholism and smoking”;

- “Implement a ‘Reproductive Health of the Nation’ program. Disallow abortion except due to medical issues, and/or rape, which were proved in court. Align the implementation of illegal abortion to attempted murder in the criminal law”;

- “Ban advertising of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages in any form throughout Ukraine. Criminalize promotion of drug use (including so-called ‘soft drugs’) and sexual perversions”;

- “Provide local communities the right to limit the sale of alcoholic beverages”;

- “Set a special tax on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, genetically modified food. Direct the funds received to programs addressing social diseases (tuberculosis, oncological and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, drug addiction)”;

- “Create a network of modern laboratories for the analysis of food products for the presence of genetically modified organisms”;

- “Allow sale of genetically modified food products only with special labeling that is clearly visible and only in specialized departments of retail establishments. Strengthen criminal penalties for non-compliance during labeling and trade of genetically modified foods.”<sup>14</sup>

Instead of integrating the European Union, the party proposed the following: “Direct foreign efforts to build closer political and economic cooperation with natural allies – the countries of Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical axis – Sweden, Norway, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, in the long term – Belarus et al.”<sup>15</sup>

Ukrainian nationalists, similarly to those from Lithuania, emphasized in their programming documents the necessity of freeing the people from under the influence of material values, phenomena and processes dominating in the Western Europe. They believed that they have adverse effects on European nations. Hence their conviction of the importance of the health culture of the nation, and care for its physical and psychological strength; whereas Hungarian nationalists from the Jobbik party, similarly to nationalists from the National Rebirth of Poland and the Polish National Radical Camp emphasized the importance of Christian values for the survival of the nation in the “dying Europe”, and for the formation of its morality and attitude. They did not deny, however, the importance of health-improving efforts.

<sup>14</sup> All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda”, *All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” program – “Program for the Protection of Ukrainians”*, <http://en.svoboda.org.ua/about/program/> (28.06.2016).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

INTERNATIONAL THIRD POSITION – AN INTERNATIONAL IDEOLOGICAL PLATFORM  
OPPOSING TO THE MATERIALISM OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The International Third Position is one of the forms of cooperation between nationalist parties on the international level. It was created in Great Britain in 1989. It brings together nationalist parties from different countries, Central and Eastern as well as Western Europe.<sup>16</sup> The main document of that organization is called the *Third Position – 10 Point Declaration*. The first three provisions of that ideological statement (*The Primacy of Spirit, The Moral Order, Opposition to Materialism*) illustrate the attitude of nationalists towards Western civilization, therefore we shall quote them in the fragments:

– “It is an integral part of our political tradition that Man is, self-evidently, a complex of Spirit and Matter, and that the primacy lies with the Spirit. Without an all-pervading spiritual revolution – a method of purification and improvement carried on by the individual for a life time – our militants will not differ in any essential sense from the degenerates who have given rise to the horrors of the modern world, and who have acted upon a purely materialist conception of Life and History. (...)”;

– „Since the degeneracy of the modern world is founded upon immorality and amorality, it stands to reason that a regenerate world can only be built upon Moral Order and Christian standards of living. The Third Position believes that it is vital that people understand that, contrary to the propaganda of the mass media of contemporary society, there does exist Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood, Good and Bad in our world, and not a range of equally valid opinions and choices as materialists claim. Moral Order, to have any real meaning, is necessarily founded upon the immutable principle that only Truth has rights. Since the Family is the primary element and centre of any healthy society, it follows that its strength and unity are essential to the stability, happiness and development of the Nation in all its aspects, material and spiritual. For this reason, the Third Position opposes any and all agencies and policies which seek to restrict, undermine or destroy Family Life in any way whatsoever. Furthermore, we believe that healthy societies and large families go hand in hand; consequently, we believe that the State is duty bound to do all in its power to make large families the norm in our society. The Third Position asserts that it is wholly opposed to the ‘legalization’ of Abortion, artificial birth control, Euthanasia, Divorce, Homosexuality, Genetic Experimentation on Humans at any age and Vivisection, since they contravene God’s Law and Objective Truth in the most blatant manner, and wholly negate the life-giving principles of the Third Position as an Ideology and Way of Life. (...)”;

– „The French Revolution of 1789 was the primary event which thrust philosophical materialism onto the world stage. In the intervening two centuries, the power of Organized Naturalism in all its diverse forms – that is to say, the systematic tendency to deny in theory and practice the reality of Soul and Spirit – has grown steadily to the point that it now threatens to engulf the entire world. Materialism in its war with the Spirit has taken on many forms; some have promoted its goals with great subtlety, whilst others have done so with an alarming lack of subtlety, but all have added, in greater or lesser measure, to the growing misery of Mankind. The forms which have done the most damage in our time may be enumerated as: Freemasonry, Liberalism, Nihilism, Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Imperialism, Anarchism, Modernism and the New Age. Each of these creeds – materialist at base – is philosophically wrong and discredited in practice. (...)”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> M. Lewandowski, *op. cit.*, s. 42.

<sup>17</sup> *Third Position – 10 Point Declaration*, <http://en.nop.org.pl/third-position-10-point-declaration/> (28.06.2016); *Les principes de la Troisième Position*, <http://web.archive.org/web/20010815162846/http://ftp.org/full10-french.html> (14.12.2016).

## ANTI-OCCIDENTALISM OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISTS

Pro-Western movements in Russian political thought are marginal and mostly socially unsupported in parliamentary and presidential elections. Russian political thought is dominated by pragmatic politicians who use anti-Occidental attitudes for the purposes of propaganda, as it is done e.g. by the ruling camp of the Russian Federation. Among the multitude of Russian political currents, however, are also movements treating anti-Occidentalism as the core element of political party programs. Nationalism is one of those movements.

Russian nationalism is not a uniform phenomenon. One of the Russian nationalist movements is represented by the Rodina party (Партия "РОДИНА") founded in 2003-2004. After a break in its activity, it was reactivated in 2012. Rodina is a party sympathizing with the ruling camp and accepted by the latter as the group taking over votes of those citizens who otherwise would have voted for the so-called "hard opposition". The party, in the initial period of its activity, claimed the reconstitution of the great Russian Empire, built on a strong authority of the state, the people of Russia, and the Orthodox Church. The latter makes the nationalism of Rodina stand out among other nationalisms, including those represented by Western European parties, even more so as the program of the Rodina party was full of shocking images of external threats and it considered international relations, in particular between Russia and the USA, in geopolitical terms.<sup>18</sup>

The program of the Rodina party, reactivated in 2012, was entitled *Long Live Russia! (Слава России!)*. In the introduction to the program, its authors presented their stance on contemporary geopolitics, the problem of erosion of traditional moral values and dehumanization of contemporary society, as well as financial, economic and social crises constituting challenges for the civilization of mass consumption. They declared that in the past, the Russian state had been an exceptional example of civilization based on primacy of spiritual values over material ones, such as patriotism or respect for national traditions. In their opinion, the world crisis poses a threat to national identity of Russians and sovereignty of the Russian Federation as a global superpower, entailing an increase of tension within the country, and therefore it requires undertaking effective measures aimed at protecting the uniqueness of Russian civilization. The party concluded that it is necessary to unite all Russian citizens on the basis of an all-national patriotic ideology.<sup>19</sup>

Chapter one of the program mentions three basic principles for the new national patriotic ideology:

1. A nation-state in which relations between authorities and citizens are built based on the previously agreed Russian interests, and in which social classes and groups never turn against one another.

<sup>18</sup> R. Bäcker, *Współczesne rosyjskie nacjonalizmy*, w: M. Jeziński (red.), *Współczesne nacjonalizmy*, Toruń 2008, s. 172.

<sup>19</sup> Слава России! Программа Всероссийской Политической Партии "Родина", 29 сентября 2012 г., <http://www.rodina.ru/partiya/documents> (28.11.2016).



2. National unity understood as all Russian nations becoming one political nation.
3. Fatherland meaning territorial integrity of Russia and protection of rights of the people and the nation-state.<sup>20</sup>

Implementation of the nationalist program, based on those three principles, was supposed to effectively stop the Western influence on the culture, politics and economy of the Russian Federation.

It should be noted that anti-Occidentalism is a feature of political thought of parties and political groups, as well as columnists and writers, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a Nobel Prize winning writer deceased in 2008, the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*. Anti-Occidentalism is used for propaganda by authorities of the Russian Federation. It reinforces the sense of threat in Russian society and rallies citizens around the leader of the country and the ruling party.

### CONCLUSIONS

In the thought of nationalist parties from Central and Eastern Europe, an aversion or even hostility towards materialism and consumerism of the Western civilization is clearly visible, in particular as concerns its secular nature, which, in programs of Polish and Hungarian parties was presented opposed to a civilization based on Christian values. What is more, in the case of the analyzed program of the Russian party, the “bad Western materialism” was juxtaposed with “good Russian spiritualism”. Nationalist parties strongly criticize the “confusion” of nations, races and religions, which was judged by the nationalists as the reason for degeneration of Western Europe and a portent indicating its imminent destruction.

Moreover, in programs of nationalist parties, hostility towards the USA and American culture spreading across the world was expressed. Those elements of programs of nationalist parties may be analyzed in terms of cultural anthropology. Nationalist attitudes are characterized by nativism and anti-acculturation. Nativism is a conscious effort towards renewal or strengthening of one’s culture, and anti-acculturation is the strife for elimination and annihilation of foreign cultural norms, even if they come from a stronger culture.<sup>21</sup> Aversion or hostility towards Western civilization are to become the components of national identity, which, in the nationalist thought, is one of the foundations of a nation-state.

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**Keywords:** nationalism, Western civilization, consumerism, materialism, Europe

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> R. Bäcker, *Nietradycyjna teoria polityki*, Toruń 2011, s. 153-154.

## ABSTRACT

*Nationalism is a movement in the political thought in which the idea of nation and a nation-state represents the highest value. In nationalism, loyalty towards one's nation surpasses all other manifestations of commitment. However, nationalisms vary from state to state. Central and Eastern European nationalists condemn the materialism and consumerism of the Western civilization. They oppose the secularization of the continent and mass migration, believing that those processes will lead to the self-destruction of the European nations. Therefore, they seek to rebuild the sovereignty of nation-states. The paper analyzes the programs of nationalist parties in Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia in the context of arguments raised by those parties in their critical discourse about the Western civilization.*