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The sacralization of the nation in the Polish social thought of the interwar period. Selected contexts

The image of the nation in the Polish historiosophy of the 1920's and 1930's is mostly connected with its sacralization, which can be noticed in the predominant metaphysical approach to this topic. Sacralization meant either the recognition of an ultimate, absolute principle of spiritual or mundane life, or eternal reality different from other manifestations of human life. The nation was religiously revered and distinguished from the profane, that is to say – the sphere of ordinary and everyday matters. The sacralization of the nation, as can be observed in the Polish social thinking of the interwar period, was performed at the psychological, social and axiological level, that is in the context of the soul, sense of community and absolute values.

Analyzing the texts of Polish thinkers in the field of nation and nationality, one can state that they could be qualified as belonging to a few theoretical conceptions treating sacralization as: an a priori category of normative consciousness referring to the neo-Kantian tradition with many advocates at that time, an a priori category of collective or social consciousness referring to the school of humanistic sociology, a category regarding the sacred value as autonomic and absolute, and one that ascribes ontological sense to the sacred and the profane in the process of transforming the abstract-concrete into the abstract¹.

In the case of the first one, the sacred as a form of a priori formal categories of broad consciousness of purpose differs from what really is. Hence, the material additional

¹ For more about sacralization see: A. Bronk, *Podstawy nauk o religii*, Lublin 2003; Z. Drozdowicz, Z. Stachowski, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia religii świata*, Poznań 2002; M. Eliade, *Historia wierzeń i idei religijnych*, Warsaw 1988, vol. 1, especially the introduction, *Religia i religijność w warunkach globalnych*, M. Libiszowska-Żółtkowska (ed.), Kraków 2007; J. Mariański, *Sekularyzacja i desekularyzacja w nowoczesnym świecie*, Lublin 2006; *Religioznawstwo polskie w XXI wieku*, Z. Stachowski (ed.), Tyczyn 2005; *Religia i religijność*, M. Szulakiewicz (ed.), Toruń 2011, by the same author: *Religia i czas*, Toruń, 2008; Z. J. Zdybicka, *Religia i religioznawstwo*, Lublin 1988; J. Szmyd, *Religijność i transcendencja*, Bydgoszcz 2002.

depiction of the sacred allows for the diversity of specification and is always only one of the manifestations of the sacred. In the second case, sanctity is something separate, forbidden, but at the same time worthy of love and respect, as a contradiction of the profane. Such an evaluation of the social consciousness may result in and has frequently resulted in a diversity of divisions between people and things. Within this approach, the essential source of sacralization is the community as a supra-organic and supra-individual entity transcending the bounds of human existence. The third approach treated religion via the concept of the sacred, as an experience of the sacred, the encounter and relationship between the human being and the sacred. In this case, the sacred is presented as something objective, explored through religious experience. In the last approach, the category of the sacred is ascribed an infinite number of semantic layers, corresponding to the forms of mental approaches of the social entity. Sacralization is supplementary to abstraction of any substance. The concept of a nation may serve as such a category.

By sanctifying the nation, Polish thinkers were actually updating the concept of the human being and the society. In the case of the human being, the idea was to display the potentials of the human being and those connected with his/her nature. In the case of the society, the focus was on its role in shaping the human being. Essentially, attention was devoted to natural and sub-natural predisposition of the human being, who thanks to culture or grace and culture could reach the optimum level of his/her possibilities and thereby sanctify the community – the nation.

It did not matter what theoretical stances Polish social thinkers were referring to, because the sacralization of the nation was dictated by, among other things, the necessity of shaping the identity of Poles living not so long ago on occupied land, and creating a national community out of these Poles.

The Polish social thinking noticed that the encounter of the Polish people's psyche with the reality of building their own state, fear of new challenges, the conviction about the crisis of European culture, result in striving toward sanctifying the entity that decided about Polish people's identity – the nationality and the nation. Hence, Polish social thinkers noticed the necessity of sacralization (of the nation). Such approach was to show the whole truth about the "Polish soul". In the process of sacralizing the nation, emphasis was mainly placed on the existential self-dependence connected with the separation of the realm of mental life. Among the concepts used were: "the soul of the nation", "the spirit of the nation", "the psyche of the nation", "nation's mental disposition".

At this stage it is worth paying attention to how Erazm Majewski (1858-1922), author of the bulky *Nauka o cywilizacji* (1908-1923), captures the idea of the nation. He believed that social sciences should refer to scientism rather than overcome it. As he wrote: "There was too little of the scientific method (...), too little faith in this method and too little adherence to this method, too small conviction that the history of mankind within these bounds, as it has been depicted by historiosophy and sociology, is actually a science"².

² E. Majewski, *Nauka o cywilizacji*, vol. 1: *Prologomena do socjologii i antropozofii*, Warsaw 1908, p. 22.

The consequence of that view was, among other things, the rejection of the evolutionist idea of progress, dismissed by Erazm Majewski as a relic of metaphysical thinking. His approach was immersed in biologism, but he thought that one has to aim at revealing the most profound structure of the universe. The author also asked the question about the human being's role in the universe, the human being who creates a world "characteristic and unparalleled".

In this respect his thought promotes similar solutions to American pragmatism, especially to G.H. Mead who searched for solutions in sociology. At the same time, he reconstructed Spencer's notion of the peculiarity of the "supra-organic entity". However, he disagrees with L. Gawor on treating civilization as the supreme level of human development and with its perception as the sum of manifestations of social and individual life. On the one hand, the philosopher praises L. H. Morgan's conception, but on the other hand, he is critical of Dilthey's conception of understanding history³.

To his mind, the society is a typically human phenomenon. The emergence of the civilization was in his opinion connected with, though forced by struggle over survival, inter-human cooperation. This process featured the specialization and socialization and functional diversity of the human world. The process was triggered by the creation of speech playing the role of not only casual communication, but also of preserving tradition. That is why in the eyes of E. Majewski, the civilization is a peculiar entity different from other qualitatively distinguished planes of reality. It is on this entity that "the spirit of Earth is born and developed" – the emergence of the human culture. Therefore, civilization (reality D) is a human community, a biological substance which created and is still creating, amid its phylogenetic development, culture, that is the whole of social creations of material and spiritual nature: technology, knowledge, social institutions, traditions, religious beliefs and art.

As G. Szumer rightly observes, E. Majewski put special emphasis on the fact that diverse human environments led to the creation of different languages. Seeing that common speech constitutes a basic civilizational bond, one might say that there are as many civilizations as there are languages. For this reason, he stresses the civilizational diversity of mankind as well as inter-civilizational differences. Moreover, he believes that language community poses the foundation of the national feeling. This statement enabled him to assert that each civilization is national by nature⁴.

That is where, at least from the pragmatist, bio-logistic and modernist positions, the sacralization of the nation occurs, wherein the nation is associated, according to what he wrote, with something very sophisticated and superior to the organism, something infinitely tragic. He saw the nation as "an extensive psycho-physical structure". From his point of view, the human being is created in the social sense by the nation, as he or she

³ Cf. L. Gawor, *Szkice o cywilizacji*, Rzeszów 2009, p. 27 and by the same author: *Mysliciele mało znani. Filozofia polska końca XIX wieku i pierwszej dekady XIX*, Rzeszów 2011, p. 107-109.

⁴ Cf. B. Szumer, *Cywilizacja w myśli polskiej. Poglądy filozoficzno-społeczne Erazma Majewskiego*, Katowice 2007, p. 72-86.

has a soul construed as the product of homeland. E. Majewski wrote: "Each human being is a product of homeland, the soul, the escape from which is impossible. Thus, in no foreign environment can our soul feel so at home. Even when we depart from the physical homeland, we do not part with the ideal homeland, as it always follows us. One can confirm that »the human being is a fraction of a greater whole«, but that it is not a fraction of »mankind«, because our soul has been given form not by mankind, but by what the homeland was saying to us since the very beginning"⁵.

It is the nation that "appeals most to genius". E. Majewski states: "so first and foremost one who was blessed with the possibility of attaining the highest realms of abstraction, reaching for the mighty power of thinking and feeling up until the end of the universe, laying their hands on the stars, sensing immortality and the whole world in their bosom – that is the universe as sensed by the human being through the homeland and that is what must be, because although he/she feels it inside and he/she is a product of the homeland and that is what must be, because he/she feels it inside, and he/she as whole is a product of their homeland"⁶. Sacralizing the homeland, the Polish sociologist could have thought that the society is "a monolingual people and nation", while the only viable civilization is one within a nation. The thesis that the society creates the man meant that the "human soul derives from the nation"⁷. It is a clear reference to Herder's concept of the nation as a psycho-physical whole using one language.

One can also find reference to E. Majewski's thesis regarding civilization's national character in Zygmunt Wasilewski's works (1865-1948⁸, especially in the book *O życiu i katastrofach cywilizacji narodowych* published in Warsaw, 1921. The author believed that the civilization is shaped first and foremost by cultural factors, which constitute the basic influence on shaping particular and always diversified human communities in the material and spiritual sphere. In this process, mankind is divided into distinct mental types which, in the end, become the foundation for the emergence of a separate ethnic-national community. Sacralizing the nation, he made it the basic civilization-shaping factor. Civilizations whose primary distinguishing feature is the sense of a cultural (mainly lingual) and national community, are, in his opinion, the basic subject of history. "Mankind is built on civilizations", as underlined by Z. Wasilewski. Such a sacralization of the nation implied theses resonating in the sphere of broadly interpreted diplomacy. The author thought that in the social world the basic feature is that of competition between national civilizations to achieve dominance, conducted predominantly via the method of cultural annexation. Furthermore, he claimed that there is a danger of losing identity by particular national civilizations. These are the two faces of "national civilizations' catastrophes".

⁵ E. Majewski, *Nauka o cywilizacji*, vol. 2: *Teoria człowieka i cywilizacji*, Warsaw 1911, p. 336.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁷ Cf. E. Majewski, *Nauka o cywilizacji*, vol. 3: *Kapitał*, Warsaw 1914, p. 65-66.

⁸ Z. Wasilewski, lawyer by education, literary critic by profession mainly focused on the period of romanticism. Editor of "Gazeta Warszawska" throughout 1917-1925 and between 1925 and 1935 editor of "Mysł Narodowa". Active member of the National Democracy.

Unlike Wasilewski, addressing the concept of the nation, B. Limanowski attempted to reconcile romanticism with evolutionism. His views were defined by Jerzy Szacki as "national organicism". In the Polish sociologist's works, he noticed a concept of the nation regarded as a supreme level of socialization, a historiosophy addressing the evolution from primitive communism to national republic or even universal federation. According to J. Szacki, a significant role in B. Limanowski's concept of the execution of this "evolution plan" was played by nations, spirituality and mentality. In this context, we can observe that the forerunner of Polish sociology is sacralizing the nation, which in his theory is manifested by "the spiritualization" of the social organism.

Thereby the nation as "the supreme organism" is rendered the most remote from the world of nature, as it constitutes a spiritual unity, characterized by the sense of national unity. On the one hand, it is a reference to the notion of psychological evolutionism, and on the other hand – Polish romanticism⁹.

A similar measure was undertaken by K. Kelles-Krauz, according to whom the nation is one of "collective entities". However, his views might be classified as belonging to the latter type of understanding the category of sacralization. This approach stemmed from incorporating psychology into sociology. He attempted to reconcile Marxism with Kant's critical philosophy. The author agreed that cognition features a priori elements, but he did not subsume them to typical a priori, believing that cognition is trapped in the subjective world. The entity plays an active role in directing cognition and selection of experience data, whereas the most crucial determinants of cognitive processes are social and historical conditioning.

Regarding the nation as one of collective entities, Kelles-Krauz mainly addressed the issue of the emergence of vague ideals which were ahead of economic reality. He assumed that the production method depicts the whole social life, the base depicts the superstructure, substance defines form, basic needs depict formal needs. Nonetheless, from his standpoint, human reactions to stimuli from the basic level are mediated by prior habits, attitudes, convictions, institutions. He also introduced a category of the lines of layers, tiers, rows in the base and the superstructure. He argued that the superstructure is an enormous, multilayer construction, having difficulty in adjusting to the changes in the productive sphere, while each of its layers has relative autonomy.

Similarly as J. Szacki, he assumed that the social form is not only an epiphenomenon of economic substance, whereas in social life a significant role is played by causes which should be searched for beyond economic relations of a given state and epoch¹⁰. In this context, he presented the law of retrospective revolution which declared the necessity of idealizing distant past by promoters of reformatory ideals. He connected the process

⁹ Cf. J. Szacki, *Wstęp. Krótka historia socjologii polskiej*, in: *Wstęp. Krótka historia socjologii polskiej*, ed. by the same author, Warsaw 1995, p. 20 and vid. B. Limanowski, *Naród i państwo. Studium socjologiczne*, Kraków 1906, p. 82 and first and foremost *Socjologia*, part 2, Kraków 1919, p. 21, 85, 88, 140 and 230 and J. Kurczewska, *Naród w socjologii i ideologii polskiej*, Warsaw 1979.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Szacki, *Wstęp...*, op. cit., p. 31.

of nation formation with the rise of capitalism, but especially with alienating and sacralizing processes. One might conclude that for him sacralization was strictly linked to alienation, which was brought about by society's class division. Speech played a significant role in this process. As he wrote, "removing individuals from their traditional situations, mixing them together in a new constantly changing life, a huge abundance and complexity of new social relations gave national speech (as a social linker) this exceptional importance which it has today in nations' consciousness"¹¹. Therefore, nationality is a multitude of people speaking one language, having common and cultural futures of which they are conscious and its own distinctness, traditions and values. It is an organic whole deciding about its own fate and all forms of its life¹².

As S. Dziamski aptly puts it, "Kelles-Krauz's approach underscores not only the significance of national language and cultural community, but also the awareness of this lingual-cultural bond as well as the need for own state as a vital condition securing nation's growth. Pointing to the functional interrelation of language and economic factors in the nation-formation process, he argued that »the indispensable consequence of uninhibited economic growth is self-definition of national consciousness in proletariat, this class' protection of nationality and its pursuit of independence«. This tendency is, as he claimed, »a historical necessity«"¹³.

The idea of the nation was also an important element of Feliks Młynarski's thought¹⁴. The philosopher performed a reconstruction of the hitherto history of Europe as well as the ideals of its future social-economic system.

In his approach, the friction between two ways of giving Europe social organization: individualism and universalism were of key importance in the history of the European civilization. He wrote: "no one, neither theorists nor practitioners, doubts that the human being was, is and will be both the subject and the object of history. However, what is the basic phenomenon? The human being as a subject or the society enveloping him/her as one of its many objects? The assumption of the former theory evokes the individualistic worldview, whereas the assumption of the latter gives rise to the universalist perspec-

¹¹ K. Kelles-Krauz, *W kwestii narodowości żydowskiej*, in: *Pisma wybrane*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1962, p. 325.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 324.

¹³ S. Dziamski, *Zarys polskiej filozoficznej myśli marksistowskiej 1878-1939*, Warsaw 1973, p. 223.

¹⁴ F. Młynarski (1884-1972). In 1903 he enrolled in philosophical studies at the Jagiellonian University, the fruit of which was one of the first Polish works on sociology (*Socjologia wobec teorii poznania*). In 1900 he became a doctor of philosophy. In 1919 he completed his post-doctoral studies. F. Młynarski was active on the Polish political scene. He belonged to "Zet", National League, Independence League. In the years 1913-1914 he organized the Polish Rifle Squads (Polskie Drużyny Strzeleckie) and during the First World War he was a soldier of Piłsudski's Legions. After Poland regained independence, he worked in state administration. In 1929 he started working in Warsaw School of Economics (Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa); professor since 1933. During WWII he conducted classes at Krakowska Akademia Handlowa and the Jagiellonian University (1945-1949). In 1951-1960, up until retirement, he held the office of library director at Cracow University of Economics. His most important works include: *Socjologia wobec teorii poznania*, Kraków 1911; *Zasady filozofii społecznej*, Kraków 1919; *Człowiek w dziejach. Jednostka – państwo – naród*, Warsaw 1936; *Proporcjonalizm ekonomiczny. Zagadnienie nowego kierunku*, Warsaw 1937; *Totalizm czy demokracja w Polsce*, Warsaw 1938.

tive"¹⁵. According to him, individualism treats the individual as autonomous, emphasizing its primal character as an entity. Hence, he believed that the society is organized according to the common will of individualized entities, whereas universalism describes the society as an entity which in various organizational forms subjugates the life of particular human individuals in accordance with the imposed apriori pattern. According to F. Młynarski, at the beginning of the turn of the 20th century, the European civilization faced a hazardous new history chapter – postmodernism, a time of universalist tendencies' emergence.

Within this perspective, F. Młynarski presents a vision of Europe's new social regime designed to save the principle of individualism. The nation shall constitute the basis. The nation is a younger formation in relation to individual life, but it arose on the grounds of historical individualism (it is the most profound union of individuals). This is where its superior position to the state (and any and all other spiritually universal ways of human social organization) stems from.

Sacralizing the nation, he assumed that it is primal in character, though equivalent to the individual. Thereby, the author links individualism to the nation and nationalism, a concept which he called *natiocracy*. He asserted that nationality is connected with the Promethean walk of freedom, namely the nation's power to rule the state. As L. Gawor rightly puts it, "F. Młynarski's natiocracy is based on three premises: 1. The nation (and the state) is a social formation historically secondary to individual life (...); 2. The nation is superior to the state, whereas the state should perform solely the functions of an executive body; 3. The nation is of primal character in relation to the individual"¹⁶.

The above-mentioned assertions make it easy to find a theory of conflict also referred to by Jan Karol Kochanowski-Korwin (1869-1949)¹⁷. His reflections in this field were called "psychohistory". The basis of these thoughts was the claim that "the images of historical facts are as variable as kaleidoscope patterns; their source is elementary: the psyche involved in the game of peoples is just like colorful petals of a given kaleidoscope and the kaleidoscope itself – unchangeable. That is why learning about human and peoples' psyche is a no less elementary task than that of a humanist or embryologist, and morpholo-

¹⁵ F. Młynarski, *Człowiek w dziejach. Jednostka – państwo – naród*, Warsaw 1936, p. 31.

¹⁶ L. Gawor, *Mysłiciele mało znani...*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁷ J. K. Kochanowski studied history at the Jagiellonian University (1888-1894) and at the University of Wrocław (1892-1894), where he did a PhD on Polish medieval history. He was editor-in-chief of "Przegląd Historyczny", he published in "Przegląd Akademicki", "Poradnik dla Samouków" and „Książka”. Between 1908 and 1912 he gave lectures on Polish medieval history at Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych. In 1919 as a full professor he became the head of the Faculty of Polish Medieval History and History's Complementary Studies at the University of Warsaw. In the years 1920-1921 he was the university's president and in 1921-1922 – vice president. He lectured there up until 1934, and later, after retiring, he was appointed honorary professor of the University of Warsaw. In 1922 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Padua. In 1928-1930 he was a Member of Parliament with the BBWR party. He was a member of Polska Akademia Umiejętności i Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego, which he chaired in the years 1918-1925. His most important works include: *Echa prawnictwa i błyskawice praw dziejowych na tle teraźniejszości*, Warsaw 1910; *Nad Renem i nad Wisłą. Antyteza dziejowa*, Warsaw 1913; *Postęp ludzkości jako wyraz praw psychicznych rozwoju*, Warsaw – Lvov 1917; *Polska w świetle psychiki własnej i obcej*, Warsaw 1920; *Wśród zagadnień naszej doby 1918-1933*, Warsaw 1934; *Humanizm a człowiek*, Warsaw 1937.

gy does not explain the essence of phenomena examined by a scientist"¹⁸. According to his perspective, history shapes two "historical antitheses": battles between North and South and between the individual and the masses. These two lend a dialectic and variable quality to social history. The opposition between North and South represents a conflict of two human types, shaped by different environmental conditions. The peoples of the North, predatory, ruthless, cold and provident, naturally aim at invading the peoples of the South, lazy due to the favorable living conditions, sensitive and intellectually superior to their aggressors. This "flywheel effect" in history leads not only to the migration and mixing of peoples, but also to mutual diffusion of features and ideals peculiar for these types, which to a considerable extent represents the image of history.

To illustrate this thesis, J. K. Kochanowski refers to the imposition of statehood on the South by the North and the North embracing the religion (Christianity) of the South. This process features the second historical antithesis, called "the axis of history", which concerns the inevitable antagonism in human history between the individual becoming aware of his/her own autonomy and uniqueness and the mass – non-contemplative, irrational, driven by the mass instinct.

Significant themes of Kochanowski's thought addressed the issue of the nation. The nation is, according to him, a social scope making it possible to overcome the individual-mass conflict. It is feasible because national communities are linked via, among other things, the bond of Christianity. These are the foundations on which one can build a society immersed in national spirit and consisting exclusively of "individualized individuals". The national spirit is what binds individuals to form a nation, rendering it easier for eminent individuals ("the superior types") to effectively steer the masses. Thereby the triumph of spirit over nature is effected and that is how the nation's sacralization occurs. It is a game of the individual with the masses, the game of "a symphony of hymns for oneself"¹⁹.

In this plan J. K. Kochanowski distinguishes the Polish nation, as an instance of historic merging of mass interest with individual interest. It constitutes the proof for Poland's historical significance. Such deliberations earned him a place in the interwar neo-messianic movement.

One of the most high-profile and typical neo-messianic philosophers of the interwar period was Antoni Chołonewski 1872-1924²⁰. In *Duch dziejów* he wrote that the greatest value arising from Polish people's national character was always the feeling of liberty, manifested by religious tolerance, the parliamentary *liberum veto*, the freedoms enjoyed

¹⁸ J. K. Kochanowski, *Polska w świetle psychiki własnej i obcej*, Warsaw 1920, p. 17.

¹⁹ For more see: G. Szumer, *Teoria narodu według Jana Karola Kochanowskiego*, "Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej", 2007, vol. 52, p. 251-270.

²⁰ A. Chołonewski was mainly a publicist addressing the issues of eastern regions (Kresy), the Polish character of Recovered Territories (in the West and Pomerania) as well as the Jewish issue. He lived and published in Lvov, Kraków, Gdańsk and Bydgoszcz. He worked in editorial offices of "Przegląd Polski", "Dziennik Polski", "Słowo Polskie" and "Głos Narodowy". He followed up on the thought of Stefan Buszczyński in the field of philosophy of history. His chief works include: *Duch dziejów Polski*, Kraków 1917; *Po odparciu najazdu bolszewickiego w r. 1920*, Kraków 1920; *Państwo polskie, jego wskrzeszenie i widoki rozwoju*, Warsaw 1920.

by the gentleness and the levy in mass. Based on these principles, the pre-partition Polish society created a uniform nation, consolidated by the feeling of moral duty, which was at odds with the contemporary tendencies in Europe, where order was grounded on the disciplining absolutism. The annihilation of the independent national Polish entity was triggered, according to A. Chołoniewski, by negligence in cultivating freedom under the Polish-Saxon rule.

Nevertheless, despite Poland's political strangulation in the 18th century, the ideology of freedom survived. An exceptional role of freedom custodian was played by romantic literature, the creators of which formulated a revitalization program of the Polish nation, based mainly on this leading ideal. The program featuring slogans of equality, autonomy, international justice, in time became the foundation of many pan-European and national political manifestos. On the basis of the above, A. Chołoniewski concludes that Europe owes the Polish nation eternal gratitude. Despite defeats and countless victims, it preserved the ideal of liberty, thanks to which one could look optimistically at the post-European future. In this sense, Polish people – a chosen nation, severely experienced by history, fulfilled their historical mission.

Jerzy Braun (1901-1975)²¹, belonging to that group, was one of the most consistent Polish neo-messianic authors. His works were rationalistic, assuming the identity of existence and knowledge. Essential was the assumption of God's existence – absolute reason and creator of life, and soul's immortality. Similarly as Wroński, he believed that “the philosophy of the absolute” explores the laws of being, applicable in the chrematic reality (mundane) and achrematic (transcendental). The most significant is the law of creation, applicable both to the Absolute and other dimensions of being. In relation to mankind, this principle refers to God-independent history- and culture-creating activity. This activity has an eschatological dimension as it determines human being's purpose of existence: the moral and spiritual change towards practicing christian values and the intellectual demand of learning about the world, in the end leading to the shift from “faith” to religious “certainty”. This in turn is to cause the human being to turn to God, to his/her immortality and in the end – divinization.

From this perspective, J. Braun accents nations' special role, where each nation has a calling for partial contribution to historical mission. By sacralizing the nation, he assumed that Polish people played an exceptional role among nations. Through their history and political resolutions, they displayed a direction for development for not only a crisis-stricken

²¹ Jerzy Braun, professor of Polish studies and philosopher, a man of letters and publicist, a scouts activist (author of the well-known song *Płonie ognisko i szumią knieje*), fought in the war of 1920 and the Warsaw Uprising. Having encountered the works of Hoene-Wroński in 1928, he became a staunch advocate of his thought. Government delegate for Poland, between 1948-1956 – political prisoner of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL), a Catholic activist. Stayed in Rome up until his death in 1965. His most significant works are: *Hoene-Wroński a Polska współczesna. O nowy ład w świecie cywilizowanym*, Warsaw 1932; *Kultura polska na bezdrożach. O nowy kształt polskiej kultury narodowej*, Warsaw 1936; *Zagadka dziejowa Polski. Próba historiozofii*, Warsaw 1938; *Wrońskizm a nauki formalne. Prolegomena semantologiczne do filozofii absolutnej*, Warsaw 1939.

Europe, but all mankind. The Polish-born ideals such as state federation, Church union, the unity of national culture (synthesis of "higher" culture with folk culture) as well as loyalty to Christianity, could contribute to saving the Western civilization, faced with a jeopardy of fascism and communism.

The executed synthesis of power and liberty in the pre-partition Poland is a model for surmounting this 20th century pan-European dissonance towards creating "an idiocratic culture", with spirit's dominance over matter. In this context, Braun dreams up a prospective vision wherein Poland would have command over Europe. Based on the aforementioned principles, in the future the state would build a powerful "missionary Catholic empire". A different approach to messianism was adopted by Wincenty Lutosławski. The philosopher promoted national education, initiated ethical movements of national renaissance and the so-called national metaphysics²². He created the concept of a common "self" as an optimal force unlocking the best spiritual energy and respecting "the hierarchy of the spirit".

What made it peculiar was the attempt at finding the internal relationship and unity of the world of souls, leading to a certain kind of communion which would be characterized by a supreme culture²³. In this view, an individual on a high level, a genius, the flower of humankind has just one aim in life: he/she searches for the possibly most profound, the tightest, even ideal bond between souls, their complete communion. It is a sphere of absolute freedom, where no other factor is as important as unity²⁴.

Within this concept, the human being is distinguished from other beings by his/her soul – the self-aware self. However, the soul is aware of itself as well as of other souls and the material world with which it communicates via the senses²⁵. The self's relationship is one with the actual reality without which it is impossible for the self to communicate.

W. Lutosławski regarded the nation as the basic community, but the reflections in this field echoed his thoughts on the idea of the communion. That is why he frequently used the concept of the nationality which he referred to as a species of "spirits" or a certain

²² Cf. S. Cywiński, *Trzydziestolecie Eleusis*, "Myśl Narodowa", 1933, no 20; T. Czeżowski, *Lutosławski Wincenty*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 18, Wrocław – Warsaw – Kraków – Gdańsk 1973, p. 153-156; by the same author: *Wincenty Lutosławski*, "Ruch Filozoficzny", 1958, vol. 18, no 1-3, p. 10-13; W. Jaworski, *Eleuteryzm i mesjanizm: u źródeł filozofii społecznej Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, Kraków 1994, p. 174; D. Kalbarczyk, *Trzy koncepcje twórczości: Abramowski, Brzozowski, Lutosławski*, „Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej”, 1977, vol. 23, p. 315-349; J. Makota, *Filozofia człowieka. Poglądy metafizyczne Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, „Życie i Myśl”, 1971, no 6; A. Niesiołowski, *Nowoczesny filaretizm polski i jego dorobek moralny*, "Verbum", 1937, z. 1; S. Pacuła, *W. Lutosławski droga do filozofii*, "Życie i Myśl", 1971, no 6; St. Pięgoń, *Z Kombroni w świat*, Kraków 1946, p. 274; by the same author: *Niesamowite spotkanie literackie (T. Miciński – W. Lutosławski)*, in: *Miłe życia drobiazgi*, Warsaw 1964, p. 405-454; T. Weiss, *Ewolucjonizm W. Lutosławskiego*, "Zeszyty Naukowe UJ", 1968, no 160; *Od prometeizmu do mesjanizmu narodowego*, in: *Z problemów literatury polskiej XX wieku*, Warsaw 1965, p. 105-128; T. Żeleński Boy, *Uroczy znachor*, in: *Pisma*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1956, p. 363-377.

²³ Cf. W. Lutosławski, *Z dziedziny myśli. Studia filozoficzne*, Kraków 1900, p. 341.

²⁴ Cf. W. Lutosławski, *Seelenmacht. Abriss einer zeitgemässen Weltanschauung*, Lipsk 1899, p. 189, 194; H. Struve, *Historia logiki jako teorii poznania w Polsce*, Warsaw 1911, p. 508-516; by the same author: *Filozofia polska w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu (1894-1904)*, Warsaw 1907, p. 29-31 and F. Gabryl (priest), *Polska filozofia religijna*, vol. 2, p. 316-376.

²⁵ Cf. W. Lutosławski, *Logika ogólna, czyli teoria poznania i logika formalna*, London 1906, p. 23.

characteristic level in the spirit's development. Nationality does not depend on climate, topography or hypsometry or even on residents' descent. A distinct type of a spirit selects a suitable place on Earth for itself or on other planets so as to realize its national ideals"²⁶. Nationality is also connected with humankind's civilizational growth, its evolution. W. Lutosławski wrote: "Just as new animal and plant species emerged gradually one after another, the species of of spiritual life inside the human form emerge one after another, revealing more and more complex relationships"²⁷.

In the context of these reflections, one could say that the nation, sanctified by W. Lutosławski, is not an exclusively spiritual bond between people, but "a completely specific reality" manifested by numerous national institutions, customs, habits, works of art, literature and science. Although each nation has its language, its descent, its historical past, according to W. Lutosławski, none of these features, "not even their sum", constitute a nation. Only a community understood as a certain species of the self creates its language, its history. In this statement the author of *Ludzkość odrodzona* touches upon the basics of metaphysics and recognizes the human self and similar selves as the supreme principle of reality. This enables him to discuss, on the one hand, the individualism of the self and on the other hand, its communal and national nature.

It seems, however, that in W. Lutosławski's theory the nation as an ontological category had a more narrow meaning than "the communion of the self", which allowed a greater diversity of human being's spiritual and moral refinement in the process of overcoming the bodily-material limitations of a given culture. It allowed for a possibility of mankind's betterment in the process of making oneself aware of the importance of free will and action guided by love. With the self's gradual spiritual growth, state-national institutions should disappear, replaced by social organizations combining "voluntarily cooperating, similar souls" aiming at greater and greater and more unreserved spiritual relationships of the self, transcending any fixed forms"²⁸. Basically, it represented the sacralization of the sense of community, including the nation.

The creators of the Christian provenance did not limit themselves solely to the messianic sacralization of the nation. A different context was adopted by K. Michalski, one of the representatives of the Polish neo-Thomism in the Leuven version. According to the author, it was open thomism which absorbed the results of detailed sciences, guided by the rules of authenticity and liveliness²⁹. Hence, he concluded that christian wisdom is

²⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

²⁹ Michalski Konstanty (priest) – 1879-1947. Philosopher and theologist. He was ordained in 1903. Following his studies in Lovanium, he was conferred a doctoral degree in 1911. In 1917 he prepared his post-doctoral thesis entitled *Jan Buridanus i jego wpływ na filozofię scholastyczną w Polsce*. In 1919 he started giving lectures at the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University. He was the dean of the Faculty of Theology a few times, and in the academic year 1931/1932 he was the president of the UJ. Between 1938 and 1947 he was the chairman of Komisja do Badań Historii Filozofii w Polsce. His chief works include: *Mistyka i scholastyka u Dantego*, Kraków 1921; *Wpływ Oxfordu na filozofię Jana z Mirecourt*, Kraków 1921; *Między heroizmem a bestialstwem*, Kraków 1949.

linked to the open soul seeking truth even in alien worldviews. In the light of this, Michalski wished to conduct dialogue with all ideologies, based on an open, rational discussion.

K. Michalski (along with J. Maritain and E Mounier) should be regarded as one of the more interesting Catholic representatives of historiosophy of that time. K. Bochenek observes that open thomism assumed realism recognizing freedom of human activity as the chief source of human history which is comprehensible and sensible, because it is the work of man creating the symbols and signs, revealing human thoughts, feelings and nostalgia in the process of exploring the world³⁰. In this process, the most significant role is played by religion, philosophy and detailed sciences, with the first one talking about the fallen man- absolved by mercy, philosophy focusing on the thinking man – a rational creature, and detailed sciences – on man of work. In his view, a real human being combines these three bases. In 1934 in *Tomizm wobec współczesnej filozofii dziejów*, K. Michalski used the term “perfectionism” which was to refer to the evolution of spiritual-social life of mankind towards greater and greater forms.

In contemporary totalitarian systems, such as Bolshevism and fascism (also Nazism) he noticed common roots in both of these sinister ideologies. They referred to religious forms of collective life, opposing the concept of battle for existence in communism and the role of blood and race in fascism. From his standpoint, both assumptions are derived from and are limited to naturalistic and mechanistic thinking. They do not explain liberty or spiritual creation. He criticized political racism for worshiping the nation consisting of individuals bound by blood ties, not a spiritual bond. He assumed that both ideologies sacralize the nation in the face of imminent threats to human existence, resulting from sociopolitical and economic contexts of the contemporary world, fraught with fear and anxiety.

K. Michalski contrasted this sacralization of the nation with another one based on spirituality. He recognized the spirit as the chief, though not the only, driving force behind history. He asserted that human fate is shaped by heterogeneous arrangements of causes created and located in historical trends, functioning according to God's concept. It is God who leads nations and countries via natural measures. The only authority capable of leading the nation through different historical turbulence towards the path of growth is Providence. K. Michalski's sacralization is concealed under the concept of perfectionism. In his definition of the nation, speech is the basis in a constant betterment of activities, thoughts and life from the most primitive forms to more and more developed ones and better corresponding to changed conditions. Love and freedom leading to God are regarded as the driving forces behind this process. This theory was accompanied by optimism in the approach to world history, even in the most tragic moments for humankind.

Another concept of nation's sacralization can be noticed in the works of F. Sawicki³¹ who combined voluntarism and Thomistic rationalism. He searched for the ultimate

³⁰ K. Bochenek, *Mysłiciele katolicy*, copy in author's possession.

³¹ Franciszek Sawicki, a priest. (1877-1952). Philosopher of history, theologian. Following studies at the theological seminary in Chełm, he was ordained in 1900. A year later he enrolled in studies in Freiburg im Breisgau and in 1902 he received his doctoral degree. From 1903 up until 1952, he gave lectures on philosophy, canonical

reasons for the existence of “everything”. The author believed that one can find it out only if all of processes are considered. He meant religious, philosophical and naturalistic cognition. In his view, religion provides knowledge by revelation, whereas philosophy in cognition uses reason and intuition. The theory incorporates all issues beyond the scope of detailed sciences.

What F. Sawicki perceived in history was continuity. History was the execution of God's plan. The essential role in this execution was attributed to the human spirit creating the nation. Thereby emerging culture-creating processes were divided into: the culture of spiritual life (ideal), manifested in religion, art, morality and science, and the material culture connected with the existence of the human being as a person of “flesh and blood”, social life (organizations) including that within the Church and the state. For the crisis of contemporary culture F. Sawicki blamed, among others, Christians who were not always guided by faith principles throughout history. Hence, from his standpoint, it was necessary and possible to revive christian values. Bearing in mind the prevalent pessimistic and catastrophic contemporary tendencies, Sawicki's spiritual personalism was a source of optimism and hope.

According to K. Bochenek, as a personalist F. Sawicki understood that the human being is a person, a self-aware creature, in charge of oneself. A person is a being in oneself, rational, with immanent purpose, strengthened in the spirit of dignity and autonomy. Herein, one can discern a stark opposition to reification tendencies. The human being is sacralized, because he/she embodies hypo-static perfection in the most superb form. The human being is linked to values, and at the same time human philosophy is connected with the philosophy of values, which was a novelty in the emerging Polish personalistic thought. As K. Bochenek wrote to U. F. Sawicki: “The measure for reviving social life is to apply ethical principles in the family, nation, state as well as institutions organizing economic life”³².

The representatives of political thought referring to Catholicism granted it the status of “the only true religion”, whose social teachings were to decide about individuals' conduct and the shape of society and nation. In this process, the most significant role was to be played by Catholic ethics, its sacralized moral norms, or to be more precise, adhering to these norms in the process of building a community. This fact was material to whether the society met the requirements of a “good community” or not³³. Emphasis was put on the fact that a person must be the end and the measure, not a means to an end for a human

law, moral theology and dogmatics at the theological seminary in Pelplin. His main works include: *Wert und Würde der Persönlichkeit im Christentum*, Köln 1906; *Individualität und Persönlichkeit*, Paderborn 1913; *Filozofia dziejów*, Gdynia 1974; *Die Gottesbeweise*, Paderborn 1926; *Filozofia miłości*, Poznań 1934; *Filozofia życia*, Poznań 1936; *Kryzys kultury a religia chrześcijańska*, Poznań 1937; *Filozofia ducha w walce z filozofią życia*, Płock 1938; *Katolicyzm jako religia osobowości i społeczności*, Warsaw 1939; *Osobowość chrześcijańska*, Kraków 1947.

³² K. Bochenek, *Myśliciele katoliccy*, ms. cit.

³³ For more see: B. Szlachta, *Konserwatyzm. Z dziejów tradycji myślenia o polityce*, Kraków – Warsaw 1998, p. 11; J. Bartyzel, *Konserwatyzm bez kompromisu. Studium z dziejów zachowawczej myśli politycznej w Polsce w XX wieku*, Toruń 2001, p. 116-118.

community. From W. Krawczyk's point of view, such an approach to Catholicism defends the individual who apart from mundane goals also aims at the supernatural. This goal is set by God, which makes the human being obliged to achieve it³⁴. To supplement this utterance, one should state that we are dealing with the defense of the individual via sacralization of goals which the individual is supposed to work towards in his/her activity. Sacralization decides that no one and nothing can make the human being or nation renounce particular goals.

In this context, one should pay attention to the words of K. Górski who believed that all Catholics should defend the individual's inherent sense of liberty, whereas the nation and the state ought to give the individual freedom indispensable for accomplishing their tasks. He thought that this is what theocentric humanism consists in. The doctrine recognizes God as the supreme value pursued through the activity of every human being as a nation's member. In K. Górski's view, human freedom stems from human being's faith which cannot be restrained by nation, society or state. The sacralization of goals leads, among other things, to the conviction that only dialogue, not only with Catholics, but also with people of other religious beliefs, can give rise to the creation of a "godly state"³⁵.

Sacralization of goals which all human activity works towards was linked to the conviction of some Catholic thinkers about "the sinful human nature". In their view, as underlined by Jarosław Macała, "destructive human instincts could only be overcome by religion, as it is only through religion that human deeds tend towards goodness and are provided with standards and goals". They rejected the individual's absolute freedom as it led to society's demise. It was to be controlled in the moral and material sphere, however inconvenient³⁶. The author is right in saying that, on the one hand, Catholic thinkers underscored "the sinful human nature", a pessimistic "outlook on history", lightened only by Catholic authorities. On the other hand, there is the nation's sacralization. In this process, a significant role is played by the skeptical attitude of Catholic thinkers to the capacity of the human mind. The nation's sacralization also led to the belief, especially among Catholic conservatives, that the human being succumbs to evil all too easily. They tried to oppose this theory. In the author's view, they claimed: "one cannot tolerate bad human tendencies, temptations or anarchic individualism, compelling him/her even by force to respect the principles of faith and morality. They have less faith in the human being and his/her capability of acting in accordance with the principle of goodness, than personalists. Hence, the inclinations towards authoritarian social and political resolutions"³⁷.

³⁴ Cf. W. Krawczyk, *Katolicka myśl współczesna na tle współczesnych doktryn społecznych*, in: *Katolicka Myśl Społeczna. Pamiętnik III Studium Katolickiego w Warszawie 1937 r.*, Poznań 1938, p. 45.

³⁵ Cf. K. Górski, *Nowy ideał wychowawczy*, „Prąd”, 1935, no 5; by the same author: *Państwo chrześcijańskie średniowiecza*, Warsaw b.r.w., p. 26; Cf. J. T. Dybowski, *Ku aktywizacji. U źródeł katolickiego personalizmu*, „Kultura”, 1936, no 24.

³⁶ J. Macała, *Polska katolicka myśl polityczna II RP*, Zielona Góra 2004, p. 52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

A considerable part of Catholic thinkers presented a pessimistic outlook on human nature, based on which they arrived at the conclusion that the nation should have a major role in the process of shaping the society of the future, a society whose personality would be capable of embracing the sanctity of the moral realm. That is how the nation's sacralization occurred, which was to lead to human's internal transformation, which in turn was to serve as the basis for external changes. Those thoughts were frequently anti-liberal and anti-socialist. The doctrine unconsciously referred to Kant's idea of "duty", although it had a more republican than national undertone. It was clear that Kantian renaissance resulted in the emergence of tendencies separating science from faith, and precisely speaking, philosophy from faith. The former was to be based on cognition, while the latter – on feeling. These tendencies were assessed as symptomatic of the burgeoning religious movement or return to "true religiousness" of widespread social masses. It was presumed that this had to happen seeing that the materialism-fascinated humankind reached a turning point, the crossing of which demanded new orientation in the totality of the universe.

From this basically ontological assumption, practical postulates regarding the human functioning within a state were put forward. It was claimed that the human being should be guided by the same principles in private and public life, while Catholicism was to become the supreme norm of national cooperation. According to J. Macała, such an attitude led to the conviction that "the influence of Catholic religion should be ubiquitous, dominant and uncompromising. Only then would laicism, 20th century's most hazardous disease, be defeated. This religious integritism was also stressed by the Christian Democratic Party (with time though less and less) and its more conservative version, on a smaller scale, appeared within national parties, eclipsed by the nation and nationalism"³⁸.

The nation's sacralization led to a significant question, whether Catholicism is a foundation of the Polish soul, whether it decides about Poland's affiliation to Western Europe, and as a consequence, whether Catholicism resides in the nature of Polish people creating what is Polish or whether the quality of being Polish resided in Catholicism. Macała duly states that it was about the relationship between the nation and Catholicism, and to be more precise, whether Catholicism allows involving faith in national goals, or conversely, whether the nation should serve in the process of strengthening Catholicism. Thus, the question asked was whether the union of nationality and Catholicism gave supremacy to religion or conversely.

The answers were twofold: for some thinkers of this persuasion the most essential was nationality's supremacy, whose "strengthening should be the responsibility of Catholicism, for others the supremacy of Catholicism, as first you are a Catholic, and only

³⁸ Ibid., p. 53-54. Vid. J. Prądkyński, *Wartości i wskazania katolickie*, "Kurier Poznański", 1927, no 176; L. Radziejowski, *Kościół i Naród*, "Warszawianka", 1926, no 232; W. Korfanty, *Tchórze czy wyznawcy*, "Polonia", 1934, no 3546; Z. Wądołowski, *Ku religijnemu odrodzeniu*, "Przegląd Katolicki", 1932, no 5; A. Romer, *Wiara i wojsko*, "Przegląd Katolicki", 1937, no 15.

later a Pole"³⁹. One has to notice that both responses were connected with the acceptance of theses supporting ontologization and nation's sacralization as well as treating the nation as a sanctity with a separate entity in the tradition proposed by Neo-Thomists. The whole had to be real and concrete, and as such was formed solely by the nation.

The nation's sacralization in the Polish social thought, especially national thought, was linked to depicting the relation between the concept of the nation and nationalism. The interpretation of these concepts was thought of as the most controversial in the interwar period, though today they also evoke a lot of doubts⁴⁰. Upon analyzing Catholic thought, one notices its pluralism and at the same time a peculiar universalism. While no universally-accepted definitions of nation and nationalism have been established, the nation was regarded as "God's work", which was tantamount to sanctifying nationalism. Furthermore, Catholic circles were wary of the notion of the nation, as it was relatively new in the Church's social doctrine, which achieved its mature form only in the 19th century. Moreover, the term was promoted by the French Revolution as a contrast to society or civilization, and then romanticism emphasized the differences between the state and the nation.

As a rule, the thinkers of this persuasion underlined the spiritual nature of the nation. They wrote that it is a voluntary and natural union, and it is free will referring to common tradition, spiritual experiences and ideals that decides about nation's shape. This stemmed from nation's ontologization and sacralization, displaying love for God and at the same time people bound by the same religion as essential substance of the national bond. M. Macała is right stating that "in the Catholic thought we have on the one hand, the acceptance of voluntarist or subjectivistic definition of the nation (with the dominant role of national consciousness) and on the other hand, a distinct emphasis on the nation-creating role of Catholic religion in the case of Poland"⁴¹.

The latter approach was adopted in the interpretation of the nation by the thomist Innocenty Maria Bocheński. In the 30's he opposed the biologicistic theory wherein nation's functioning was determined by human's natural features, excluding the necessity of incorporating moral norms.

Apart from logic, his works in that period also broach national-Catholic issues and their social dimension. Here, rather than exploring and searching, Bocheński popularized his beliefs. Sacralizing the nation, he criticized liberalism, pacifism, ecumenism, internationalism, the idea of a secular state (which he contrasted with "a total unidirectional

³⁹ J. Macała, *Polska katolicka...*, op. cit., p. 55; Vid. F., *Katolicyzm i polskość*, "Słowo", 1923, no 238; K. J., *W sercu narodu*, *Dziennik Poznański*, 1926, no 202; J. Rembieniński, *Wielka Polska*, "Mysł Narodowa", 1927, no 24; F. Konieczny, *Katolicy w Polsce wobec cywilizacji*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie", 1928, vol. 22; J. Rostworowski, *Najważniejsze postulaty katolickie w dzisiejszej Polsce*, Płock 1936, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Vid. A. Wierzbicki, *Naród-państwo w polskiej myśli historycznej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Wrocław 1978, p. 57-72; E. Gellner, *Narody i nacjonalizm*, Warsaw 1991, p. 14-15; J. Szacki, *O narodzie i nacjonalizmie*, "Znak", 1997, no 3, p. 8-31; M. Hroch, *Małe narody Europy*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Kraków 2003, p. 99-104.

⁴¹ J. Macała, *Polska katolicka...*, op. cit., p. 56.

state”), using “meagre measures” by the Church, attempts at reinterpreting the Gospel and J. Maritain's personalism. He also denounced Polish Catholicism's anti-intellectualism, which by referring mainly to feelings and will, did not create a holistic worldview and did not rationalize the truths of faith. He criticized modernism, sentimentalism, fideism, skepticism, pragmatism and intuitionism as saturated with anti-intellectualism. He was a declared rationalist and he conceived of faith as the work of reason.

For J. M. Bocheński, the nation is a collectivity referring in the realm of culture to peculiar national values. The nation is a condition for the emergence of the state whose aim is to preserve and defend these values. It is a common task for all members of the nation. The nation's sacralization often led to the conclusion that only a national state can be conducive to the emergence of a nation as a form of spirituality and sensibility. However, from J. M. Bocheński's standpoint, it did not have to be a national state, because a state is first and foremost a rationalized community, emerging involuntarily. Assessing J. M. Bocheński's thought, U. Schrade notices that for him „the nation is a human community fighting for an independent state entity”⁴².

That is how J. Bocheński sacralized the nation as a cultural community, one of whose components was religion uniting individuals. A consequent process of nation's sacralization led him to believe that a nation-uniting religion becomes, in a way, an element of an ideology and at the same time a broadly-understood culture. In this context, Catholicism was becoming the basic element of Polishness. Thus, J. M. Bocheński thought that non-Catholics deserved tolerance at best, but not equal rights. He was of the opinion that religious practice assumes different forms depending on the nation. From his standpoint, Poland was assigned the role of “the bulwark of Christianity”, hence the sacralization of courage and other knightly (soldierly) virtues, enthusiasm for Sienkiewicz's “Trilogy”, defending the principle of the just war. In practice, it entailed opposition to mythologizing Polish history, defense of external or internal censorship, preventing the acquisition of material which posed a threat to patriotic attitudes. This view impaired the sacralization of the nation that ceased to have absolute spirit and began to lose its independent metaphysical state.

The Polish social-political circles frequently deliberated over which community is of greater significance – the nation or the state. The same was true of Catholic circles. For some theorists of that persuasion (eg. Karol Górski, Jacek Woroniecki), the existence of an intentional entity was nation's essential feature, which defined it and distinguished it from nationality shaped through blood ties. In spite of that, O. J. Woroniecki convinced about the need for evaluating both of these “supreme communities”, which emerged due to the fact that the human being is by nature a social entity. The differences between these structures were limited, in his opinion, to the types of bond arising within them. The national community had a morally more profound character than the state, and thanks to that, with its structures and tradition, it made the human being more attached to it. For this

⁴² U. Schrade, *Międzywojenna polska myśl narodowa. Od patriotyzmu do globalizmu*, Kraków 2004, p. 123, 129-135.

representative of the personalistic movement in Polish Catholicism, the nation's superiority over the state was all too obvious. He stressed it even more so in the face of the looming totalization of social life. From his point of view, the state attains this goal via the civil law, the implementation of which is overseen by legal authority.

Sacralizing the nation, J. Woroniecki observed that there is a certain transcendental whole, with which nation members share a certain, intangible bond. This shaped the consciousness of its members that they also belong to a spiritual community, which distinguished them from other groups, including in terms of their conduct, which he referred to as national customs⁴³. The nation leads people via customs, the implementation of which is overseen by public opinion. In this context, Woroniecki wrote about patriotism and nationalism, believing that loving one's homeland and nation is every man's obligation. He was critical of extreme nationalism, directed against other nations. He opined that it corresponded to putting feelings before reason. Thus, he rather discussed patriotism or moderate nationalism, denouncing any type of chauvinism⁴⁴. Thereby he opposed the postulates attributing the most significant role in shaping community's unity to national egoism. The basis for shaping this unity consisted in seeking society's moral goodness, enabling the individual to live according to virtue.

Summing up, one could state that in the process of sacralizing the nation, Polish social thinkers referred to the concept of eternal (in the mundane sense), godly and natural product of former, present and future generations. They were frequently organicistic concepts because the nation was conceived of as an organism, whose elements were inextricably linked and co-dependent.

For Catholic circles, sacralization and personification stemmed from the supremacy of God's law. As K. Grzybowski aptly put it, there were those who saw the nation as a metaphysical end, treating it as a concept⁴⁵. The nation was believed to have a metaphysical aim, irrespective of the intellectual consciousness of individuals who perceived this aim much better through feeling than through reason. To comprehend the said aim, one needed faith, religious feeling, because the aim was founded on Catholic religion.

Frequently, the nation perceived as a community of generations was thought of as primary in relation to the individual, with its own goals, whereas the individual constituted only an atom and could never be independent of the nation. The fact of the matter lay in harmonizing the relationship between the individual and the nation.

All the above-mentioned conceptions sacralize the nation. The metaphysical approach is the dominant one in references to this issue. Broaching the issue of the nation and national character entailed either acknowledging the ultimate, absolute value of life, be it spiritual or material, or eternal reality, separate and hence sub-natural. The nation was religiously revered and distinguished from the profane (the ordinary and the mundane).

⁴³ J. Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, vol. 1: *Etyka ogólna*, Lublin 1995 (op. 2), s. 246.

⁴⁴ J. Woroniecki, *U podstaw kultury katolickiej*, Poznań 1935, p. 59-61.

⁴⁵ K. Grzybowski, *Ojczyzna – naród – państwo*, op. 2, Warszawa 1977, p. 160-164.

The nation was sacralized by representatives of all theoretical movements during the interwar period. It is an essential and characteristic trait of Polish deliberations of that time, making our thought stand out against the European background.