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Contemporary national movement and the problem of migration

Beginning in 1989, political groups of national and nationalist provenance have taken up or continued their activities in an open form. All of them referred in their origins to the ideological and political achievements of Narodowa Demokracja (National Democracy; ND) (Radomski, 2011: 182-193), or to the legacy of the so-called national offspring associated with Ruch Narodowo-Radykalny (National-Radical Camp; RNR). Their socio-political projections reflected the ideological content of the main constructor of the national camp and promoter of its doctrine, Roman Dmowski, and such National Democracy activists as Jan Ludwik Popławski, Zygmunt Balicki, Tadeusz Bielecki, Adam Doboszyński and Jędrzej Giertych. It should be remembered, however, that national groups are also diverse in terms of ideological, curricular and structural diversity, just as nationalist thought was diverse in the Second Polish Republic. This is because it contained a vast palette of ideological, projective and curricular shades (Majchrowski, 2000: 99-162).

The number of groups with a national inclination in the last years of the last century amounted to several dozen, officially registered political entities (Tokarz, 2002; Tomasiewicz, 2003; Maj, Maj, 2007). This was due, among other things, to programme differences, different political tactics, and the political ambitions of individual leaders. Among external factors, the dynamics and longevity of the process of shaping the party system in Poland, the discomfort stemming from the lack of political stability and the short duration of individual party entities are worth noting (Maj, 2008: 113). The systematization of individual groupings is based on the distinguishing characteristics of the inclusion or exclusion of a given entity.

Programme differences in recent years have concerned, among other things, the desired political, ethical and moral order, the socio-economic system, an evaluation of and reckoning with the past, projections of the future shape of the united Europe. The

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socio-political concepts of contemporary national formations include attitudes to religious belief, family, school, local government institutions, culture, economic and social issues (Smolik, 2017).

The nation, family and religion remain at the centre of the value system¹. Without going into the various ways of understanding the term nation and defining it, it should be pointed out that it is often treated as a community of culture²(A. Smith, 2007:72-95); Gellner, 1991:15-16). One of the publicists of Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (National Revival of Poland; NRP) writes: “A nation is a voluntary association, based on psychological and moral bonds, of people who possess – as a result of common ancestors and historical tradition – a sense of cultural distinctiveness and a desire to preserve and develop it” (Słodkowska, Dołbakowska, 2005: 275).

Consequently, one of the tasks was the purification of national culture to preserve the national community. Defining the canon of national culture makes it easier for national publicists to identify enemies, and it strengthens the moral protest against alleged threats from them. A radical revision of notions about our own past is called for, rejecting accusations of Polish guilt towards other nations or prejudices. A sense of pride in belonging to one’s own nation created on the basis of properly selected readings can facilitate the realization of the construction of a sovereign nation-state. It, thus, contributes to instrumentalization by creating a uniform image of Polish culture, from the circle of which artists not inclined to accept the principles of Catholic traditionalism and national exclusivism would be excluded. Posing as the depositaries of the nation, they explicitly limit the canon of national culture to the work of ethnic Poles, consciously negating much of the Polish output created as a result of external influences, which they accommodated. In this context, nationalists see many threats, such as the presence of national minorities or the deliberate activities of external enemies (Radomski, 2016: 16-18). Because the Latin civilization was to dominate in Poland, the influence of other civilizations was feared. As Maciej Giertych puts it: “one cannot be civilized in two ways”. (Giertych 1995: 59). In this case, the reception of the views of Feliks Koneczny, considered one of the scientific authorities in the discussed milieu, can be seen. In the inter-war period, the Jewish minority was regarded as particularly dangerous. For this rea-

¹ At the beginning of the Third Republic of Poland, there were complications concerning the classification of particular groups into the national current. Generally speaking, it includes various organizations and circles referring to the tradition of ND. The most significant groups include: Stronnictwo Narodowe (National Party; NP), Stronnictwo Narodowe “Ojczyzna” (National Party “Fatherland”), Polska Wspólnota Narodowa-Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish National Community – Polish National Party; PWN-PSL), Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (National Rebirth of Poland; NOP), Ruch Narodowy (National Movement; RN) and of course Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families; LPR).

² Consequently, in the opinion of Ernest Gellner, for the representatives of the above-mentioned ideology, the nation is primarily a community of culture. Similarly, Anthony Smith argues: “All varieties of nationalism regard the nation as a form of public culture, open in principle to all members of the community or all citizens of the nation-state”.

son, among others, there was an almost hysterical reaction to the possibility of accepting Jewish refugees from the Third Reich (Biliński, 2001).

In order to protect themselves against these dangers, a national education campaign was called for to weaken the influence of liberal ideas. This doctrine was strongly criticized and its spread was supposed to enable the influx of immigrants. As the well-known politician Roman Rybarski wrote:

Liberalism does not care who comes and what they come with, as long as there is a free circulation of goods and ideas. The life of a nation under the influence of these principles becomes a marketplace where the best and latest products are being sold in an uproar. The gates are being opened wide to the West and the East. Respect for one's own values are disappearing and one wants to change the whole life, which, by the way, is constantly changing, to their own fashion [...]. No wonder that this creates anarchy and chaos that wears everyone out (Rybarski, 1926: 232).

The aim of the article is to present the position of the contemporary national movement towards the problem of the influx of immigrants to Europe, with a particular emphasis on the threats arising from this fact for Poland. The article uses opinion journalism, political programmes, and the press of the contemporary national movement. Content analysis and, to a lesser extent, comparative studies were used as a research method (Szczepaniak, 2012: 95-96).

Facing the problem of migration

Contemporary nationalists mention migration movements as one of the elements causing social tension and resulting in the weakening of national identity. In a distasteful style Adam Gmurczyk, one of the leaders of NOP wrote: "It is no longer small groups of Europeans moving across the continent, but a whole host of civilizationally alien elements taking over individual countries, turning Christian and national Europe – by transferring their own traditions – into a real cultural pigsty" (Gmurczyk, 1997: 13). They look at migration from three perspectives: internal security, cultural security, and security of care or, more broadly, social security (Potyrała, 2016: 80-84).

The dimension of cultural security is, however, the most important for contemporary nationalists (Trojanowska-Strzębowska, 2010: 19-22). Referring to Koneczny, one of the leaders of RN stated: "Anyone who respects traditions and multiculturalism knows that nothing harms cultures so much as their mixing" (Trudnowski, 2017). Consequently: "The national movement has always opted for a national, or mono-ethnic, state. Even if there are cultural differences, and Poland does have multicultural traditions, Polish culture should play the dominant role. Polish culture and Catholic traditions are two stems from which Poland should draw. And any large immigration, no matter from which country, is a threat" (Trudnowski, 2017). One can see in this case a sense of insecurity concerning one's own nation. One can also think that in the opinion of the nationalists, the possible process of acculturation, understood in this case as drawing from foreign cul-

tures, does not enrich Polish culture. From the quoted statement, it appears that the solution could be full assimilation. The situation in Western Europe provides justification for this. The large number of mosques and the adoption of Islamic culture and customs have led to a feeling of threat in European countries, including physical threats caused by the aggressiveness of the newcomers or even terrorist attacks. The vision of the development of events is close to that presented in the novel *Submission*, which was in fact positively evaluated by the National Democrats (Piskorski, 2019: 6). In their statements, they prove that the threat of the Islamisation of Europe is becoming real (Kamiński, 2001: 16). This can be seen in France, where colonization continues, manifested by the large number of Muslim families. They further point out that religion prevents Muslims from assimilating. In Serbia and elsewhere, they have allegedly attacked border services and even destroyed food supplied by Christian charitable organizations. Examples are cited of Chechen refugees terrorising other refugees. In addition, the presence of Muslims was said to encourage further abandonment of the Christian religion by already secularized Europeans. It was emphasized that Islam is destroying Europe and the inhabitants of the continent are unable to oppose it. It has been claimed that a Muslim can only be a fundamentalist (Giertych, 2015a: 8). Over time, accusations against students from Eastern Europe also emerged. According to Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth; MW), as said by Szymon Wiśniewski, spokesman for MW in Mazovia: “Ukrainian students are very often privileged at the expense of Polish students. They receive huge subsidies, money and scholarships to study here with us. That’s why we, as young Poles, as nationalists, do not agree that the Ukrainian minority should even have such subsidies, which amount to over 10-11 million PLN” (*Młodzież Wszechpolska przeciwko przyjmowaniu ukraińskich imigrantów*, 2017). In this context, there were proposals for remedies. Maciej Giertych proposed: “cooperation of states and nations of Europe in order to maintain Christian identity; application of personalistic ethics; promotion of diversity; acceptance of the principle of subsidiarity; leaving judicial power in the hands of those who accept the Latin civilization” (Szwed-Walczak, 2017: 239).

They also proposed that individuals from the Islamic world should familiarize themselves with the Catholic tradition, which would make conversion possible. They proposed to ban the manifestation of radical Islamic principles and to control the activities of Islamic clerics. It was stated that: “Aware that they will be subjected to such indoctrination and control, they may be less likely to settle among them” (Giertych, 2016: 2). Pope Francis’ call for each parish to take in one family in a life-threatening situation was supported. In this way, the refugees would be separated and would not pose a greater threat. European countries should also refrain from providing social assistance to refugees. In Poland, an assimilation course and the learning of Polish language would also be necessary (Shaded, 2016: 4). During the migration crisis, there was a strong protest against the attempt to accept about 7,000 refugees into Poland. Activists of the national movement recorded a film *Stop for Refugees* in which they put forward the idea of hold-

ing a referendum during which Poles would decide whether to stop the influx of refugees (Bartkiewicz, 2019). In the course of time, they stated: “Since there is an influx of immigrants into Western European countries anyway, and there is no one to prevent it, the priority of migration policy must be to attract immigration to Europe from the Catholic countries of Black Africa” (Danek, 2016: 5). As the publisher of *Mysł Polska* argued:

In this way, under the banner of the ‘open door policy’, Western Europe will be re-Christianized. In its churches, we will see small communities of indigenous Europeans celebrating Mass in the Tridentine rite alongside a sea of Africans celebrating it in the Zairian rite. This is a much happier prospect than old churches standing empty and falling into disrepair or being turned into restaurants and disco venues, as is currently the case in Germany. Of course, priests, whether European, African or Asian, will not neglect missionary action among the non-believing majority of white Europeans. It will not be a Carolingian or Ottonian Europe, but a neo-Roman, Mediterranean Europe – the Europe of St. Maurice and St. Augustine (Danek, 2016: 5).

The programme outlined above was to apply only to Western Europe. Central and Eastern Europe was to reject immigration.

Similar comments were made about social security. It was emphasized that benefits for immigrants are a threat to social security. The newcomers do not want to work, but only to receive benefits. As a consequence, neighbourhoods of the “savage poor living off crime and milking social systems” (Szwed-Walczak, 2017: 239) have emerged. With regard to Poland, the problem was also related to the influx of the Ukrainian population. Nationalists repeatedly stressed the too lenient, in their opinion, policy of the Polish authorities in this respect. It was pointed out that the problem of Poland’s depopulation would not be solved by an influx of people from the East. The need to limit the inflow of cheap workers, who were supposed to take jobs away from Poles, was stressed. As a remedy for the lack of workforce, the need for a pro-family policy and an increase in the birth rate were indicated. It was indicated that migration phenomena are very difficult to reverse. And it was added: “The demography of the Polish nation cannot be fixed by transplanting from another nation. [...] The key is the issue of good, sensible family-friendly policies” (Trudnowski, 2017). In the pages of *Mysł Polska* it was written:

The idea of the PiS government looks like this: Poles are to be demoralized with 500+, 300+, etc. benefits, and Ukrainians are to work for this luxury. This is the shortest route to the general demoralization of the Poles and the turning of them into a dull class. History teaches us that sooner or later such a class is swept away by the working class when it reaches the appropriate level of organisation (Wielomski, Ziętek-Wielomska, 2018: 21).

In addition, it was emphasized that although a large group of Ukrainians behaves loyally towards Poland, in the Ukrainian history as well as in individual attitudes, one can notice an aversion or even hatred towards Poland. As an example, they cited a novel by Oksana Zabuzko in which the past relations of the two nations were, in their opinion, manipulated (Piętka, 2015: 7). They did not deny the right to provide individual assistance, but tried to draw a demarcation line between refugees and immigrants. For Gier-

tych, the first group are people seeking refuge in other countries. The second group are those who seek employment in other countries, but should not receive social support because they are able to work. He added that “instead of fighting for the victory of the democratic order in their homelands, they have abandoned their families and are looking for better jobs in Germany” (Giertych, 2015a: 8). He suggested that if they could not find work themselves, they would return to their homeland. The NM authorities reacted very hysterically to the statement of a government representative about the possibility of bringing workers from the Philippines to Poland. The PIS government was seen as failing to keep its promises to voters and as being influenced by the immigration lobby. One of the politicians from the national movement stated: “It will not solve the problem of the influx of immigrants either. For while it does not agree to accept people from the Middle East, at the same time it supports Poland’s acceptance of people from India and other exotic regions of the world” (Trudnowski, 2017). They also denied information that Poland does not provide assistance to refugees. They pointed to the influx of Chechens, Ukrainians and Vietnamese into Poland. Such views were presented for the benefit of international public opinion. In Poland, they have more than once addressed questions to the government about the influx of immigrants.

The economic dimension was combined with a political dimension. It has been pointed out straightforwardly that the Polish electoral law provides facilities for minorities, and, in future, Ukrainians could, like Muslims in London, impose their president in Warsaw. Consequently: “At some point we may lose our chance to be governed by the sovereign, which is, after all, the Polish nation” (Piskorski 2019:4). In this context, examples of terrorist attacks in France or Spain were cited. Cases of aggressive behaviour by immigrants in Germany were described in detail. The vision of an almost apocalyptic situation in the Western countries was hardly an incentive to protect their own territories. The growing crisis was blamed on the USA and German governments. In the former case, the USA’s efforts to dominate the Middle East were to be relevant. In the latter case, Chancellor Angela Merkel’s aim was to obtain cheap labour force (Soska, 2015: 8). The publicist of the quarterly *Mysł.pl*, enumerated the reasons for the aversion to emigrants:

- population inflows beyond state control;
- the decision to accept refugees was taken without consultation between the German and Austrian governments;
- the media did not adequately report on the risks;
- fears of the Islamisation of Europe are important;
- media coverage of the persecution of Christians in Africa has been lacking;
- the effectiveness of the Polish uniformed services was not believed in;
- the weakness of Western European societies shaped in a culture of pacifism was recognized (Lalik, 2016: 11).

Conclusions

The idea of a nation state is at the centre of the value system of the national movement in Poland. According to this idea, sovereign power in a state can only belong to the people. Consequently, national borders should coincide with national borders. This implies the principle of restricting the influx of immigrants who generate various risks. The nationalists consider the possibility of losing national identity and national culture as the most significant. This has happened in Western Europe. Poland and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are less threatened. That is why the measures should be taken that would protect Polish people from the fate of other countries. The nationalists consider the most appropriate policy to be the idea of closing the borders and implementing a national education that would strengthen national identity and protect it from the influence of Islamic civilization. Hence, the calls for a ban on building mosques. Conditionally, they point to the possibility of accepting immigrants, but this should be combined with indoctrination and acculturation. Such a programme is approved only by part of the community and is seen by the radicals as capitulant (defeatist). The third project is related to the idea of helping only Christian refugees. I also agree with Anna Szwed-Walczak's opinion that "the nationalists believe that immigrants should be received by countries that have contributed to the political crisis in the Middle East" (Szwed-Walczak, 2017: 243-244). In this respect, they assume the possibility of cooperation with nationalist organizations and anti-immigration organizations in the West. Among others, they cooperated with the German PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident). In May 2016, representatives of NM were present at the Fortress Europe demonstration organized in Dresden. Radicals from the ONR attempted in 2018 to patrol a beach in Rimini, Italy, where a Polish tourist was raped (*Włochy: patrol ONR na plażach w Rimini*, 2018). In the pages of the national press, the causes of the migration crisis of 2015 have also been given much space in the international context. Opinions and assessments are often formulated in a defamatory language and even close to hate speech (Maj, 2013: 312). This is evidenced by the slogans chanted during the demonstrations. At the same time, self-representation was made as the only force capable of opposing the threats. As a remedy for Islamization or the loss of national identity caused by the influx of immigrants from Ukraine, the development of nationalism and militarism was pointed to as a way of defending values such as Catholicism, family and national tradition (Chodakiewicz, Mysiakowska-Muszyńska, Muszyński, 2015: 504).

Completing this statement, the Declaration of NM of 2012 states: "The National Movement takes as its primary objective the defence and strengthening of Polish national identity" (Ruch Narodowy, 2013). In contrast, point 5 of the declaration entitled *Sovereignty of the people* states: "A nation is only independent when the thinking of its

elites is independent of external centres and rooted in its history. The National Movement will develop original Polish political thought. It will restore dignity and grandeur to Polish culture, so that it once again becomes attractive to other nations, also as a guarantor of universal values” (Ruch Narodowy, 2013).

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During the migration crisis, there was a strong protest against the attempt to accept a refugees into Poland. Activists of the national movement recorded a film Stop for Refugees in which they put forward the idea of holding a referendum during which Poles would decide whether to stop the influx of refugees.

Keywords: contemporary national movement, migration, political thought, cultural security, refugees

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