

Summary

Prof. dr hab. Bogumił Grott has been long engaged in the studies of nationality. As early as for his doctoral thesis he concentrated his research at the Germanisation processes in the medieval Silesia, and afterwards turned his attention towards similar issues in the former Kresy (the Eastern Borderlands of the Polish Republic), to finally concentrate his research efforts on the nationalistic movements and their relations with the religion, with a special regard for Poland and neighbouring countries.

As a political scientist and a long-time employee of the Institute of Religious Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, he turned his attention towards the relations between religion and nationalistic doctrines and the policies of nationalistic parties regarding religion and the Churches, as well as towards the practical results of the mutual positioning of the two factors: the political and the religious. The inspiration of Professor Grott's research has been the work of the late Professor Leon Halban, who passed away in 1960 and who had been studying these relations on the example of Germany. His main work was the *Religion in the Third Reich*, published in Lvov in 1939.

The testimony of the research work of Professor Bogumił Grott — a long-time head of the History of State–Church Relations, in the Institute of Religious Studies of the Jagiellonian University — are his publications, numerous collective works he has been the editor of and scientific articles published in Poland and abroad. Among these are the following titles: *Nacjonalizm i religia* [Nationalism and Religion], Kraków 1986, *Nacjonalizm chrześcijański* [Christian Nationalism], Kraków 1991, 1996, 1999 and 2006 (four editions); *Zygmunt Balicki ideolog Narodowej Demokracji* [Zygmunt Balicki ideologue of National Democracy], Kraków 1995, *Adam Doboszyński o ustroju Polski* [Adam Doboszynski on the Polish political system] Warszawa 1996 — a book published by Wydawnictwo Sejmowe (Sejm Publishing House) in the series presenting Polish politicians — and *Religia, cywilizacja, rozwój — wokół idei Jana Stachniuka* [Religion, civilisation, development: around the idea by Jan Stachniuk], Kraków 2003. In the recent years (2006, 2010 and 2012) Professor Grott has also published three large collective works on the subject of nationalistic movements, which included several articles written by himself.

The publications of Professor Grott have been often cited and reviewed by other researchers.

The book I would like to review here — *Dylematy polskiego nacjonalizmu — powrót do tradycji czy przebudowa narodowego ducha* [Dilemmas of Polish nationalism: return to tradition or a conversion of the national spirit] is in a way a synthesis of his hitherto scientific achievements. The book is interdisciplinary, combining elements of political history and political science with the elements of religious studies (political studies of religion) as well as sociology, philosophy and general knowledge of culture. Using this method has brought positive results, making it possible to grasp a much fuller image of the studied political formation and its ideas, with a special regard to axiology, which also affects its practical activity.

The angle from which the book of Professor Grott approaches the topic therefore differs from the works of other historians or political scientists. The difference lies also in the fact that the author has distinguished two main trends within the Polish nationalistic thought, instead of limiting himself to a purely chronological reconstruction of political and social ideas, ideas of history and philosophy etc. of the individual parties and fractions. The author has analysed the output of Polish nationalists, coming to a conclusion that it can be divided into two trends: traditionalist conservatism and modernising. The traditionalist conservatism trend, of the national-Catholic character, was incorporating into the programmes of representing it political parties numerous elements of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, reaching also for the Thomistic philosophy, in which it was seeking the justification of many of its projects. This trend strongly prevailed within the Polish nationalism in the late 1920s and 1930, standing against liberal democracy, and to some extent also against capitalism. It preferred socio-economic solutions typical for the social Catholicism, and even reached for the earlier Catholic thought, which had suggested the possibility of return to pre-Capitalistic social relations.

This trend was also characterised by an idealistic and anti-materialistic attitude, which was clearly reflected in its socio-economical concepts. It was also sharing the idea of the „New Middle Ages”, defined in a book of the same title written by a Russian emigrant philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, which had a significant influence on the thought of Polish Catholic nationalists.

The second, modernising trend did not have a uniform character and did not gain a large number of followers. The author includes in this trend the early National Democracy from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whose political thought remained under the influence of the Positivist philosophy, approving of the highly developed civilisation of the Western Europe of that time and its material achievements and of the ideas of the philosopher Stanisław Brzozowski, who was, in the period of his life considered nationalistic, very critical towards the Polish tradition.

In the third type of Nationalistic modernists the author includes the Zadruga movement, created in the end of 1930s, of a neo-Pagan as well as „National-Bolshevik” character, which opted for a complete reconstruction of the Polish spiritual culture and for its adaptation to fit the demands of industrialism. The movement was justifying its postulates by the endangerment of Poland by the industrialised, imperialistic Germany and the increasingly powerful, and also imperialistic, Soviet Russia. The Zadruga movement was anti-Christian and was in a way a neo-Pagan reaction to the concepts of the National-Catholics as well as of the traditionalist conservatists. The leading motto of the latter was the Catholic Country of the Polish Nation, which expressed the idea of a religious state understood as its political goal.

A separate, interesting thread in Bogumił Grott’s book is the political thought of the Polish nationalists during the Second World War, and especially their vision of the post-war Poland they expected to achieve, hoping for a repetition of the effects of the First World War, when Germany had eliminated Russia and was itself consequently defeated by the Western countries. Thanks to that event, the Central-Eastern Europe had gained its independence. The end of the Second World War, however, did not bring the same result.

The book being reviewed consists of a number of sections.

It starts with a Preface.

Next there is Chapter I, titled *Zagadnienia wprowadzające* [Introductory issues]. It highlights a couple of issues functionally connected with Polish nationalism, such as the manner in which it is currently being treated by science as a political orientation, the religious character of Polish intelligentsia and the critic from the Church regarding the early Nationalistic thought.

Chapter II, titled *Świat zewnętrzny: widma zagłady — idee destrukcyjne — źródła inspiracji* [The outer world: visions of doom, destructive ideas and sources of inspiration] outlines the European background, i. e. various trends important not only to the Polish nationalism, but also to the very existence of the Polish nation (Hitlerism, Soviet Communism). It briefly characterises various anti-Liberal movements in the pre-war Europe, with features either similar or completely opposite from the ones of Polish nationalism. The author uses the division of anti-Liberal movements proposed by an English historian Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper, who had distinguished „Dynamic Fascisms” from „Clerical Conservatism”, and includes in the latter the National Party and a part of National Radicals, the so-called National Radical Camp — the „ABC” group (named after the name of a periodical).

Chapter III, titled *Ewolucja ku Katolickiemu Państwu Narodu Polskiego* [Evolution towards the Catholic Country of the Polish Nation] is the largest one in the book. Here the author reconstructs the main parts of ideology of the main nationalistic political society in Poland, the National Radicals, as well as both national-radical

circles separated from the National Radicals in 1934. The chapter is divided into a part referring to the Second Polish Republic and another referring to the period of the German occupation. The ideology of these parties is presented according to the following pattern: Information regarding the party's political activity, the concept of a nation, political system, economic system, attitude towards the Jewish population and the historical–philosophic thought. In case of the period of the German occupation additional chapters are provided, presenting the concepts of nationalists regarding the shape of the post-war Poland and the organisation of the Middle-Eastern Europe as located between Germany and Russia.

The chapter also provides a separate description of marginal Polish National-Socialist parties, whose ideology had nothing in common with racism, but accepted the Catholic postulates. Attention is also given to the National Unification Camp, a pro-Government organisation created in 1937, which did not, however, manage until September 1939 to articulate and develop a full programme.

Chapter IV, titled *Reakcja neopogańska* [Neo-Pagan reaction], describes the doctrine developed by the founder of the movement Jan Stachniuk, the author of over a dozen books and numerous articles. The author points out the fact that this ideologist had been inspired by the research of the sociologist Max Weber and his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, as well as by other researchers studying the relation between religions and economic issues. Again in this case the author presents the doctrine of the Zadruga movement as a type of neo-Paganism with strong anti-personal features. In time, the theoretician of the movement started to question not only Christianity as a whole, but also other great religions, as directing human attention towards the supernatural, affecting their role here on Earth in building the civilisation. This task he considered a human feature which distinguishes us from other living creatures and defines our identity. The author also draws attention to the reasons behind the failure of Zadruga concepts and of the modernising trend of Polish nationalism as a whole. He also points out the fact that the more radical wing of the Polish radicals — the National Radical Camp Falanga (named after the title of the periodical) had many modernising features. This trend was not, however, expressed in any specific doctrine. It remained on the level of partial statements, as Falanga also supported the idea of the Catholic Country of the Polish Nation.

The book finishes with the part titled *Zamknięcie czyli dylematy polskiego nacjonalizmu* [The closure, or the dilemmas of Polish nationalism]. The author considers as the main dilemma of Polish nationalism the issue whether to accept the rules of Catholic personalism, protecting an individual from an excessive submission to the country and the roles imposed by it, or to uniform the individuals and force a tribute of a great effort to strengthen the country, and consequently also its independence.

The author ends the book with a conclusion that in case of Poland, ironically, submitting to the rules of personalism brought upon individuals a great suffering, and upon the whole nation the danger of being erased from the map of Europe.

Finally it is worthwhile to mention that Professor Bogumił Grott is the author of the classification of nationalistic movements according to their relations with the religion. He distinguishes movements which: 1/ are inspired by the religious values and the doctrine of the Church (or churches), 2/ have no such inspirations, but do not question the religions, treating them as a social and cultural fact which should be taken into consideration, and 3/ fight against religion and the Churches. The last category is sometimes described as neo-Pagan.

The above classification is also presented briefly in one of the chapters of the book. It creates a ground for discussing the influence of nationalistic movements on the social and political life. It is also a basis for the statement that nationalisms cannot be studied in separation from the cultural soil they are coming from and that it is difficult to discuss nationalism as a homogeneous category. There are many nationalisms.