

JAROSŁAW TOMASIEWICZ

Orcid 0000-0001-9750-5256

JAN STACHNIUK (1905–1963) – NEO-PAGAN AND NATIONAL BOLSHIEVİK

Słowa kluczowe: neopaganizm, nacjonalizm, komunizm

Keywords: neopaganism, nationalism, communism

ABSTRACT

Jan Stachniuk (1905–1963) was genuine Polish philosopher and political activist. Stachniuk started his activity in ranks of the left-wing Piłsudskite youth movement but during 1930s he became an ideologue of the anti-Catholic ultra-nationalist far right group called Zadruga. Under Nazi occupation of Poland Zadruga movement was absorbed into left-nationalist Stronnictwo Zrywu Narodowego and after the World War II Stachniuk unsuccessfully tried to collaborate with new communist regime. His ideology was synthesis of pantheist neopaganism, extreme pan-Slavic nationalism and totalitarian (quasi-Stalinist) version of socialism but his last – and most mature – works proclaimed universalist ideal of human creativity.

Poland is a predominantly Catholic country, but radical anti-Christian tendency also was alive here. Polish neo-Paganism's forerunner was Zorian Dołęga-Chodakowski alias Adam Czarnocki (1784–1825) – pan-Slavistic ethnographer and archaeologist. In 1818, in his book entitled *O Sławiańszczyźnie przed chrześcijaństwem* (*On the Slavdom before the Christianity*), he claimed that

Christianity destroyed unity and strength of Slavs, their own culture; and “to revive – Poland must return to native faith”. Bronisław Trentowski (1808–1869) was a pantheist philosopher and pedagogue who tried to create the “national philosophy” (“Chowanna”). He was interested in pre-Christian Slavic religion, which, in his opinion, was more valuable than Christianity. Seweryn Goszczyński (fighter for national independence, participant of insurgency of 1830) had raised similar ideas on a political level¹.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the anti-Catholic attitude spreads into politics. Right-wing nationalists like Stanisław Pieńkowski fought against Catholicism as a Semitic religion². On the left-wing socialist Jan Hempel (1877–1937), author of “Kazania Piastowe” (Piaśt’s Sermons), discerned two kinds of religions: positive Indo-European (divinity within man) and negative Semitic (divinity out of the man)³. Antagonists of Christianity have also been inspired by anti-Catholic writings of the most important Polish philosopher of XIX/XX Stanisław Brzozowski (1878–1911)⁴. Echoes of the Slavic pagan past were heard amongst writers like Tadeusz Miciński and painters like Marian Wawrzeniecki⁵.

Organized neo-pagan movement begun no sooner than after World War I. The first group was Święte Koło Czycieli Światowida (Holy Circle of Svantevit Worshipers) created by Władysław Kołodziej. Since 1924 he collaborated with the “Odrodzenie” – an esoteric magazine interested in old Slavic culture.

¹ R. Okraska, *W kręgu Odyńa i Tryglawa*, Biała Podlaska 2001, p. 55; K. Tichá, *Tadeusza Micińskiego walka o Człowieka. Od indywidualistycznego symbolu Lucyfera do Słonecznego Boga jako mitu doskonalącej się zbiorowości*, Olomouc 2009 [typescript of PdD dissertation], pp. 35–36, 89–94.

² B. Łużyca, *Polska Myśl Nacjonalistyczna na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, „Zadruga” 1939, no. 3; J. Tomaszewicz, *Naprawa czy zniszczenie demokracji? Tendencje autorytarne i profaszystowskie w polskiej myśli politycznej 1921–1935*, Katowice 2012, pp. 101, 153; H. Hofmann, *Astralistyka (Szkice z dziejów religioznawstwa polskiego)*, Kraków 1991, pp. 39–62.

³ J. Tomaszewicz, *Po dwakroć niepokorni. Szkice z dziejów polskiej lewicy patriotycznej*, Łódź 2014, pp. 55–62. Piaśt was the first legendary king of Poland.

⁴ Brzozowski evolved from Nietzscheanism – and afterwards quasi-nationalist Sorelism – toward Catholic modernism, but in first phase of his activity he was written: “You should not be frightened or disheartened by a thought that in the battle-field of heroes and human labor all seems to pass and only a funeral mass is celebrated over a man, and bells are continuously ringing in honor of God who resuscitates to confusion of a man, for him to have never been born”. S. Brzozowski, *Ludzkość i naród*, „Świt” 1907, no. 26.

⁵ R. Okraska, *W kręgu...*, op. cit., p. 56.

Kołodziej, Karol Chobot and Jan Sas-Zubrzycki founded Towarzystwo Literatów Lechickich (Society of Lechitic Writers). Kołodziej was an editor of magazines “Siew Wolności” and “Wiadomości Astrologiczno-Literackie”. In 1941 he created in Kraków Wielka Rada Drzewidów Lechii Polskiej (Great Council of “Druids” of Polish Lechia). In 1946 the Rada demanded independence for... Rugen island as an important center of early-medieval Slavic paganism⁶.

Another cell grew out of artistic circles. It was the Szczep Rogate Serce (Tribe of Horned Heart) – an artistic group that tried to create genuine Polish ethnic art. The Szczep was organized in 1929 by sculptor Stanisław Szukalski, winner of the Grand Prix in Paris in 1928, who was inspired by both artistic avant-garde and pre-Columbian art. Since 1930 the SRS published a paper entitled *Krak*. They believed that Christianity had corrupted the original Slavic culture. Szukalski created projects of an altar of the Sun, a pagan temple “Duchtynia” or synthetic “Politwarus” (Poland – Lithuania – Russia) deity⁷.

Small group around the “Demiurg” magazine (Bronisław Miazgowski, Włodzimierz Stępniewski) was inspired by Platon philosophy. They believed that the third Slavic age of Aryan civilization (after the Roman and German ages) would come. They, therefore, propagated the unity of Slavs as a “supra-nation” and religion of Demiurg-Swarożyc. Since 1934 they published the paper *Demiurg*. In 1940 W. Stępniewski created in Bucharest (Spring of 1940) Komitet Zachodniosłowiański (Western Slavic Committee) fighting for unity of Western Slavs⁸.

Neo-paganism influenced also an informal group of Józef Niećko and Ignacy Solarz in left-wing peasants’ movement, especially in Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej “Wici” (Union of Rural Youth) and in Towarzystwo Uniwersytetów Ludowych (Society of Peoples’ Universities)⁹.

⁶ J. M. Majchrowski, *Szkice z historii polskiej prawicy politycznej lat Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków 1986, p. 129; J. Tomaszewicz, *Naprawa...*, op. cit., pp. 356–357. Lechici is name of legendary ancestors of the Polish nation.

⁷ J. Tomaszewicz, *Naprawa...*, op. cit., pp. 379–383. Szukalski died in the USA in 1987 but the Tribe was active until death of its last member M. Konarski in 1998.

⁸ J. Tomaszewicz, *Demiurgizm jako przykład neopoganizmu rasowo-nacjonalistycznego*, “Ex Nihilo” 2012, no. 1.

⁹ R. Okrasa, *Słowiańska sielanka. Józef Niećko i jego „neopogańska” wizja dziejów Polski*, [in:] *Religia – Polityka – Naród. Studia nad współczesną myślą polityczną*, ed. R. Łętocha, Kraków 2010, pp. 81–96.

However, the primary formation of Polish neo-Pagans was “Zadruga”, created by Jan Stachniuk. He was born on 13 January 1905 in the small town of Kowel in the Volhynia district¹⁰. His father, Paweł, a railwayman, was a Ukrainian, and his mother Franciszka descended from a Polish family that took part in an insurrection against Russian authority in 1863. From his earliest years, Jan aspired to avoid a futile existence in his provincial hometown. As early as the age of ten, he aimed his revolt at Christianity. In 1927 Stachniuk went to the Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa (Trade Academy) in Poznań and began political activity as a left (syndicalist) wing of the radical Piłsudskite students’ organization Związek Polskiej Młodzieży Demokratycznej (Polish Democratic Youth Union). He was a collaborator of an anti-clerical lecturer, professor Henryk Ułaszyn, and therefore was conflicted with students – members of the Catholic nationalist Obóz Wielkiej Polski (Camp of Greater Poland)¹¹.

In 1933 ZPMD published Stachniuk’s first work, entitled *Kolektywizm a naród* (*Collectivism and the Nation*). Stachniuk’s collectivism was both socialist and nationalist. In his own words: “We endeavor after social justice and shall struggle for it only because it, as a system of collective life, is a condition of extracting from a man a will of creativity, a will of the greatness of the nation”¹². He based his socialism on national interest, the idea of national community: “Collectivism will remove a painful splinter, economic individualism, out of nation group’s life, so the feeling of community will extremely increase. The fiery patriotism, exploding at moments that are important for the nation will lose its occasional character, and become transformed into a persistent collective enthusiasm, spreading completely consciousness and emotions of individuals composing the nation”¹³. Stachniuk criticized Marx-

¹ Dążymy do sprawiedliwości społecznej i o nią będziemy walczyć tylko dlatego, iż jest ona jako system życia zbiorowego warunkiem wydobycia z człowieka woli ku twórczości, woli wielkości narodu.

¹⁰ T. Szczepański, *Stachniuk Jan „Stoigniew”*, [in:] *Zadruga: Słownik Biograficzny Uczestników Ruchu Zadrużnego w XX wieku*, eds. M. Dymek, T. Szczepański, Warszawa 2019, p. 129.

¹¹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk – 1905–1963. Życie i dzieło*, vol. 1, Wrocław 1976, typescript in the Manuscripts Section of The Jagiellonian Library, signature 13/77, pp. 16–17, 21–22.

¹² J. Stachniuk, *Źródła różnic*, „Zadruga” 1938, no. 1.

¹³ Idem, *Kolektywizm a naród*, Poznań 1933, p. 82.

ist socialism as a “shadow of industrial capitalism” due to its materialism¹⁴. However, “Instead of the motive of economic egoism, a motive of formative enthusiasm should emerge. Only this motif can ensure proper and efficient production within the industrialist-collectivist system”¹⁵. In his eyes, the society “has to resemble assault troops, members of which – single soldiers – still feel consumptive needs, but these are not existences or wants of the troop itself”¹⁶. He even praised the “tragic beauty of destroying the life substance of an individual to obtain creative values”¹⁷.

Two years later, a new Stachniuk’s book – *Heroiczna wspólnota narodu. Kapitalizm epoki imperializmu a Polska (Heroic Community of Nation. Capitalism in Age of Imperialism and Poland)* – was published in Poznań. This work was devoted to Stanisław Bukowiecki, leader of the Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej (Union of Renovation of the Republic – left-wing of Piłsudski’s movement), and its preface was written by Dr. Feliks Widy of the Narodowe Stronnictwo Pracy (National Labor Party) – small nationalist workers’ party supporting Piłsudski’s regime. Stachniuk declared himself a nationalist and depicted an impressive vision of future Poland: “A boiling container of energy of powerfully extended Poland of Zadruga will demand us to share influences in Central Europe and be ready to a titanic throw along the line Ukraine – Kubań – Caucasus – Caspian area – Tashkent – Turkestan to meet with a Japanese arm in the interior of the heart of Central Asia”¹⁸ⁱⁱ. It was here that the term “Zadruga” was used for the first time by Stachniuk for his concept of National Creating Community (Narodowa Wspólnota Tworząca). He took the word for the old Slavic ancestral community and applied it to a modern political context. In this book, we can find the sentence that is an essence of Stachniuk’s political philosophy: “As well the Catholic philosophy in its special interpretation as political dependence [of Poland – J.T.] and still permeating towns by

ⁱⁱ Kipiący zbiornik energii potężnie rozbudowanej Polski zadrużanej będzie nam kazał podzielić się wpływami w Europie Środkowej i być gotowymi do tytanicznego rzutu wzdłuż linii Ukraina – Kubań – Kaukaz – zlewisko kaspijskie – Taszkient – Turkiestan do spotkania się z ramieniem japońskim w głębinach Centralnej Azji.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 6.

¹⁵ Idem, *Człowieczeństwo i kultura*, Wrocław 1996, p. 245.

¹⁶ Idem, *Heroiczna wspólnota narodu*, Poznań 1935, p. 192.

¹⁷ Idem, *Człowieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁸ Idem, *Heroiczna...*, op. cit., p. 295.

Jews was in the functional relation with each other”¹⁹iii. “Heroic Community” provoked a vivid discussion in the “Prosto z Mostu” – a weekly cultural magazine of the extreme nationalist right²⁰.

In 1935, Stachniuk finished his studies and decided to get out of clerical Poznań. The following year he moved to Warsaw with his girlfriend and dentist Sabina Różycka. Here he met many like-minded individuals such as brothers Stanisław Grzanka (known as “Ludmił”) and Józef Grzanka (“Warcisław”), engineer Ludwik Zasada (“Przemko”), Tadeusz Then (“Racibor”) ²¹. The Zadruga collective came into being, and on 1 November 1937, it published the first issue of the monthly journal of that name with a subtitle “Polish nationalists’ magazine”²².

In its ideological statement, Zadruga announced: “We are nationalists for we find our definite purpose in the nation. [...] We are nationalist Poles who, in the current reality – called Polish – are suffocating. [...] We accuse Polish historical past because of our unappeased hunger, because of our tawdriness, poverty, and humiliation... We revolt against the Polish historical past. [...] We are nationalists who will seek warnings and indications in our past, so treacherously distorted, about what was and can be an impediment to the Greatness of the Nation. [...] For us, Polish Nationalists, it is obvious that Greatness of Nation cannot be built when its collective soul will be fulfilled with the same spirit pith which has been overpoweringly influencing the run of Poland’s history so that its view occasions tragic emotions in us. [...] We shall repudiate all this that is strange to the Nation, that parasitically exhausts it and deadens its vital energies. [...] For the Slavs, Zadruga was an ancestral community that formerly was a base of their social organization.

iii I filozofia katolicka w specyficznej wykładni, i niewola polityczna, i zażydzenie miast stało ze sobą w funkcjonalnym związku.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 123.

²⁰ B. Grott, *Religia, cywilizacja, rozwój: wokół idei Jana Stachniuka*, Kraków 2003, p. 30; A. Witowski [J. Mosdorf], *Romantyzm kopca termitów*, „Prosto z Mostu” 1935, no. 29.

²¹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 43. Members of Zadruga (“zadrużanie”) used old Slavic names as a *noms de guerre*; Stachniuk’s pseudonym was “Stoigniew”. *Pseudonimy autorów artykułów w “Zadrudze”* (typescript by Maciej S. Czarnowski).

²² A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 43, 48.

[...] Zadruga as a platform of our longings will join that heroic past with a vision of Nationalists Poland”^{23iv}.

Stachniuk was nationalist because of his collectivist vision of society. The nation was seen as the basic form of social organization. Stachniuk wrote: “An individual [...] in a nation feels like a transient leaf on an everlasting tree. It feels subconscious that its aspirations, ideals, tasks are inherent in a higher existence which is a historical community”²⁴. But nationalism of Zadruga was the nationalism of a new type – the pan-Slavic one. In the opinion of Stachniuk authentic – ancient – Pole-Slav “grew from a Polish ethnic soil, which had not yet consumed the utterly imported ideology of the Quietism. It is best characterized by the spirit of independent landowners, the high sense of belonging to the tribal community, their dignity [...]. It was a kind of economic strong knight-farmer and craftsman, positively marked as an average Pole from before the second half of the sixteenth century”²⁵. Unfortunately, “Poland [...] has lost its soul and over the whole millennium has lived as if hypnotized, weak-willed, immersed into the barely conscious experience of alien values which totally disorganize the forces of the Slavic World. It explains the apathy and a heavy-with-sleep style of Slavic life, full of ... melancholy, resulting from internal marasmus”²⁶. Stachniuk criticized “cultural paralysis of Slavdom”²⁷, i.e. inertness of Slavs, but planned to “use of them as a raw mate-

^{iv} Jesteśmy nacjonalistami, bo cel nasz ostateczny upatrujemy w narodzie. Jesteśmy nacjonalistami Polakami, którzy w obecnej rzeczywistości – polską zwanej – duszą się... Za nasz niezaspokojony głód, za małość, za nędzę, za upokorzenie oskarżamy polską przeszłość historyczną, przeciwko niej się buntujemy... Dla nas, Nacjonalistów Polskich jest oczywistym, że Wielkość Narodu nie może być zbudowana, gdy jego zbiorową duszę wypełniać będą te same treści duchowe, pod których przemożnym naciskiem historia Polskich toczy się a obraz jej wzbudza w nas tragiczne odczucia... Odrzucimy to wszystko, co jest Narodowi obce, co go pasożytniczo wyniszcza i jego żywotne energie tłumi... Zadrugą Słowianie nazywali wspólnotę rodową, która niegdyś stanowiła podstawę ich ustroju narodowego... Zadruga, jako pomost naszych tęsknot łączy tamtą bohaterską przeszłość z wizją Nacjonalistycznej Polski.

²³ *Kim jesteścieśmy?*, “Zadruga” 1937, no. 1.

²⁴ B. Grott, *Religia...*, op. cit., p. 162.

²⁵ J. Stachniuk, *Dzieje bez dziejów. Teoria wewnętrznego rozwoju Polski*, Wrocław 1990, p. 224.

²⁶ Idem, *Mit słowiański*, Wrocław 2006, p. 15.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 34.

rial for the melting furnace of Zadruga myth to create common – Slavic supranation (*nadnaród sławski*) with the corresponding ethnic and regional specific features”²⁸. He believed that the Polish people would become a “Prometheus of the degraded Slavic World” through “release from initial Slavic biological mass the element of creative will”, “create an organization transforming the released creative impulses into a spontaneous activity of super-active biological organism of Slavia” and “defeat hostile forces restraining the process of formation by Slavia the authentic world of culture”²⁹.

Stachniuk had a nihilist attitude toward tradition. “The whole [Polish – J.T.] heritage rises on the foundations of imported values, and these values are the backbone of culture”, he stated³⁰. For Stachniuk, Christianity was not genuine Slavic religion but was “anchored in the ideals of Judaism”³¹. The Polish culture was, in his eyes, a “product of the rape of our old, pagan-naturalist Slavic culture”³². This alien system of values has a destructive impact on society: “Christian ideals, the salvation of the soul, the bliss of the rotten encasement of a persona in comfort, not the culture grown on the foundations of lyric of digestion, but what is the negation of all this”³³. In his opinion, a “positive view of the world by our ancestors-pagans, their admiration of existence, thirst for energy and creative power from an evangelistic point of view should be defined as devildom”³⁴. Christianization of Poland appeared as a “vaccination of cancer of anti-culture to its organism”³⁵. Jesuits “form Polish literature, history, art, law and customs [...], all elements of the group’s ideology are crafted in a homogeneous fashion, whose core is Catholicism”, and Poland became “a great Catholic parish” or a “secular Jesuit convent”³⁶. However, Stachniuk was not any pagan reconstructionist. He wrote: “Of course, it is

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 151.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 164, 172.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 35.

³¹ Idem, *Dzieje...*, op. cit., p. 90. Describing Catholicism as a form of Judaism (“mental Semitism”), Zadruga provoked attacks from the both Catholic Press Agency and Jewish journals.

³² Idem, *Droga rewolucji kulturowej w Polsce*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 35–36.

³³ Idem, *Mit...*, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁴ Idem, *Droga...*, op. cit., p. 29.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 23.

³⁶ Idem, *Dzieje...*, op. cit., p. 47, 223.

ridiculous to renew the symbols, Swantewit, Swaróżyc, and so on. Let us leave idols to the idiots. What we care about is an intense bond of the same attitude toward life, and it is the same”³⁷. He tried to reconstruct a “naturalistic worldview”, i.e. originally pantheist, which was characterized by “the experience of unity of the organic world”³⁸.

Nevertheless, particular curiosity was excited in Poland by Zadruga’s espousal of what was interpreted as “paganism” – an anti-Catholicism combined with philosophical pantheism and calls for the renewal of the old Slavic traditions. Rumors circulated about Svantovit (Svantovit – Świętowit was the highest deity of the Slavic pantheon) worship, with rituals involving holy snakes and drinking fermented honey. The Zadruga group tried to substitute Christian Christmas with a pagan feast of “Szczodre Gody” (Abundant Festivities), observed for the first time on 24 December 1938³⁹. A Papal Nuncio, mons Filippo Cortesi, initiated a campaign against the neo-pagan movement in Poland. There was a surge in censorship and confiscation of material deemed blasphemous or attacking the state policy (e.g. the confiscation of a paper “The Enemies of Slavia”, directed against the Munich treaty of 1938)⁴⁰. The group became politically isolated. The left regarded Zadruga as anti-Semitic and fascist, and the national-Catholic right regarded it as pagan, socialistic, and pro-Soviet (because of its pan-Slavism)⁴¹.

In spite of this Zadruga was extending its sphere of influence, recruiting the likes of artist Janina Kłopotcka “Lubomira” (known as a creator of the “Rodło” symbol of the Polish Union in Germany), journalist Zbigniew Sadkowski “Krak”, chemist Walenty Nowacki “Sławomir”, student and Piłsudskite activist Bogusław Stępiński “Wojśław”, sculptor Stanisław Szukalski “Stach z Warty”, theologian and former Franciscan monk Ludwik Gościński “Przedpełk”, clerk Antoni Wacyk “Gniewomir” with his wife Felicja (“Dobromira”), poet Niewiadomski, Jadwiga Koniuszewska, Leszek Poraj-Kuczewski, Henryk Szyszko.

³⁷ Idem, *Droga...*, op. cit., p. 36.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 33.

³⁹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁴⁰ S. Potrzebowski, *Słowiański ruch Zadruga*, Szczecin 2016, p. 62.

⁴¹ K. Czapiński, *O przebudowę duszy polskiej — Akcja “Zadrugi”*, „Robotnik” 1937, no. 384; W. Malewski, *Ideały a rzeczywistość “Zadrugi”*, „Tęcza” 1938, no. 12; K. Czapiński, *Niewczesne pomysły. Polski nacjonalizm przeciw chrześcijaństwu*, „Robotnik” 1939, no. 210.

Zadruga branches were set up Tarnowskie Góry, Łódź, and Lublin⁴². The magazine even won readers among the Poles in the USA, where Zadruga was popularized by Stanisław Opolski “Wojśław” in the columns of the “Ameryka-Echo”. Pan-Slavism of Zadruga was enthusiastically supported by well-known Slavophil, Gen. Lucjan Żeligowski⁴³.

In 1939, Stachniuk published two works. In the first one – *Państwo a gospodarstwo. Geneza etatyzmu w Polsce (The State and the Economy: Origin of Statism in Poland)* – he scrutinized the causes of Poland’s economic underdevelopment and advocated an expansion of the state-owned sector in the Polish economy⁴⁴. In the latter, entitled *Dzieje bez dziejów (History without History)*, Stachniuk traced Poland’s fall to the influence of Catholicism, which he argued had warped the national psychology and dragged it down into a quagmire of passivity and vagueness⁴⁵.

The outbreak of war scattered the slim Zadruga group, but Stachniuk gathered a nucleus around him in October 1939 in Warsaw (e.g. Gościński, Kłopotcka, Koniuszewska, S. Grzanka, Dr. Damazy Jerzy Tilgner, Tadeusz Podgórski and others)⁴⁶. He produced *Teoria bezdziejów (Theory of the Lack of History, 1940)* and *Teoria mitu (Theory of the Myth, 1941)*, which were later to become chapters of his main work *Człowieczeństwo i kultura (Man and Culture)*⁴⁷.

At the same time, copies of *History without History* were being distributed. The shock of the September defeat met with a good reception from disaffected young people who were looking for new ideology radically contesting the former system of values. In 1941, young neophytes of Zadruga created the so-

⁴² A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴³ S. Potrzebowski, *Słowiański...*, op. cit., p. 70.

⁴⁴ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴⁵ S. Potrzebowski, *Słowiański...*, op. cit., pp. 71–74.

⁴⁶ Other groups were formed by Zadruga sympathizers in Great Britain („Goreją Wici” 1943: L. Zasada, A. Wacyk, T. Then, S. Opolski, Józef Słonczyński, Wilhelm Kwaterniak) and Germany („Arkona” 1945–1946: B. Stępiński). T. Szczepański, „Goreją Wici” – emigracyjne pismo środowiska zadrużan w Wielkiej Brytanii, „Tryglaw” 2013, no. 15; J. M. Majchrowski, B. Grott, „Arkona”, „Zaranie”, „Kuznia”, „W drodze” i „Stanica”: pisma wydawane przez zadrużan w brytyjskiej strefie okupacyjnej w Niemczech, „Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej” 1982, no. 2.

⁴⁷ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 68.

called Grupa Sprawcza (Action Group) under S. Grzanka⁴⁸. After six months of its activity, the Group was dissolved, and its members joined the radical nationalist Ruch Miecza i Pług (Sword and Plough Movement)⁴⁹. The growing popularity of Zadruga had to cause a counter-action of its enemies. In 1942 well-known Catholic writer Zofia Kossak-Szczucka in her booklet *Pod dyktandem Berlina* (*From Berlin's Dictation*), accused Stachniuk of emulation of Alfred Rosenberg's concepts and ideological support for Nazism⁵⁰.

However, in the Autumn of 1942, the Christian-democratic Stronnictwo Pracy (Labor Party) split, with radicals creating the Stronnictwo Zrywu Narodowego (National Upsurge Party) headed by Zygmunt Felczak and Feliks Widy. SZN was small group, but had youth wing (Związek Młodzieży Zrywu Narodowego – National Upsurge Youth Union), and military organization (Kadra Polski Niepodległej – Cadre of Independent Poland), cooperating with the Armia Krajowa (Home Army)⁵¹. SZN took up the ideology of Zadruga, but with “une petit difference”: the revolution proposed by Zryw was to go along with Christian values. The party's ideology is revealed in its journal “Zryw”: “There are no opposites between the contemporary Polish left and right – both wings of the nation tend toward one purpose, though in different ways. There is no contradiction between postulates of economic socialism and national postulates. On the contrary – socialist postulates become a criterion of national feelings”^{52v}. “Zryw” was written almost single-handedly by Stachniuk, who was a principal theorist of the group⁵³. Stachniuk published also two

^v Między współczesną polską lewicą i polską prawicą w najgłębszych pragnieniach i tęsknotach nie ma sprzeczności, wręcz przeciwnie – postulaty socjalistyczne stają się probierzem uczuć narodowych.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 71–72.

⁴⁹ J. Tomaszewicz, *Ugrupowania zadrużne i neozadrużne w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (1939–1945)*, „Historia i Polityka” 2012, no. 7. This group was accused of collaboration with Nazis. Idem, *Mysł polityczna Ruchu Miecza i Pługa a ideologia zadrużna*, „Państwo i Społeczeństwo” 2013, no. 41.

⁵⁰ Z. Kossak-Szczucka, *Pod dyktandem Berlina*, Warszawa 1942, pp. 3, 5–7; B. Grott, *Religia...*, op. cit., p. 44; S. Potrzebowski, *Słowiański...*, op. cit., pp. 77–78.

⁵¹ W. Bujak, *Historia Stronnictwa Pracy 1937–1946–1950*, Warszawa 1988, p. 78; J. M. Majchrowski, *Geneza politycznych ugrupowań katolickich: Stronnictwo Pracy, Grupa „Dziś i Jutro”*, Paris 1984, pp. 59–61.

⁵² *Zryw narodowy – synteza polskiej myśli politycznej*, „Zryw” 1943, no. 19.

⁵³ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 74.

books: *Zarys ekonomii (An Outline of Economy)* in 1942 (signed as F. Widy) and *Zagadnienia totalizmu (Problems of Totalitarianism)* in 1943.

Opponents of the SZN have accused it of pro-communist tendencies but with little justification. Felczak's adherents demonstrated their faith in the Polish Government in exile in London many times, for example, in their programmatic proclamation in January 1944. Later they refused to submit to the communist Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego (Polish Committee of National Liberation). However, until November 1944, Zryw pursued an alternative solution, maintaining relations with remains of the disintegrated Centralny Komitet Ludowy (Central People's Committee – a political representation of the radical non-communist left) trying to create any “third power” between PKWN and an emigration London government. In 1943 and 1944 journals of the SZN, „Zryw” and „Kadra Polski Niepodległej”, attacked communist Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers Party) as a Soviet spying network. The ideology of the National Upsurge was to enable Poland to break out of its “civilization depression” (*niż cywilizacyjny*) and save it from falling under “Russian slavery”. SZN criticized the Soviet concept of the “Curzon Line” as the eastern border of Poland. Instead, the SZN promoted the ideals West-Slavic solidarity: the Polish-Czech-Yugoslavian bloc. On the other hand, an analysis of the Felczak-Stachniuk group proved that Russia would be the deciding factor in Eastern Europe. Zryw proposed a hard political struggle for Poland's independence, but without being overtly hostile to the Soviet Union. It was ready for strategic agreement with the USSR⁵⁴.

Stachniuk took part in the August 1944 uprising against German occupation in Warsaw. The KPN fought in the Old City and defended the Warszawskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe building at the corner of Mazowiecka and Kredytowa streets. Witnesses of these events say that Stachniuk gave ample evidence of his courage⁵⁵. After the fall of the uprising, Stachniuk was sent to a prison camp in Pruszków, but he escaped soon. F. Wacyk's house in Częstochowa became a base for Zadruga members where Stachniuk, Kłopocka

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 72; M. Piotrowski, *Służba idei czy serwilizm? Zygmunt Felczak i Feliks Widy Wirski w najnowszych dziejach Polski*, Lublin 1994, pp. 182–188.

⁵⁵ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 103.

and seven other persons assembled. In February 1945, Stachniuk decided to return to Warsaw to face the new political situation⁵⁶.

The month before, F. Widy had taken it upon himself to offer SZN co-operation with the communist authorities in Lublin, and this was taken up. Under Yalta's terms, the communist government was obliged to restore the Christian-democratic party in Poland, and members of the SZN were briefed to do just this⁵⁷. Stachniuk's colleagues gained political influence and power through the Labour Party: Widy became the voivode in Poznań, Felczak – a vice-voivode in Bydgoszcz, and Tadeusz Jędrzejewski ("Wszebor") an editor-in-chief of "Zryw"⁵⁸. Stachniuk himself began writing for a national newspaper, "Ilustrowany Kurier Polski". In 1945 and 1946, Stachniuk wrote two works: "Polska i rewolucja" (Poland and Revolution; published as a work by Widy) and "Droga wielkiej odbudowy" (Way of a Great Restoration; under Felczak's name)⁵⁹.

Co-operation with the communists worked for a while, although Stachniuk was convinced that what he called "half-sovereignty" (i.e. Soviet protectorate) was just not enough. In his opinion, "half-sovereignty is a danger for national existence but on the other hand, a blow against harmonic course (*ciąg harmoniczny*) [synonym of Polish Catholic "back-culture" – J.T.] and the bourgeoisie"^{60 vi}. Stachniuk planned to harness that half-sovereignty for revolutionizing all spheres of Polish life and strengthening Poland's potential. He drew up an "Ideograf" (Ideograph), a programme for moving from the status quo through a "reformist state" and "national-communism" to a "State of Slav Community". For the first stage, he aimed to use anti-capitalism as a liberating impulse for the nation and accent "proto-nationalism" (*pre-nacjonalizm*). The second stage would see a "positive anti-capitalism" ("socialist system as an instrument of Nation's historical tasks and a lever of the full Nation's independence"), the liberation of proto-nationalism from the "mental slavery" of Catholicism, destroying of the Catholic right, a reduction of Jewish and

^{vi} Półsuwerenność jest zagrożeniem bytu narodowego, ale też jest ciosem w ciąg harmoniczny i mieszczaństwo.

⁵⁶ T. Szczepański, *Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁷ W. Bujak, *Historia...*, op. cit., pp. 122–126.

⁵⁸ M. Piotrowski, *Służba...*, op. cit., p. 194.

⁵⁹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 107.

⁶⁰ Stachniuk's letter to A. Wacyk (29 November 1945).

Russian influences in Poland, with “real equality of the partners: Poland and Russia” at last emerging. The third and final stage was the “slavization of a Sovietism” and “slavization of a proto-nationalism”⁶¹.

At the same time, he was hard at work writing more books. *Człowieczeństwo i kultura* (*Humanity and Culture*), which contained the principles of his philosophy of “culturalism”, was published in Poznań in 1946 (notabene the book was signed on the title page with a symbol of “kołomir” – old Slavic name for the Celtic cross). Stachniuk called his philosophical system “culturalism” because he considered that culture – interpreted as creativity – is the very essence of humanity. “The fundamental property of man is the genius of creation, i.e. the ability to bind the elements of the human psyche with the elements of nature in such a way that a new and mighty shape of power arises, which is subordinate to man”, he wrote⁶². The culture was understood by Stachniuk as “the process of reorganization of the natural order of the world, collecting elements and combining them according to a different pattern, thanks to which a new type of power subordinate to man is created”⁶³. He strongly believed in “mystic union with the pulsing existence of creativity sphere”⁶⁴. The ultimate goal of humanity is “control and subordinate all energy existing in the world to human beings”⁶⁵, and “a resignation from this task is a resignation from the very essence of humanity”⁶⁶.

For Stachniuk, “the center of human history on earth is not struggling of spirit and matter, egoism and altruism, God and Satan, it is not class or race war, what it is, is the battle between ‘culture’ and ‘back-culture’ (wspakultura) for reign over the human being”⁶⁷. Constituents of “wspakultura” are personal-

⁶¹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 114, 132–133, 169.

⁶² Idem, *Człowieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 26.

⁶⁴ Idem, *Mit...*, op. cit., p. 163.

⁶⁵ Idem, *Człowieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 13.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 117. The Stachniuk’s neologism “wspakultura” is translated also as “contraculture” (M. Strutyński, *The Ideology of Jan Stachniuk and the Power of Creation*, [in:] *Modern Pagan and Native Faith Movements in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. K. Aitamurto, S. Simpson, Abingdon 2013) or “anti-culture” (J. Gulanowski, *New Pole in New Poland. Upbringing according to Jan Stachniuk*, [in:] *Utopia, Ideology and/or Everyday Education Practice*, ed. W. Złobicki, Wrocław 2019).

ism, hedonism, nihilism, spiritualism, moralism, and pan-love (*wszechmiłość*). As he explained: “Personalism is the tendency to lead such a life that an individual, free from service in the name of cultural heritage, seeks the tranquility of pure being, taking as its ideal a complete lack of disturbance of lyrical rumination on the inside and idyllic repose on the outside. [...] Nihilism fights against cultural production [...] Hedonism, in turn, bases itself on discovering that products of culture can be exploited for secondary, inconsequential consumption. Nihilism is bent on the destruction of the foundations of culture, while hedonism attempts to serve a carefree feast on the ruins”⁶⁸. In the case of Christianity, all other elements concentrate around spiritualism⁶⁹. “From this point of view there is no difference between a hero and a pick-pocket, a traitor who brings his nation to ruin and the defender of the nation, enemy and friend [...] a religious prude and a genius inventor”⁷⁰. Christian corruption also influenced contemporary secular culture which he called “lay back-culture” (*wspakultura laicka*): “And here it rises more often – a partial mind both Christian and skeptic, lacking the grace of faith. It wanders between Gospel and Darwin’s theory of evolution, between the Church and pragmatism, the cult of the ‘savior’ and methodical economics”⁷¹.

Stachniuk proposed total cultural revolution for “overcoming Pole-Catholic sentiments. It will be a revolution in the world of spiritual values”⁷². He wanted to completely change Polish “ideomatrix” (ideomatrixa – dominant model of reproduction of norms and values). In his agenda, “The healing process should be expressed in the transformation of worldview norms in the creative and cultural spirit, in the creation of positive patriotism, which is in complete opposition to the group consciousness of the Jesus-Mary followers, and in the reconstruction of literature. [...] each of these fields will become something completely different than they currently are. [...] The model of the capable, creative Pole should be enthroned. The differences between him and a ‘good Pole’ must be the same as they exist between an a-historical personal-

⁶⁸ J. Stachniuk, *Wspakultura*, Warszawa 1948, pp. 32, 63.

⁶⁹ Idem, *Chrześcijaństwo a ludzkość*, Wrocław 1997, p. 107.

⁷⁰ Idem, *Człowieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 102.

⁷¹ Idem, *Chrześcijaństwo...*, op. cit., p. 204.

⁷² Idem, *Droga...*, op. cit., p. 67.

ity, [...] and a heroic personality”⁷³. Realization of this aim required the whole state apparatus: education, mass-media, cultural policy⁷⁴. “For complete negotiation of inert history, conquering of political power is imperative”, Stachniuk wrote⁷⁵. However, as he promised, “It will be the beginning of a human revolution, the beginning of an avalanche, opening up prospects for a truly revolutionary new and wonderful world”⁷⁶.

In April 1947 Stachniuk published *Walka o zasady. Drugi front trzeciej Rzeczypospolitej* (*A struggle for Principles. The second front of the Third Republic*), and in September *Wspakultura* (*The back-culture*). This was to be the last legally published work by Stachniuk (typescripts of another his works: *Chrześcijaństwo a ludzkość* (*Christianity and Humanity*), *Droga rewolucji kulturowej w Polsce. Studium o rekonstrukcji psychiki narodowej* (*The Way of Cultural Revolution in Poland. Study about the reconstruction of national mind*) and *Mit słowiański* (*The Slav Myth*) were deposited at D. Tilgner house in 1949)⁷⁷.

However, Stachniuk’s political situation changed in 1946 when Felczak died (3 July), and his successor Widy became an obedient servant to the communists. In 1947 “Zryw” weekly ceased to be published. Stachniuk decided to leave the Zryw faction and rebuild Zadruga. In September 1947, he sent a petition to the communist leader Władysław Gomułka. Unsuccessfully. In the following year, Gomułka was purged under the accusation of “right-nationalist deviation”⁷⁸.

His relations with the regime became worse and worse. In August 1949, he targeted the state authorities with a significantly entitled document *Tragikomedie Polski Ludowej* (*A Tragicomedy of the Peoples Poland*). There was an immediate reaction from the security forces. On 3 September, Stachniuk was arrested in Bydgoszcz and held in jail at Mokotów. Kłopotka and Stępiński were arrested too. Stachniuk was kept under arrest for two years and eight months. He was charged with involvement with so-called “Promethean Ac-

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, pp. 34, 45–46; Idem, *Dzieje...*, op. cit., p. 85.

⁷⁵ Idem, *Mit...*, op. cit., p. 172.

⁷⁶ Idem, *Droga...*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁷⁷ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., p. 197.

⁷⁸ M. S. Czarnowski, *Fragmety życiorysu Jana Stachniuka na tle wydarzeń politycznych w Polsce powrześniowej* (typescript, 1988).

tion” (a secret organization promoting separatist tendencies in the Soviet Union), of anti-Sovietism (confirmed by a chapter on Soviet totalitarianism in the book “Problems of Totalitarianism”), “introducing fascism into the political life of Poland”, and even conspiring with the leader of Yugoslavian nationalists Dragoljub Michailović⁷⁹.

Stachniuk’s trial was held in secret. His barrister Oktaw Pietruski had not been admitted. The public prosecutor demanded the death sentence. On 9 July 1952, Stachniuk was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment, but this was reduced to seven on appeal. Colleagues Stępiński and Kłopocka were given three years each. Stachniuk served his time in Barczewo prison near Olsztyn and recorded that the gaolers’ favorite entertainment was to beat his head with a heavy bunch of keys, shouting “you fascist!”⁸⁰.

The thaw after Stalin’s death brought about Stachniuk’s release on 10 February 1955, but by the time he regained freedom, he was already a broken man. He tried to write again but failed and lived in extreme poverty. When he turned to the authorities with a request for an indemnity for unjust imprisonment, communist party official Roman Zambrowski told him that for men like him, “there is no place in Peoples Poland”. In 1956 and 1957, Stachniuk unsuccessfully tried to arrange emigration to Canada (T. Then lived there). In the summer of 1957, he tried to escape to Sweden but again failed. He spent the last years of his life in a sanatorium in Radość near Warsaw. He died on 14 August 1963 and two days later was buried at Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw⁸¹.

SUMMARY

Stachniuk built his ideal around the notion of *Zadruga*, which means “community” in Old Slavonic. He combined socialist beliefs with pan-Slavism and philosophical paganism to produce what he termed “panhumanism”. He saw culture as arising from individuals and peoples taking root on a particular spot. This positive and evolutionary localization led to harmonious and creative cultural flowering. Any theories, ideas, systems, or principles which did not stem from this primordial locus were a product of back-culture (*wspakultura*), of which the spiritual father was Socrates.

⁷⁹ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 204–206; S. Potrzebowski, *Słowiański...*, op. cit., p. 98.

⁸⁰ A. Wacyk, *Jan Stachniuk...*, op. cit., pp. 206–207, 210.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 211, 217.

According to Stachniuk, the ideas of Socraticism were devoid of any tangible substance and crushed the spirit of the rooted *homo creans*. The world's great religious and philosophical systems (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity) were born of back-culture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brzozowski S., *Ludzkość i naród*, „Świt” 1907, no. 26.
- Bujak W., *Historia Stronnictwa Pracy 1937–1946–1950*, Warszawa 1988.
- Czapiński K., *Niewczesne pomysły. Polski nacjonalizm przeciw chrześcijaństwu*, „Robotnik” 1939, no. 210.
- Czapiński K., *O przebudowę duszy polskiej – Akcja “Zadrugi”*, „Robotnik” 1937, no. 384.
- Czarnowski M. S., *Fragmety życiorysu Jana Stachniuka na tle wydarzeń politycznych w Polsce powrześniowej* (typescript, 1988).
- Grott B., *Religia, cywilizacja, rozwój: wokół idei Jana Stachniuka*, Kraków 2003.
- Gulanowski J., *New Pole in New Poland. Upbringing according to Jan Stachniuk*, [in:] *Utopia, Ideology and/or Everyday Education Practice*, ed. W. Złobicki, Wrocław 2019).
- Hoffmann H., *Astralistyka (Szkice z dziejów religioznawstwa polskiego)*, Kraków 1991.
- Kim jesteście?*, “Zadruga” 1937, no. 1.
- Kossak-Szczucka Z., *Pod dyktandem Berlina*, Warszawa 1942.
- Łużyca B., *Polska Myśl Nacjonalistyczna na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, „Zadruga” 1939, no. 3.
- Majchrowski J. M., *Geneza politycznych ugrupowań katolickich: Stronnictwo Pracy, Grupa „Dziś i Jutro”*, Paris 1984.
- Majchrowski J. M., *Szkice z historii polskiej prawicy politycznej lat Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków 1986.
- Majchrowski J. M., Grott B., „Arkona”, „Zaranie”, „Kuznia”, „W drodze” i „Stanica”: *piśma wydawane przez zadrużan w brytyjskiej strefie okupacyjnej w Niemczech*, „Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej” 1982, no. 2.
- Malewski W., *Ideały a rzeczywistość “Zadrugi”*, „Tęcza” 1938, no. 12.
- Okraska R., *Słowiańska sielanka. Józef Niećko i jego „neopogańska” wizja dziejów Polski*, [in:] *Religia – Polityka – Naród. Studia nad współczesną myślą polityczną*, ed. R. Łętocha, Kraków 2010.
- Okraska R., *W kręgu Odyna i Tryglawa*, Biała Podlaska 2001.
- Piotrowski M., *Służba idei czy serwilizm? Zygmunt Felczak i Feliks Widy Wirski w najnowszych dziejach Polski*, Lublin 1994.
- Potrzebowski S., *Słowiański ruch Zadruga*, Szczecin 2016.
- Stachniuk's letter to A. Wacyk (29 November 1945).
- Stachniuk J., *Dzieje bez dziejów. Teoria wewnętrznego rozwoju Polski*, Wrocław 1990.
- Stachniuk J., *Wspakultura*, Warszawa 1948.
- Stachniuk J., *Źródła różnic*, „Zadruga” 1938, no. 1.

- Strutyński M., *The Ideology of Jan Stachniuk and the Power of Creation*, [in:] *Modern Pagan and Native Faith Movements in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. K. Aitamurto, S. Simpson, Abingdon 2013.
- Szczepański T., *Stachniuk Jan „Stoigniew”*, [in:] *Zadruga: Słownik Biograficzny Uczestników Ruchu Zadrężnego w XX wieku*, eds. M. Dymek, T. Szczepański, Warszawa 2019.
- Tichá K., *Tadeusza Micińskiego walka o Człowieka. Od indywidualistycznego symbolu Lucyfera do Słonecznego Boga jako mitu doskonalącej się zbiorowości*, Olomouc 2009 [typescript of PdD dissertation].
- Tomasiewicz J., *Demiurgizm jako przykład neopoganizmu rasowo-nacjonalistycznego*, „Ex Nihilo” 2012, no. 1.
- Tomasiewicz J., *Naprawa czy zniszczenie demokracji? Tendencje autorytarne i profaszyzowskie w polskiej myśli politycznej 1921–1935*, Katowice 2012.
- Tomasiewicz J., *Po dwakroć niepokorni. Szkice z dziejów polskiej lewicy patriotycznej*, Łódź 2014.
- Tomasiewicz J., *Ugrupowania zadrężne i neozadrężne w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (1939–1945)*, „Historia i Polityka” 2012, no. 7.
- Wacyk A., *Jan Stachniuk – 1905–1963. Życie i dzieło*, vol. 1, Wrocław 1976.
- Witowski A. [J. Mosdorf J.], *Romantyzm kopca termitów*, „Prosto z Mostu” 1935, no. 29.
- Zryw narodowy – synteza polskiej myśli politycznej*, „Zryw” 1943, no. 19.

Stachniuk's Works

- Kolektywizm a naród (Collectivism and the Nation)*, 1933.
- Heroiczna wspólnota narodu. Kapitalizm epoki imperializmu (Heroic Community of Nation. Capitalism in Age of Imperialism)*, 1935.
- Państwo a gospodarstwo. Geneza etatyizmu w Polsce (The State and the Economy: Origin of the Statism in Poland)*, 1939.
- Dzieje bez dziejów. Teoria wewnętrznego rozwoju Polski (History without History. Theory of internal development of Poland)*, 1939.
- Zarys ekonomii (An Outline of Economy)*, 1942 – under Widy's name.
- Zagadnienia totalizmu (Problems of Totalitarianism)*, 1943.
- Polska i rewolucja (Poland and revolution)*, 1945 – under Widy's name.
- Droga wielkiej odbudowy (Way of a great Restoration)*, 1946 – under Felczak's name.
- Człowieczeństwo i kultura (Humanity and Culture)*, 1946.
- Walka o zasady. Drugi front trzeciej Rzeczypospolitej (A Struggle for Principles. The second front of the Third Republic)*, 1947.
- Wspakultura (The Back-culture)*, 1948.
- Chrześcijaństwo a ludzkość (Christianity and Humanity)*, 1997.
- Droga rewolucji kulturowej w Polsce. Studium o rekonstrukcji psychiki narodowej (The Way of Cultural Revolution in Poland. Study about the reconstruction of national mind)*, 2006.
- Mit słowiański (The Slav Myth)*, 2006.