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Belarus in the context of stages of transformations occurring in European states

The history of Europe has often been looked at through the angle of history of particular European states. Such interpretation makes it easier to assimilate knowledge on the closest ancestors, and at the same time it carries the variable of the geographical area of the given state, particularly in connection with the history of another country, where the losses of the two intertwine. Then, the area and the history become the variables, which describe the fates of given communities. The historical factor can be complemented by its reference to the development variable of the model of the state, which determines its political processes.

In his lecture given in the European cafe in Sopot in May 2007, while presenting the perspectives for the world and Europe on the threshold of the 21st century, Andrzej Piskozub drew attention to two prevailing phenomena: globalization and integration of Europe. The present-day merging of Europe was preceded by a period of disintegration, expressed as *the road through agony*, which divided it

¹ A. Piskozub, *Świat i Europa na progu XXI wieku*, [in:] The Jubilee Book of Professor Waldemar Grzywacz, Szczecin 2007, pp. 575-590.

in particular stages into *sectarian, dynastic and national states*¹. Before disintegration, which lasted from 16th to 20th century, there was a period of unified European civilization from 10th to 15th century, which took place after five centuries of building the integrity of European civilization from 5th to 10th century.

When entering the stage of sectarian states, Europe broke off with the unity of European civilizations that had taken so much effort to build. Christopher Dawson stretches the creation of Europe from the fall of ancient Rome to beginnings of medieval integrity, which was marked with the creation of the Holy Roman Empire proclaimed by Otto I in 962, after the earlier, 1.5 century long and ephemeral imperial rule of Charlemagne. *Respublica Christiana* reached beyond the state formed by the Ottos, both in terms of space and time. It was an idea, which united all Europeans, who in Christianity sought a form of organisation of national life. We can speak of Christian integrity of Europe until the end of the 15th century, when approach of the Reformation marked the change of the former model.

Before another cycle of integration took place in Europe, it went through a phase of disintegration, which did not generate a single state model, but went through transformation from the focus on religion, then an enlightened ruler, to reach its end with the concept of a state of one nation. It was only after recognition of the absurd limitations of a nation-state, paid with the world wars in the first half of the 20th century, that the quarrelling nations opened their eyes to the need of building a community beyond ethnic divisions. This coincided with the loss of European colonial conquests acquired since the epoch of great geographical discoveries.

It is true that in the period of disintegration Europe became a power on a global scale, but it was also the internal conflicts and unhealthy competition that drew a line through a number of positive achievements. It is then wisdom after the event the comeback to integration and merging of Europe on the grounds of civilization-based unity, which is clearly marked with Russian in the east, Turkey in the south-east, the Mediterranean in the south and the Atlantic in the west of the continent, although in this case we can talk about the particularly close relations with Europe-born America. If the European civilization went beyond that area, it would disrupt its civilization-based identity.

The above described transformation stages of a state model generally occur one after another, although it is not always perceptible throughout Europe with the

² K. Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa. Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza*, PIW, Warsaw 1998.

same force. It is worth to refer here to Jerzy Kłoczowski's² concept of Europe of two velocities, which aptly reflects the multifaceted lag of its central-eastern part as compared to the western part, which blazes new development trends.

The purpose of this work is to present a model of transformation of a European state in the form of successive stages with the emphasis placed on the Byelorussian path. The author draws attention to over two hundred years of the Russian rule in Belarus, from the end of the 18th until the end of the 20th century, and collates it with almost 250 years' long occupation of the Duchy of Moscow by the Mongols, which lasted until the close of the 15th century. Subjecting Moscow to the Mongol rule affected the formation of the Moscow state according to the models based on foreign civilizations. Whereas the two hundred years of the Russian occupation of Belarus took place at a different stage of social development. The Byelorussian land had already left behind the formation process of its statehood and before the partitions it had belonged to the Republic of the Two Nations. The author's intention is to consider the Russian influence on the Byelorussian ambivalence towards the European stage of a nation-state. The possibility of skipping, or at least simplifying a specific stage of transformation of a state model is considered, which in the case of Belarus seems to substantiate the Byelorussians' attitude to the concept of a nation-state.

It is also worth to pinpoint the fact that the currently common interpretation of history often bears the mark of the author's national perspective, which reflects the functioning of a specific nation-state. Yielding under the pressure of the surrounding state system is not without significance for one's own concepts of political scenarios. The reality, in some cases, turns out to be resistant to envisioned projections.

The 16th century as the epoch of sectarian states in Europe

A state described here as sectarian, occurring after the Christian unity of Europe, means such an organisation of social life and form of its administration, which focuses on a given Christian faith. In this case, it constitutes the main axis of the state model and at the same time it is the source of its dissent.

The split in the religious unity of Europe becomes a fact. The issues related to an attitude to religion come to the foreground of internal and international relations. Martin Luther (1483-1546), the reformer acting in Germany, rouses broad ranges of the European society with his views. French reformer John Calvin (1509-

1564) finds the right place to propagate his religious doctrine in Switzerland. In this circle of reformers we can also mention Ulrich Zwingli, influenced by Luther and acting in Switzerland, and Heinrich Bullinger – Zwingli’s successor and an opponent of the Lutherans. In the Netherlands, among others, two Melchiorites are working, namely: Jan Matthys and Jan Bokelson. In 1525 Grand Master Albrecht Hohenzollern transforms the state of Teutonic Knights into a secular duchy. Also, an anticlerical revolution breaks out in England – due to King Henry VIII (ruling from 1509-1547). Lutheranism is adopted in the Nordic states as early as in the first half of the 16th century. Calvinism spreads in France, and religious wars of 1562-1598, which tear the society apart according to their sectarian sympathies, become the sign of the times.

An attitude to religion is also the basic interpretation of politics in those European countries, where the Reformation has been nipped in the bud. In Spain, the growth of Protestantism is hindered by the Inquisition. The situation is similar in neighbouring Portugal. In Italy, the church is still going strong. In 1542, pope Paul III reorganises the Inquisition by appointing the Cardinals’ Congregation of the Holy Roman and Common Inquisition, so called *Sacrum Officium*. Earlier, in 1540, the same Pope brought to existence the Society of Jesus, whose roles was to fight the heretics and to do missionary work around the world. Their widespread presence on royal courts in the role of confessors and tutors of crown princes, as well as at schools and universities, as teachers, preachers and missionaries, gives the best picture of the spirit of the age of sectarian states.

Meanwhile, in 1539 the new faith reaches Livonia (Pol. Inflanty), where after the dissolution in 1561 of the Order of the Brothers of the Sword, the lands remaining in Polish and Swedish hands, and later under the Russian rule, remain Lutheran. From 1540, in the multi-denominational (Catholic and Orthodox) Republic, Jan Łaski propagates Calvinism. The Czech brothers create their communities, while representatives of various Protestant Churches in 1570 establish the Confederacy of Sandomierz. Three years later, the issue of denominations is discussed by the Sejm, which guarantees tolerance of Christian denominations. The Counter-Reformation is connected with the activities of Stanisław Hozjusz (1504-1579), the Bishop of Warmia, and with the increasing discrimination under the rule of Sigismund III Vasa.

An essential part of the role of religion in social relations within the Republic was creation of the Uniate Church, which was ratified in the Union of Brest in 1596, when some of the Orthodox bishops formed an alliance with the Catholic Church. Resistance of a considerable part of the Orthodox population, with

Prince Konstanty Ostrogski in the lead, against the Union of Brest brought about the Orthodox Council, called still in the same year. The foremost opponents of the union were Michał Kopysteński, the Bishop of Przemyśl, and Gedeon Balaban. The Council, which condemned the union with the Roman Church, deprived the hierarchs who acceded to it of their holy orders, but it was further decisions of the anti-uniates that carried more significance. While in western Europe the Catholic-Protestant competition directed the question of religious choices to those two courses of faith originating from the same circle of civilization, on the eastern fringes of Europe the choice was wider by the Orthodox course of Christianity, anchored in the Duchy of Moscow. The opponents of the union were with time to lean towards Moscow and surrender to the otherness of its civilization.

The degree of influence of the reformatory and contra-reformatory movements on the politics of the Republic in the 16th century, although characterised by a healthy dose of acceptance of tolerant attitudes, and not as dramatic as in other parts of Europe, provides a good picture of the principal tendencies by placing it in the framework of a sectarian state. The culmination of that factor's actions in social relations can be observed in the Republic with a slight delay in comparison to western Europe, namely in the Chmielnicki Uprising (1648), who while aiming at separating the Ukrainian land from the Republic formed an Orthodox bond with tsarist Moscow. It is worth to recall Chmielnicki's appeal to his subordinates, which presented his reasons for the alliance with Moscow: *„Colonels, yesauls, sotniks, all Zaporozhian host and all Orthodox Christians (...) today we have called a council, open to all the nation, so you can together with us choose a hospodar from among four lords, whoever you want. The first one is the Turkish Sultan, who has repeatedly called us by his envoys; the second is the Tatar Khan, the third the Polish King, who if we want can still receive us back in his grace; the forth is the Orthodox Tsar, whom we have incessantly called to us for six years. From them, choose who you want. The Turkish Sultan is a scamp. We all know what bondage our brothers Orthodox Christians, the Greeks, suffer, and how oppressed they are by the heathens. The Crimean Khan is also a scamp, whom we have befriended under duress. You know what unbearable burden we have taken upon us. And what enslavement, what merciless Christian blood shedding and oppression from the Polish masters, you don't have to be reminded, you know yourselves, a Jew or a dog they have valued more than our Christian brother. And the Orthodox Tsar of our faith is, pitying our Orthodox Church, after six years of our pleading, has now turned his gracious heart and deigned to send his envoys to us, and we won't find*

a better haven than his Tsar's arms, and who is not in agreement with us, he can go his way, wherever he wants"³. When in western Europe, with the Thirty Years' War, the model of a sectarian state is given up, the Republic adopts its patterns, as that is how we should interpret its history from the Chmielnicki Uprising until the Bar Confederation.

This reliance on the eastern neighbour did not give Ukraine independence. We can see as symbolic the uncompromising refusal of the Moscow envoys to take an oath of allegiance to Chmielnicki's forces in Perejasław in February 1654. The Tsar's emissaries were not convinced by the argument that Polish kings swear to their subjects⁴. Only the Cossacks took an oath, who could then see that the Tsar was not a Polish king. The Chmielnicki Uprising, which ended after two years with a truce in Niemierz, and then Chmielnicki's death, and his successor's, Jan Wyhowski's settlement signed in Hadziacz, were a prelude to the war of Moscow (1658-1667), where the religious factors were left behind and Grzymultowski Peace Treaty (1686) brought about division of Ukraine into areas of influence of the Republic, Moscow and the Crimean Khanate, which with time was settled with the Ukrainians. And so the enthusiastic uprising, which ended with poor results, burned out the Ukrainians' hope for independence based on the religious factor. It did not provide a sufficient guarantee of execution of the chosen policy, although it will for long remain an essential element influencing the social life of the inhabitants of this part of Europe.

Examination of Russia in the 16th or 17th century in the context of a sectarian state does not provide a basis for its correct or adequate to European history presentation. Admittedly, increasing indifference of the society to the Orthodox Church and religion could be observed. In the opinion of Andrzej Andrusiewicz *„this had nothing to do with the western European rationalism, but it indicated a certain mental state, tinged with heresy, magic, mysticism, asceticism, and sometimes – on the contrary – it was combined with exceptional decadence. That was kind of a Russian variety of Gnosticism, brought by various heretic opposition movements, particularly by Judaizantes, which was belated by hundred of years echo of the Church's battle with apostasy and breaking off with Judaism*"⁵. Denomination was not as a determining factor in Russia's policy as in Europe, although it was repeatedly used by the state as a tool of its imperial politics. For

³ L. Kubala, *Szkice historyczne. Wojna moskiewska r. 1654-1655*, Warsaw, Krakow 1910, p. 50.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ A. Andrusiewicz, *Cywilizacja rosyjska*, Volume I, Książka i Wiedza, Warsaw 2004, p. 407.

political reasons, and as counterweight to the European variations of Christianity, in his letter to Vasil III of Moscow (1505-1533), monk Philotheus formulated the ideological basis of the „*Three Romes*”. Moscow was to become the centre of the world, and the Orthodox faith subjected to political power was to serve the widely understood imperial politics. The faith was perceived here as a tool, whereas the subject was the politics of controlling the society, territorial integration of the country and expansionist policy.

The 17th century as transition from the sectarian to the dynastic model of a state

The denomination as the leading factor in interpersonal as well as international relations affected the fate of the Europeans throughout the 16th century and reached its turning point in the central Europe in the 17th century, during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The war, which began as a religious conflict with the aim of imposing a certain denomination, led to a fiasco of a sectarian state. One of the key resolutions of the Westfal Peace Treaty was prohibition for the rulers to impose any denomination on their subjects, and the territorial exception from this formula came down to the emperor's hereditary states and the Upper Palatinate, where only Catholicism was permitted. Apart from the dukes liberated from the primacy of the emperor, a secular state was an unquestionable winner. The Thirty Years' War, although limited in terms of the territory to central Europe, and particularly to German countries, changed the perception of a state also beyond their boundaries. Since then, it was the state and the rulers who were to dominate the political life of Europe. The idea of an absolute monarch is born and executed in France, which is best put into words by Louis XVI, the Sun King, who said *L'état c'est moi!* (I am the state!). His father Louis XIII (1610-1643) started the creation of an absolute monarchy in opposition to the ring of Habsburg dominions advancing on France, and it is exactly this element of the dynastic thought that will form a source of political decisions in the new era. The echoes of the passing epoch of sectarian states will be heard still during the Great Northern War (1700-1721) set also on the territory of the Republic, but more as arguments in a political conflict than actual purposes of military actions. Those were motivated by the interest of the monarchs.

The dynastic epoch began in the 17th century, when the Jagiellons had already been replaced by elective kings of the Republic, who did not have the conditions to go in for dynastic politics. The Vasas used it in their policy to recover the he-

editary throne of Sweden, the Wettins (particularly August II) in their hereditary Saxony. In the Republic, the idea of a dynastic state came out in the times of partitions, in the Constitution of May 3, already during the French revolution, which in the West created the transition from a dynastic to a national model of a state.

The 18th century as the epoch of dynastic states in Europe

The following century is best described from the angle of extensive connections and the policy carried out by particular European dynasties. It goes beyond the questions of denomination, but still does not pay much attention to national factors. The drop in the significance of religious affiliation coincides with the growth of tolerance and gradual secularization, but at the same time description of that period solely from the national perspective will not reflect the essence of the geopolitical occurrences. The 18th century will belong to great European dynasties, while it must be remembered that they will not originate from all ethnically European peoples. Therefore, we are dealing here with a situation, where some nations, for instance Polish, Ukrainian, or Byelorussian, do not have their dynastic representative in that epoch, who would act on their behalf. They are relegated to the role of objects in the politics played in the virtuoso performance of superpowers.

In a sectarian state the source of power is the ability to concentrate the rule in the hands of a monarch aiming at absolutism. The power itself is here hereditary and the aim of the successive rulers is to extend it, while in a clash with another dynasty, it is guided by the balance of power – so characteristic of that epoch. The ruling dynasties' priority is to preserve the *status quo*.

The political subjects of the 18th century include the Bourbons, the Habsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, the Koburgs, and the Oldenburgs. Also the Romanovs had their impact on the political life in Europe. In western Europe, a typical example of the politics in the dynastic times were the conflicts around the issue of succession to the Spanish throne. The key determinant in this context will be the fear of an excessive increase of power in the hands of one dynasty, accompanied by the search for reasons and allies in execution of one's own dynastic plans. Sympathies and antipathies spread out basing on subjective perceptions of the balance of power.

Mutual dynastic rivalries formed the basis for many conflicts in contemporary Europe. With time, however, the dynasties gave up wars in favour of cooperation in creation of *status quo*. A good example of it is cooperation of the Hohenzollerns' Prussia, the Habsburgs' Austria and the Romanovs' Russia in the partitioning of

the Republic of Poland (1772-1795).

The politics of a dynastic state in eastern Europe was best executed by the partitioners of the Republic. Its partition was partly an effect of ill-adaptation of democracy of the nobility to the scene of the centralised and powerful dynastic states. Acting in agreement, the partitioners divided the Republic among the three of them in three stages. In percentage terms, most of the land, i.e. as much as 82%, (including all Byelorussian territory from 1793), fell to Russia of the Romanovs, and only 11% to Austria of the Habsburgs and 7% to the Prussian Hohenzollerns.

The partitioners were equally satisfied with the conquests, and their joint occupation cemented the agreed territorial division. Moreover, each of them in their own way set about bonding their acquisitions with their country. The oppressed reacted with successive rebellions and uprisings for independence. Jan Stachniuk lists the following consecutive *explosions*⁶ – as he calls them – which occurred in intervals of 30-40 years:

- 1768-1772 Bar Confederation,
- from 1794 Kościuszko and Dąbrowski's legions,
- 31-31 November Uprising,
- 64-64 January Uprising,
- 1905 Combat Action of the Polish Socialist Party, Pilsudski.

Andrzej Piskozub pinpoints that: „*All the enumerated uprisings of the nation were – this needs to be made clear – a bid for independence and they were all targeted at the same enemy of this independence – the Russian empire*”⁷. The inhabitants of the partitioned Republic are subjected to administration centres, which remain outside the former borders of their country, and they receive imposed institutions from their respective directions. The ones from the east were those, which made their blood boil most.

The 19th century as transition from the dynastic to national states

There is no better bond than a common enemy. First, at the close of the 18th century, such an enemy for the partitioners of the Republic was revolutionary France, then its Napoleonic gleanings at the start of the 19th century. Napoleon's idea of European integration by conquest hit straight in the „superpower concerto”

⁶ J. Stachniuk, *Dzieje bez dziejów*, Warsaw 1939, p. 170.

⁷ A. Piskozub, *Polska w cywilizacji zachodniej*, published by Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2005, p. 66.

of European dynastic rulers. The threatened monarchs established an anti-French alliance, and the Russian expanse with the climate that turned out so merciless for the *Grande Armée* dispelled Napoleon's dream about Europe united under his aegis. Napoleon's defeat was the victory of the *Ancien Régime*, confirmed at the Congress of Vienna (1815), which set the areas of influence of the three partitioners and the distribution of power on the European continent for a hundred years. Under the umbrella of the Viennese stipulations an attempt was made to restore the French monarchy, which however had already been infected with its own nationalism and gradually gave in to a new trend. Even though after Napoleon's fall in France Bourbons come back to power in the person of Louis XVIII (1814-1824) and Charles X the Bourbon (1824-1830), restoration is not completely successful. The July Revolution (1830) and the flight of Charles X to England is not yet the end of the monarchical system in France, but it is a definite end to the Bourbons' rule. The July Monarchy (1830-1848), and later the Second Empire (1852-1870) are only a transition to France of the French. That materialized in the form of the Third Republic (1871-1940) after the defeat in the French-Prussian war (1870-71). Another outcome of that war was unification of the German states into one – Germany's Second Reich proclaimed in 1871.

The outcome of the French revolution was a shift in peoples' thinking of a state as a collection of a monarch's subjects to the perception of a state as a commonwealth of citizens bonded by ethnic ties. Nationalistic movements united the French, contributed to unification of the German states into the II German Reich (1871) and to integration and unification of Italy (1871). The ferment of national independence forms the grounds for and interpretation of politics of other peoples, who draw on the examples and desires of those leading European centres. The new trend gradually supplants dynastic monarchies in Western Europe, replacing it with a new concept of a state based on ethnic unity of its inhabitants. National integration does not only connect particular regions of Europe merging them into one ethnic state, but first of all it is the goal for those nations, which having no state of their own, make a part of another foreign state or states. In Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, the power was distributed among the Habsburgs, the Romanovs and the Osmons, interpreted as Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Turkish empires. Only breaking them apart could make the dream of an own national state come true. And so, the struggle for national independence in this part of Europe is closely connected with the fight against the said empires.

The process of achieving a national state must have been then accompanied by shaping of national awareness and identity, in other words by a process of creating

a nation. For instance, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries the Balkan subjects to the Osman Empire still had little sense of their national identity. Their affiliation to a certain, wider group was much more strongly and accurately described by their sense of religious and legal community. A typical example is that of Bulgarian Muslims, so called the Pomaks, who were most often taken for Turks. They disclosed their connection with the Ottoman Empire by emigrating to Turkey in 1878 after Bulgaria was occupied by the Russian army. It was a similar situation with the Albanians, whose leaders almost till the last years before gaining independence aimed only at unification of the national territory as an autonomous province within the borders of Turkey⁸. In the case of the Balkan peoples of denomination other than Muslim, awareness of their ethnic otherness fostered clearer shaping of their national identity. That process, however, was spread in time, and their path to a strictly national state was still remote, which is for instance illustrated on the example of the Serbs and the Croatians.

Development of the ethnic concept was not limited solely to given peoples' awareness of one's affiliation to a specific ethnic group. Each of the forming nations, and particularly those dominating in specific states, bandied the new ideology around for their own purposes. The policy of Russification or Germanization on the territory of the former Republic provides many such examples. A hegemonic leader's oppression on the subjected ethnic groups and their submission to the policy of deprivation of their national identity was bound to raise objections and reactions contradictory to those intended. The 19th century's rebellious bids for independence on the territory of the partitioned Republic aimed first of all at throwing off the yoke of the occupant and forming an independent government with one's own sovereign dream country. The term „own” must not be treated as very precise in respect of national categories, as before the partitions the Republic was a multi-ethnic state. These issues will be put on the agenda once the rebirth of the Republic will start materializing in the second decade of the 20th century.

In the above-cited work titled „Polska w cywilizacji zachodniej”, Andrzej Piskozub titled the chapter presenting the struggle with the partitioner „Experiences and burdens of the partition period”. There, the author draws our attention to certain characteristic policies of Russia of that time towards the conquered lands. He disposes of Pan-Slavism with the words of Jan Kucharzewski, who identifies this Russification-friendly trend, or maybe more precisely – an ideological tool, with

⁸ J. Żarnowski, *Dziesięć wieków Europy*, Warsaw 1983, pp. 364-366.

the rule of race solidarity, i.e. with racism. For in terms of quality, writes Piskozub, nothing makes the idea of Pan-Slavism different from, for instance, „Nordic” racism, which claims superiority of the „German race” over other sections of mankind⁹.

The anti-Polish chauvinism begins to flourish in Russia after successive uprisings for independence. They find reflection in the statements of Russian columnist Katkov, otherwise regarded as liberal, who after the January Uprising, *in one of the polemics concerning the Polish question in 1863, to the charge that Russia would not be able to cope with the more civilized Polish nation, replied: „we’ll stupefy them to our level”.* *One of the stupefying tools was the Russian school in Poland¹⁰.* None of the ethnic groups in the former Republic of Poland remaining under Russian rule was free from this peculiar concept of „*limiting to one’s level*”.

The inhabitants of the former Republic were subjected to various methods of indoctrination. In view of the fiasco of Pan-Slavism, aimed at gathering of all what is Slavic into one state, as it was earlier done by the Great Duchy of Moscow to all what was Russian, the Russians used the Germans as a bogey to seduce the Poles. Germinization carried out in accordance with the spirit of the times gave the Prussians, and then the Germans, an adequate reputation, and therefore hardened the Poles’ national spirit. The Byelorussians, who were not subjected to that two-sided oppression, looked with reserve at the idea of distinct ethnic emancipation. In other times, i.e. in 1939, Minister Beck expressed the dilemmas of Polish political choices in the following words: *if we follow the Germans – we’ll lose our independence, if we follow the Soviets – we’ll lose our soul.*

The partitioners left an imprint on the territory they occupied and its inhabitants to a various degree. Implications arising from that also had an impact on social processes. As Andrzej Piskozub observes, *social life under Russian rule was so paralysed, that even the Springtime of Nations in 1848 met with no response there, despite disturbances that went at that time through Prussian and Austrian rules¹¹.* And so, one of the greatest ideological trends of contemporary Europe bypassed the area remaining under Russian jurisdiction. In fact, Russification carried out by the tsarism sharpened the differences between the Pole and the Russian, but it simplified them in reference to the Byelorussians.

⁹ A. Piskozub, *Polska...*, p. 91.

¹⁰ W. Stadnicki, *Sprawa polska*, Poznań 1910, p. 468.

¹¹ A. Piskozub, *Polska...*, p. 84.

The 20th century as the times of national states in Europe

In the new formula of a state it is ethnic factors that come to the forefront, as well as those aspects of one's own identification, which unify the society into a crystallizing formula of a nation. The definition of nationality itself is very extensive and it is not free of contradictions, if we seek the only notional formula. Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi draws our attention to the related difficulties, considering it insufficient to rely solely on such factors as common language, blood ties, or common history etc. In his opinion *nations are conscious communities of culture and fate, connected by politics, or aiming at unification or liberation*¹². A similar definition based on subjective sense of own affiliation was adopted in Poland in 2002 during the national census¹³. A national state is a category, which reaches beyond individual choices, and which carries out subjective politics of a government of the nation dominating on a given territory. However, to speak thoroughly about a national state, it must be a conscious purpose of a given social group of the same ethnic definition.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries Europe's attention was focused on the Balkans, and events accompanying ethnic rebellions of those times were described in Europe as its balkanization. This pejorative term reveals the lack of respect and understanding for the rapid emancipation processes of the Balkan ethnic groups, which in accordance with the tendency then prevailing in Europe, desired to gain their own national states. The nearly 500 years' domination of the Ottoman empire on this territory was not a factor that would foster gentle transition into a new state, and it was bound to lead to numerous territorial disputes. Further armed bids for independence, the Balkan wars still before the WWI, contributed to the final ruining of the Turkish domination on the Balkans. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was not the final solution for creation of national states in this region. Admittedly, a number of new states appeared, but there were also such, which did not

¹² R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Naród europejski*, published by Adam Marszałek, Toruń 1997, p. 11.

¹³ In a report of the Central Statistical Office it was adopted that „Nationality is a declarative (based on subjective feeling), individual characteristic of each person, expressing the person's emotional, cultural or genealogical (depending on the parents' origin) relation with a particular nation”. [After:] Central Statistical Office, *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna (Population. The condition and demographical and social structure)*, http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_756_PLK_HTML.htm, 17.07.2007, p. 19.

fit in with the contemporary national states. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians as a single federal state resulting from the WWI was only a stage of the turbulent path followed by the ethnic groups involved on their way to separate independence. The drama of the continuously competing Serbs and Croats that carried on throughout the 20th century, gives a perfect picture of the tragedy and suffering of otherwise so closely related Slavic peoples. After years of struggles, at the close of the 20th century, both the Serbs and the Croats gained their national states, but hasn't that experience left the trauma that needs to be cured?

Having gained its own statehood, Croatia wishes to join the European Union, where it would have to give up its complete and sovereign independence. In other words, as a national state it will have to give up some of its ethnic ideals. This however, does not dishearten Croatia from continuing its path to European community. Serbia, historically favoured by Russia, is now affected by the failed dream of Great Serbia. The joy of one's own ethnic state, paid for with many sacrifices, is not an everlasting perspective for a nation that is still licking its wounds. The future fate of the Serbs is sure to be affected by the events taking place in the neighbouring countries, but for now they have the pride of having their own state, from which Kosovo will probably soon break away. However, limited by ethnic borderlines, Serbia seems to be a failure of a country of great aspirations but limited to an ethnic state.

After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the WWI brought about the collapse of the tsarist empire and the dynastic empire of the Hapsburgs. The space freed of the former hegemonic leaders was filled up with new states on the map of Europe, and though they marked progress of the concept of an ethnic state, often they did not constitute a final fulfilment.

Czechoslovakia was formed similarly to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. As Piotr Eberhardt observed: „*Creation of Czechoslovakia was of crucial importance for further fate of the Czech and Slovak peoples. The Czech nation was subjected to constant demographic, economic and cultural expansion of the Germans, while the Hungarians did not conceal their intention to magyarize the Slovaks. Both those Slavic nations were facing the threat of slow assimilation and loss of their national identity. Creation of that Slavic state did not only hinder those processes, but even let them make up for the losses incurred throughout the ages*¹⁴”. It is worth to mention here that in the Czech part of the country, the Czechs

constituted 67.7% of the total population, while the Germans – 29.5%. Respectively, in the Slovak part of the country, the Slovaks made up 67.7%, the Germans 4.5%, and the Hungarians – 17.2%¹⁵. The Slovaks, as well as the Croats, could experience a semblance of an ethnic state during the WWII, when under German rule such a state was allowed to be formed by the III Reich. That was only a transitional period, as already after WWII Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were brought back to life. The Slovaks and the Czechs' road to independence led through a period of a common state until the events of 1989, when after the Velvet Revolution Moscow domination was thrown off, and the road to an ethnic state was crowned by the peaceful proclamation of separate Czech and Slovak republics in 1993.

The Republic of Poland was to revive after the WWI from the ruins of earlier partitions. Still during the wartime operations, ethnic questions were raised by the opponent sides as a reason to draw sympathies, but also to attract recruits from particular ethnic groups. That was Tsar Nicholas II's appeal, when the Germans were achieving successive military victories driving his armies from the territory of Poland. The roles of the ethnic factor was well appreciated also by the Germans and the Austrians, when the deed of the two emperors was proclaimed on the 5 November 1916, by which they announced resurrection of the „independent” Kingdom of Poland. By their decision, despite many ambiguities in terms of the borders and the level of sovereignty, the two emperors drew a line through over a century long solidarity of the partitioners. The Kingdom of Poland was to be reborn, but what about other ethnic groups living to the west of Russia?

The concept of Mitteleurope and the support of the states connected with Germany, was the German idea for creation of post-war order in that part of Europe. Apart from the Poles, also Germans were well disposed towards the Ukrainians, which they expressed during negotiations of the Treaty of Brest (1918) and in military operations. With Brest negotiations in the background, and under protection of German occupation, the following states proclaimed in 1918 their independence: Ukraine – 22nd January, Lithuania – 16th February, Estonia – 24th February, Latvia – 23rd March, and Belarus 25th March. Earlier, after the Russian army had been driven out of the country, independence of Poland was decided – on the 5th of November 1916, and of Finland – on 5th of December 1917. Demarcation in March 1918 of the Brest borderline was tantamount with Russia's comeback to its western ethnic border. The territories lying to the west of that border were to be

¹⁵ Data based on the census in 1930., after: P. Eberhardt, *Między...*” pp. 114-119.

formed with the spirit of the time, i.e. basing on ethnic factors. However, consolidation of the states established under the German umbrella was prevented due to Germany's defeat on the front in Western Europe. The winners in the east now had to withdraw and leave the deserted areas to the outcomes of the Polish-Soviet war soon to break out.

The events of 1919-1920 easily deserve to be described as a clash of civilizations, if only due to the intentions of the Russian revolutionary forces. Poland was to be only a step on the road to conquest and transformation after the Soviet fashion of a possibly largest part of Europe. Simultaneously with the military struggles with the Soviet invader, the reborn Republic was going through a dispute about the spatial organization of the still endangered state. Two very disparate concepts deserve our particular attention.

The two polar opposites were Josef Pilsudski's federal and Roman Dmowski's incorporation concepts. Pilsudski referred to the tradition of the old Republic, believing in a solution that would take into account a possibly widest spectrum of interest of all ethnic groups forming the state in the pre-partition era. Whereas Dmowski, moving with the times, aimed at implementation of a concept of a Polish ethnic state. Pilsudski defended Poland's independence but lost the Republic. Dmowski's nationalistic doctrine was the winner. The Byelorussians and the Ukrainians did not regain their ephemerally created states, since we cannot consider as such their Soviet republics, which formed parts of the Soviet Union. In Poland the two nations were ascribed the role of ethnic minorities.

The population remaining under Russian influence was sovietised under whipping, while in the Republic, as a result of the then Polonization policy, they reinforced their conviction of their national identity. When entering the war, in accordance with the stipulations of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty, Moscow encroached on Poland and reoccupied the territory inhabited by the Byelorussians and the Ukrainians, which were again subjected to Moscow and its policy of sovietisation.

Independent states of Belarus and Ukraine will appear on the map of Europe still in the last decade of the 20th century. To a small degree, the favourable circumstances were the effect of activities of the interested nations themselves. They took advantage of the weakness of Moscow and its inefficient Soviet economy rather than their own efforts to regain their independent existence. In this context, granting of independence is the most suitable definition. We should remember that both Belarus and Ukraine had remained under Russian occupation for over two hundred years. Apart from linguistic Russification, they were also subjected to cultural Rus-

sification and strong denationalization processes.

Formation of the Russian state is discussed by Lew Gumilow, who points out the role played by the Mongol bondage from 1237-1480, and considers the civilization heritage consolidated in this case by Golden Horde as deeper and more significant than the earlier Byzantine legacy (988-1237) or the later, initiated by Peter I and lasting for two centuries (1712-1917) „Petersburg” periods of „European Russia”, drawing its civilization borrowings from the European culture¹⁶. The period of Mongol bondage and Moscow’s submission to its influence lasted for 243 years. The period of Russian bondage and submission of Belarus to Russian influence lasted for nearly 200 years (1793-1991).

Perturbations related to the Byelorussian people’s submission to the distinct civilization of Russia, as compared with the earlier case of Poland’s effect on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, are the source of the reason for departure from the model of social growth of the Europeans, which also explains the failure to develop a strong need of ethnic identification. The period of Russian bondage created a soviet man with his typical passivity in the face of national matters.

Post-soviet Russia regains its vital forces by selling natural resources of its vast territory and by ethnic rhetoric, integrating the society around its imperial past, when it was white Russians who played the superior role. However, Russia is not adopting the European model of a national state, and this social integration based on the ethnic factor and mobilization only serves Russia’s immediate political purposes. Today’s Russia is first of all a continuator of the tradition of an expansionist state, of a high degree of militarization, with the leading role played by various policing services¹⁷. To describe Russia as a power-using state seems to be the most accurate reflection of its statehood. We can even say that Russia is seemingly a national state, but in fact it is a power-using state.

The Ukrainian’s ethnic awareness draws on historical tradition of Mazeppa Cossacks and the struggle against Russia as well as Poland in the first half of the 20th century, when the ethnic ideals were forming there. Nowadays, the internal tension line runs along pro- and anti-national orientations, where pro-national refers to defining Ukraine as an ethnic state orientated to the West, and anti-national

¹⁶ L. Gumilow, *Od Rusi do Rosji*, Warsaw 1996, p. 272.

¹⁷ The organisation, the methods and the role of secret services in the Russian Federation are outlined by Jurij Felsztński in the book written in cooperation with most probably poisoned Alexander Litvinenko. See: A. Litvinenko, J. Felsztinski, *Wysadzić Rosję*, Rebis, Poznań 2007.

refers to pro-Russianness, which might be described as soviet nostalgia.

The Byelorussians, who hadn't experienced the history of the Ukrainians, became apathetic as a state without a definite choice of their future path. The soviet symbolism commonly imposed on today's Belarus was to be the springboard for current President Lukashenko to take over Yeltsin's legacy. This did not occur and it is doubtful whether he would take Putin's place either. Deprived of the chances to play a bigger role in Kremlin, the current Byelorussian president is doing whatever he can in his own interest – maintaining his country's indefiniteness, counting on more favourable economic situation, and at least settling for the role of a Byelorussian Batiushka. Being too weak for Kremlin, he is strong enough to squash aspirations of the Byelorussian opposition as long as it is convenient for Russia, as this is where lies the key to keeping or consenting to overthrow Lukashenko.

The Orange Revolution of 2004/05 in Ukraine proved to pro-Russian Kuchma, as well as to Kremlin itself, that although geographically divided as to the people's political sympathies, the country can still turn down external, say: Russian, interference in their own national matters, thereby defending their ethnic state. The earlier Carnation Revolution in Georgia, as well as the one in Ukraine, raised fears on one side, but hope on the other, and for all – anticipation of what will happen in Belarus. Here, the regime is already prepared for possible attempts of overthrows. Mobilization of forces, repressive politics and arrests of oppositionists have driven away, if not eliminated the threat. There was no mass mobilization of the people around Byelorussian ethnic symbols. We are dealing here with a situation, where the authorities of the Byelorussian state are insistently fighting off the symbols of ethnic identification, paying homage to everything what is soviet. Anticipation of a Byelorussian bid for independence can turn out to be vain hope with no rational premises. The majority of the Byelorussians are still supporting Lukashenko's regime, with Russian as the official language, and resigning from national symbols does not cause widespread protests.

The 21st century: the twilight of European ethnic states?

In the history of Europe one can single out certain epochs, whereas temporal limits and participation of particular countries was not automatic, as it depended on a number of factors. Integration of the EU member states affects the transfer of prerogatives of ethnic states to the benefit of community institutions. This is a complex process in its nature, as it requires implementation of a number of nec-

essary changes, including resignation of autonomy in many areas of the national activity. The EU mechanisms and institutions are gradually gaining approval of the EU residents, and when it comes to a legal conflict with one's own state, the citizens of ethnic countries willingly use the possibility to appeal to the European Court of Justice. An ethnic state is not the final decisive instance, and the legal force of a supranational institution is prevailing. Also on many other planes, the citizens of the EU member states know that the true decisive power lies with the supranational institutions.

Departure from an ethnic state is not taking place without any resistance, and the discussion on the target form of the European Union is still under way. Before they moved for accession to the Community, the current EU member states had to acknowledge the primacy of the supranational organization over their own isolationism. An ethnic state still is an important player on the international scene, but the hope of the strong Union lies with strong supranational organizations. Gradual replacement of an ethnic state with the Union on one side and strong regions on the other is a very probable scenario for development of institutions on the plane of European civilization.

Today's Poland is very reluctant to give up the prerogatives of a national state, provoking the idea of Europe of two velocities. The present Polish government draws extensively on the national patriotic contents. As a success are considered those achievements on the international arena, which prove Poland's blocking power in the EU. The Minister of Education is removing cosmopolitan values from syllabuses, and Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński himself is endorsing senator Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk's bulletin titled „Powiernictwo Polskie”¹⁸, which borders on chauvinism and is intensely anti-German.

The presence in the government of such extremely nationalistic parties as PiS (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – Eng.: Law and Justice), LPR (Liga Polskich Rodzin – Eng.: The League of Polish Families) and Samoobrona (Eng.: Self-Defence) is not changing the direction of the Poles' primary choice, i.e. participation in the European Union. Still before Poland's accession to the EU, both LPR and Samoobrona were strongly against it, and even in PiS there are plenty of opponents. Being in power and able to attempt to leave the EU, the ruling politicians are not taking any adequate measures as they are afraid to be wiped out of the political scene.

¹⁸ „Powiernictwo Polskie” (Polish Trust) is a free bulletin issued by the Society of Polish Trust, the Public Utility Organization with its seat in Gdynia, which is presided by senator Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk. The bulletin is available free of charge in paper form and on the Society's website: www.powiernictwo-polskie.pl

Attempts to scuttle the EU works are all that the Polish government could do so far. A turning point in the concept of a national state in Poland is getting closer and the next governments will probably have to be more pliant to the EU institutions, which in practice will mean abandoning the idea of a national state. Moreover, since the accession to the EU, 2-3 million people left Poland in search of employment or a new life and went to Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands and other EU states. Their life in this supranational sphere will affect transformations of their awareness and perception of the role of a national state in the changing circumstances. This also refers to the Poles, who stayed in the country.

In the case of Belarus, we cannot honestly talk about abandonment of the concept of a national state, since such has never really consolidated in Belarus. One cannot abandon something one has never had. The tradition of today's Belarus is western in its contents until the partitions of the Republic of Poland, and since that time Moscow's domination changes the shaping direction of the nation, imposing eastern standards. Present Russia is not even interested in territorial absorption of Belarus. Nowadays, a country's source of power is most of all its economy and army. What makes Belarus appealing to Russia, the country rich in resources and having nuclear arsenal and conventional armed forces at its disposal, is simply the possibility to monitor the on-going processes with the view to avoid the events that took place in Ukraine, which comes down to maintaining of stagnation. To categorize Belarus as a „close neighbouring country” is from the Russian perspective more attractive than its actual absorption, or unification under the Union of Belarus and Russia. Economic factors related to Kremlin's fear of the necessity to support inefficient economy of Belarus is of key importance here. Soviet in its essence, Belarus is not hurting national pride of the Russians, as are the Baltic states, particularly Estonia, or other former Soviet Union republics, such as Ukraine or Georgia. On the other hand, from the western point of view, Belarus is perceived as an area of Moscow's influence, it has no such attributes as Ukraine, which is supported by the EU in its democratization processes. For the West, the appeal of Belarus ends with realization of the necessity to take up the rivalry with Russia for influence in this country. The European Union has enough internal problems to toss in the expense of energy needed to win favour with the Byelorussians. And so, Belarus is left to itself. Wrapped in soviet symbolic, it reassures its eastern neighbour, and since it is a highly authoritative regime, it cannot count on a flirt with the West. This does not change the fact, though, that its European surroundings do have an impact on the country's internal situation and will affect the choices of the Byelorussians themselves.

not have to be of ethnic character, but may only lead to overthrowing or replacement of the ruling elite. The mechanism describing the systematics of Europe's history in terms of sectarian, dynastic and ethnic countries, may not be an adequate *continuum* for Belarus due to its over 200-years' submission to eastern influence. In this case, the Marxist linear scheme of going through all forms of a state or a society needs to be left aside. The possibility here is to skip or go quickly and superficially from one state to another. And so, Belarus does not have to go through the stage of a national state, but it may also look differently from its western European form. Nowadays, Belarus is under the influence of post-national Europe and nationalistic Russia. To adhere to soviet models does not translate, however, into following Russia's nationalistic standards. Being affected by supranational soviet tradition, post-national EU tendencies and Russian nationalism, Belarus sticks to its own, peculiar third path of development. But how long for?

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ABSTRACT

Autor prezentuje białoruską ścieżkę na tle przeobrażeń modelu państw europejskich w epoce dezintegracji cywilizacji europejskiej (XVI-XX w.). Przedstawiono funkcjonowanie Białorusi w modelu państwa wyznaniowego, dynastycznego oraz jej stosunku do państwa narodowego. Autor zwraca przy tym uwagę, iż nie wszystkie państwa europejskie przechodzą w ten sam sposób przez kolejne etapy modeli państwowych. Obecny ambiwalentny stosunek Białorusinów do państwa narodowego tłumaczy się dwustuletnim okresem funkcjonowania pod zaborem rosyjskim (1793-1991).

The author presents the Byelorussian path in the context of transformation of the model of European states in the times of disintegration of European civilization (16th-20th c.). Functioning of Belarus was presented in the model of a sectarian and dynastic state, and in its attitude to a national state. The author draws our attention to the fact that not all European states follow the same path through the successive stages of state models. The present ambivalent attitude of the Byelorussian people to the concept of a national state is explained through the two hundred years of the country's life under Russian rule (1793-1991).

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