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“KRYVJIA” AND “ZADRUGA” AS CULTURAL  
AND POLITICAL HORIZONS OF NATIONAL  
REBIRTH PROJECTS OF BELARUS AND POLAND:  
EXPERIENCE OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

*Наша мінуўшчына – гэта блуканне па раздарожжах і муках,  
а мы цяпер ізноў пры... сваім народзе крывічанскім  
і разам з ім адбудовываемо вольную Крывію! — В. Ластоўскі*

*W koncepcji artystycznej i religijnej istota humanistyczna człowieka  
zostaje totalnie wessana do organizmu wyższego rzędu,  
jakim jest mit zadružny. — Jan Stachniuk*

THE COMPLEX AND AMBIGUOUS POLITICAL and economic processes indicative to *interbellum* in Europe and post-revolutionary period in Russia in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century appeared the most important factors of radical geopolitical and sociocultural transformations in Central and East-European region. In consequence of breakdown of the empires and activation of national movements many peoples for the first time ever (or newly) gained real chances to develop their culture and build their states independently. Among these states are Belarus and Poland, with their own historical experience, long and dramatic, full of national ups and downs and performances as well as mortifying defeats and periods of stagnations. On a wave of the civil and national recovery of the 1920s-30s, Polish and Belarusian intellectuals proposed a wide spectrum of programs of national and civic rebirth, from international-communist to conservative-nationalistic.

We will focus on the analysis and comparison of the two of them as the most original, in our opinion, insufficiently explored and evaluated: concepts of *Kryvič rebirth* by Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski and *Slavic pan-humanism* by Jan Stachniuk. The choice of these particular philosophical, historical, religious and political-ideological positions is determined by at least three circumstances. Firstly, their authors rather eloquently and completely reflected radical nationally-oriented sentiments and expectations of a certain part of the-then Belarusian and Polish intelligentsia. Secondly, these positions, although far from being indisputable in scientific-and-historical and philosophical respect, however, in general are well-developed and -founded

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conceptually (substantively and ideologically) which makes them interesting objects for analysis. Thirdly and finally, due to the features outlined above, the approaches under consideration to the solution of inter-ethnic relations issues still have an influence on the spiritual atmosphere of the society and inspire present-day Belarusians and Poles to search optimal strategies of national development now in a new general-culture context of globalization and socio-cultural transitivity (see, for example, Dziermant, 2006, Makievič, 2008; Tomasiewicz, 2000; Grott, 2003; Kończal, 2006).

Moral, intellectual, professional and civic image of both Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski (1883–1938) and Jan Stachniuk (1905–1963) takes shape in the context of an inevitable drama and tragedy of the interwar time. Being inflammable romantics and resolute fighters against the “historical ballast” aggravating people’s national development, they both passed a broken path starting from painful search for the ways of “national question” solution and attempts to organize efficient institutions to make this solution work and ending with a rigid, largely unjust condemnation of their political views and post-mortem obliteration for many years.

However, the strategies they chose to implement their life and political projects were different. Jan Stachniuk was and still remains a marginal figure in Polish philosophical and political thought primarily because of his steadfast anti-Catholic position. Although there are a lot of bright names among his conceptual predecessor (Z. Dolęga-Hodakowski, the founder of Polish archeology and ethnography, J. Słowacki, the greatest name in Polish poetry and others), his own specific religious (neo-pagan in essence) and sociopolitical (ethno-nationalistic in general) constructions inspire today a rather narrow group of intellectuals. Before World War II, Jan Stachniuk became a founder and ideologist of Polish nationalistic community “Zadruga” as well as editor of both the eponymous journal coming out in Poland from 1937 to 1939 and the underground journal “Zryw” issued during the Nazi occupation. In 1952, Jan Stachniuk was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment on a charge of creation of “Nazi” organization shortly before the war, however, in 1955 he was released.

The fate of Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski was by far more tragic (he was arrested on two occasions by faked-up evidence and in 1938 he was shoot dead), but at the same time, his political and scientific activities had a disproportionately greater influence and resonance among Belarusians in his days.

Not only was Lastoŭski a socio-political public figure and head of government of the Belarusian People’s Republic but also a talented historian and a linguist, writer and publicist. He carried on a wide correspondence with a number of European scientists and socio-political public figures, was Academician of Belarusian Academy of Sciences, and, in the opinion of a number of researchers, was a prominent scientist-polymath.

From 1923 to 1927, Lastoŭski issued the journal “Kryvič” which in essence was a platform and manifesto of the author’s position with regard to the past and future of the Belarusians, their national identity, religious life, national self-determination, principles of coexistence with immediate geopolitical neighbours. Like the journal “Zadruga” edited by Jan Stachniuk, “Kryvič” in his title contained sufficiently obvious references to pre-Christian past of the people as exemplary dispensation. This makes it possible for us, at least in the first approximation, to draw a conclusion about specific ethno-nationalism as the common basis of personal and political identity of Lastoŭski and Stachniuk.

Therefore, only at first sight in both authors’ projects there are few obvious common interests, apart from formal (a common space-time continuum as a cultural condition and the ability to create these projects) general-methodological (availability of conservative-and-traditional searches of ethno-national identity in the paradigm) and content (their national-pointed nature) similarities. A more detailed consideration of V. Lastoŭski’s and J. Stachniuk’s views enables to detect a number of philosophic-and-ideological parallels. These parallels (of course, with the simultaneous designation of specificity introduced by each of the considered authors) can be drawn within the frames of two conceptual problem-thematic blocks: *models of national history* and *projects of national rebirth*.

#### Grounding of the Models of National History and the Factors of Its Stagnation

A rigid analysis of national, respectively Belarusian and Polish, culture in the early 1920s, a statement of its tragic past and recessionary present, including the categorical estimations of its state given on this basis, evidence that Lastoŭski and Stachniuk were resolute and uncompromising authors of not just national-renaissance but obviously nationalistic projects as well. These projects appeared crucial in their lives and predetermined many things in their creation and activities: the appropriate problem-story fabric of texts and their stylistic features, attempts of personal embedding into the political field of Belarus and Poland of the first half of the past century and self-contradictory views, romanticizing of national history and appeals to risky and frequently unreasonable socio-political experiments (for example, Stachniuk’s creation of Slavic Empire or Lastoŭski’s Baltic-Belarusian federation).

However, perhaps the major indicator of radicalism of the positions of the one and the other was sharp and decisive condemnation of historical reasons, circumstances and consequences of long-lasting political dependence of Belarus and Poland, their centuries-long unequal-term incorporation into a wider geopolitical context. Moreover, Lastoŭski puts all the blame for a deplorable state of things in culture on invasive policy of the next-door neigh-

bours, Russia and Poland, for a century-long Polonization and the next two-century Russification of the Belarusian lands (Lastoŭski 1997: 354–359). In his turn, Stachniuk tends to seek for metaphysical reasons of national decadence in the vicious essence of Christian (Catholic) culture itself (Stachniuk, 1996: 98).

The conviction in self-sufficient potential of cultural development of “Kryvič people” and extortive (colonialist) nature of Polish and Russian influences on them was vividly demonstrated by Lastoŭski in his periodization of Belarusian history. He singles out four stages of it with which a four-phase dynamics of national ethnonym and national-cultural decadence among other things is related (Lastoŭski, 1997:364-365). This is, firstly, the stage of *Kryvian-Ruthenian* (10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries) is characterized with conquest of Slav lands by Varangians-Ruthenians, forcible replacement of pro-Slavic (pagan) religion with Christianity and renaming the Kryvič into “Ruses” or “Rus”.

Already at this stage, in author’s opinion, we can speak about tragic and catastrophic for the whole consequent Belarusian history phenomenon– a peculiar kind of “Varangian-Ruthenian yoke: *“the beginning of Varangian-Ruthenian power in our history should be treated in the same way as Tatar irruption in Russian history ... [...] ...in the struggle of the Kryvičes against Ruthenians they, in the first place, defended their land from foreign invasion, and secondly, in this struggle two systems of government were weighing themselves: on the one hand (on behalf of the Kryvičes), the efforts were directed to protect a deeply democratic Slavic people government system, and on the other (on behalf of the Ruthenian-Varangian), together with political slavery Norman feudalism was set forward”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 387).

Moreover, not only did the Varangians-Ruthenians give nothing positive in cultural and political aspect to Kryvič people, but also having borrowed from them their culture themselves continued their predacious conquests: *“having been slavonized from the Kryvičes and the Polans (Ukrainians), the Varangians, with the help of recruited warriors among the Kryvičes and Polans, conquer, under the pretext of Baptism, Finns and Mongolians, at the same time imposing them Slavic liturgy and Slavic language in the administration, slavonize the Finn-Mongolian tribes on the banks of the Oka, Volga, Kama, Pechora, Northern Dvina and Don rivers”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 391). Then a kind of “cultural repose” comes – *Lithuanian–Russian stage* (13<sup>th</sup> – the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century) with the replacement of the Kryvič-Ruthenian dynasty (Rahnieda-Uladzimir) with the Lithuanian dynasty (Alhierd) and affiliation of a new name to the Kryvičes-Ruthenians – “Lithuania-Rus”. Even though here the reunion of the ethnic Kryvič with their “Baltic roots” takes place, however, they are still confused in the process and specifics of their national identity, because now they are at the same time both “Lithuanians” (by state affiliation) and “the Ruthenians” (or Orthodoxies, by religion).

The third stage – *Lithuanian-Polish* – lasts until the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state. It is marked with a dramatic for the whole culture

discrepancy of masses of people (Orthodoxies) with the elite (Belarusian Catholics who named themselves Poles). Started at that period, the process of “voluntary denationalization” when “*the sons of our Fatherland hired out to aliens, and richen their barns and apiaries!*” (Lastoŭski, 1997: 248) became one of the key factors of further erosion of national identity of Kryŭski ethnos.

At last, with the fall of the Union, the fourth stage come, a Russian-Belarusian one, when the Orthodox clergy and Orthodox nobility (*szlachta*) (the remaining part of “Belarusian higher-ups”) moved to a Russian wagon train “*en mass*” (simultaneously naming themselves “Ruthenians” or “Russians”) and Kryŭski people got their official name – Belarusians. “*In this way, the tops of our national tree were gradually drying up and falling away from people’s stub...*” (Lastoŭski, 1997: 365–366).

The people themselves, owing to permanent political and cultural dependence from alien influences over the last several centuries, evolved into a specific “Belarusian-peasant” cast of ignorant, illiterate people who did not manage to establish themselves both nationally and culturally: “*over the last 200 years, Belarusians were not a nation. They made up a table peasant cast that was replenished from nowhere and new forces and the best and the noblest representatives of them diverged*” (Lastoŭski, 1997: 324). And this is despite the fact that a Belarusian, compared to a Pole or a Russian is “*both more sophisticated and artful and even more hardworking... A Belarusian can be compared to German opposed to a Great Russian. Here is an example: we live on an argil sand ground and we have no famine whereas in Great Russia people starve almost every year although they live on humus soil.*”

Therefore, “*neither Warsaw nor Moscow can give Belarusian people freedom. Both Moscow and Warsaw bring ruins and destruction.*” (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384). Lastoŭski has a strong belief that the only viable prospect for Belarusian national development is the prospect of freestanding independent rebirth without any “cultural-political patronage” of their geopolitical neighbours, since “*our historical traditions have nothing in common with either Moscow oriental absolutism or Polish anarchical szlachta*” (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384).

If Lastoŭski analyses and criticizes national historical and cultural process from anti-Russian and anti-Polish standpoint, then Stachniuk exposes anti-Christian in its nature point of view. He sees the main reasons for decline of the Polish culture in the evolution of Christianity itself, which historically successively reveals its internal self-destructive guidelines in the form of personalism, nihilism, hedonism, didacticism and spiritualism. Stachniuk proposes a large-scale philosophical-cultural program of criticism of the so-called “wspakultury” as anti-culture or “contra-culture” (Seradzan). Singling out in the history of humankind two ways of life and two ways of thought – *vegetative* (passive, conformist, uncreative) and *heroic* (active, independent, creative), the Polish philosopher associates with them firstly, the correspond-

ing cultural forms: anti-culture as cultural-creative simulation and culture as such as a permanent creative performance – and secondly, opposite ways of historical national self-determination: extensive and intensive. The culture is understood by Stachniuk as emanation of creative will of the Universe, as a “*natural order reorganization process, bringing together the elements and joining them under a different formula owing to which there appears a new type of power subordinated by man*” (Stachniuk, 1996: 10).

Among living species only the man has a specific condition and attribute of cultural creation – “*ability to creation, enigmatic creativity*”. (Stachniuk, 1996: 19). As for the total “*contra-culture*” (*wspakulturatotalna*), it favours to both individual passivity in socio-natural world and to commonly-known choice of “*inactive*” historical way, dipping of the nation into the abyss of “*dis-history*” (“*ezdziejow*”, stagnation and cultural devolution).

The main factor pinning a “*vegetative*” way of life of individuum and so-cium in culture in general and in Slavic (including Polish) culture in particular, ideals of the anti-culture and “*inactive actions*” was, according to Stachniuk, Western Christianization and the subsequent domination of Catholicism.

Christianization of Poland appeared a “*vaccination of cancer of anti-culture to its organism*” (Stachniuk, 2006a:23) which also became a pivot of national consciousness. As a result “*Poland and the whole Slavic world (Slowianszczyzna) over a thousand years have not lived a life of self-interest. Since the moment we realized cemeterial emptiness into which we were locked in our hearts, we have been yearning after full-fledged creative life, this yearn is inherent not only to Poles but also to the whole Slavic world ... As a result of this, the Slavic world (Slawia) has lost its own soul and over the whole millennium has lived as if hypnotized, weak-willed, immersed into barely conscious experience of alien values which totally disorganize the forces of the Slavic world (Slawia). This explains the apathy and a heavy-with-sleep style of Slavic life, full of ... melancholy, resulting from internal marasmus*” (Stachniuk, 2006b:15).

The processes of conversion of pagan Slavic peoples lead them to cultural apoplexy (*paraliz kulturowy*) which causes a complete abruption with tradition with a consequent slowdown of spiritual processes. Notably this phenomenon is equally incident both for Catholic Poland and Czech and South and East Slavs worshipping Orthodoxy of Greek rite.

In this regard, in J. Stachniuk’s historical and philosophical concepts the leading motive is the problematization of culture-creative value of Catholicism “*Catholicism has grown on the soil of vegetation and the basis of vegetation constitutes its deepest base... This is a religious sentiment of slowdown; corresponding to inactivity ... The essence of Catholicism is that it is directed to a disaster of any social community*” (Stachniuk, Dzieje...).

Stachniuk believes that beginning from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the internal development of Poland can be regarded as total conceptual “*Catholic experi-*

ment” on the living people’s body, submissively yielding to it. *“The Polish logos and ethos are a system of values, forcibly superimposed and established on the foundation of initial ethical feeling. Naturalistic worldview and ethics of our Slavic ancestors as humanistic consciousness in its nature ...were destroyed. Having destroyed the mental outlook of the Slavs, who were positively looking at the world, Christianity imposed its own vision of the world, its own understanding of what is good, truth, beauty. A positive view of the world by our ancestors-pagans, their admiration of existence, thirst for energy and creative power from evangelistic point of view should be defined as devildom”* (Stachniuk, 2006a:29). As a result, Polish national consciousness imbibed social and existential ideal of Catholicism – the ideal of a desert or a monastic cell – which substantially influences the economic, political and cultural life of the society.

Notably, the higher the level of realization of this ideal, the more miserable and depredated social life is in all its dimensions. And on the contrary, the weaker the realization of the Catholic ideal, the more creative opportunities people actualize in their everyday life.

Slavic national self-consciousness derogated by history and religion, in Stachniuk’s opinion, can primarily elaborate an extensive renaissance idea, related rather with fruitless *“compensative dreams of Slavic empire as powerful and formidable for its superior neighbours”* than change of state of affairs, acquisition of national independence and readiness to own cultural creativity (Stachniuk, Dzieje...). Thus, the Polish people over the last three centuries give their own transcription of this renaissance idea, suggesting instead of real efficient breakthrough a definite “relaxation”, dreamy type of existence, absolutely inorganic to any tension of physical and spiritual forces. This type is based by imperatives of romantization of country life (*sielskość anielskość*), some “life vocations” (*wakacje życiowe*), relaxed way of life-view and existence (*odprężenie*). In other words, states Stahnyuk, *“vegetative individualism is a fundamental feature of the Polish national character”* (Stachniuk, 2006a:34).

The alternative to an extensive renaissance idea and the only way to get safe Polish (and the whole Slavic) culture from heavy Christian anti-cultural burden can be an intensive ideal of national renaissance in the form of Slavic pan-humanism.

#### Projects of National Rebirth: from a Belarusian to a Kryvič, from a Pole Catholic to a Pole

Lastoŭski’s program of national renaissance includes at least the following items-stages: firstly, to establish a process of self-identification of Belarusians by returning the people their historical name and to prove its “Baltic roots”, secondly, to justify the essence of “national messengership” of Kryvič culture to humankind, thirdly, to create national-religious organization.

Lastoŭski is confident of the necessity of authentic ethnonym for the successful rebirth process: *“Today, when the nation is making efforts to come alive again from its very roots and is thoroughly seeking each trait of its individuality (in the language, customs, art and writing), it is important for the people to recollect their own name in addition — the name which says about the best days of life of our people, with their liberal veche and glorious battles for their independence. It is important to make a note by the very name of the people that they are not an artificial trait of somebody’s individuality but individuality in and of itself... The desire to put the name ‘Kryvič’ to the due height logically comes from the understanding of rebirth-national movement which must rest upon the historical past and selfhood individuality of our people”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 384–385).

Lastoŭski clearly distinguishes the notions of “Belarusians” and “Kryvičs”, however, not always giving them axiological accents, but stating specific, from his point of view, historical realities: *“As ‘Belarusians’, we are only imprints of general-Russian individuality... However, as ‘Kryvičs’, we are a specific individuum, a specific Slavic tribe with our own rich past, our specific language, territory and spiritual creativity”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 386). Thus, as only a transitional stage and part of “Russians”, “Belarusians” are doomed to the fate of small, inconspicuous, “non-individual” people in Russian imperial *“conglomerate of tribes and ethnic groups from the Baltic to Vladivostok”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 398).

If Between Kryvian-Belarusian and Russian (as well as Polish) people the organizational relation can be only extortive-political, while with the Baltic people it has a natural-historical character since *“we are closer connected by our origin with the peoples of the Baltic states, which we followed during the migration, and, therefore, absorbed the remaining west-Finnish and Lithuanian elements, than with the Muscovites, who are our colonization to the east, dissolved in Mongolian and east-Finnish elements ... [...] ...we, being close to the Muscovites in language (Slavonized Mongolians), anthropologically represent an absolutely separate type”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 436). Therefore, a statelegal future is also seen by Lastoŭski in a certain form of Belarusian-Lithuanian community life: *“Only in relations with fraternal democratic countryside peoples of Lithuania, Ukraine and others can Belarus come to its liberation, realize its state independence ... [...] So, long live to independent peasant democratic Belarus, long live to fraternal rapprochement of Belarusian and Lithuanian peoples!”* (Lastoŭski, 1997: 358).

Thus, for Lastoŭski, the basic vector of the rebirth policy and practice was *“to extract our people from Russian hypnosis and show them different values and ways of national life, to draw attention to the necessity of closer rapprochement with our Baltic neighbours...Having good will and applying certain efforts, we, perhaps, will create the Baltic Federation with Kryvian people as a*

*useful member. In my conviction, only having founded such a federative state from Palesie and Dniepr up to the Gulf of Finland, we can manage to protect ourselves from the threat of Moscow mergence*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 437).

If to appeal and to return to own historical traditions, historical name and historical "co-brother" is a tactic task of national renaissance, then the strategy of this process is awareness by the Belarusians of their general-historic mission, or awareness of that "all-mankind task" which *Kryvian* people are gifted with. Such a mission is a fastening value and ideological principle for national psychology as well as for successful state construction. Besides, without comprehension it is impossible to speak about "people's individuality" as a condition for self-dependence and efficiency in history. Upon a closer view, the historical mission of Kryvičs fall into two constituents: firstly, into "the Slavic-Baltic message" as "gathering" of all three branches of Kryvič people in a single sociocultural and political – state perspective and, secondly, into "panhuman message" under which "*Kryvič Slavic world as a whole must give the mankind new cultural values... Our historical task is decentralism and grass-roots democracy. These will bring us new values ...*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 399).

Realization of all the above-mentioned aims not least of all depends on developed spirituality of the people, on its axiological orienting points and ideals. And this is provided with the corresponding state of affairs in the religious sphere of the society. Unfortunately, notes Lastoŭski, "*we have no religious individuality, and the worst part is the absence of will to find religious individuality in ourselves. We even do not try to do that ...*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 397). Centuries-long persecution and oppressions of all that belongs to national identity touched primarily religion, when "*the 'Ruthenian/Russian faith' was imposed by enemies... Everything which was Christian was hostile; was 'Russian'. Everything that was local (rustic), became pagan, impure, foul, scorned*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 354).

This resulted in vagueness of the national Belarusian identity. This included, besides other things, both religious disorientation and uncertainty and a wonderful mix of pagan, Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic traditions in national culture. Nevertheless, such confessional mosaic as well as religious tolerance in prospect of forthcoming radical socio-cultural transformations can work as and advantage in creating a salutary atmosphere and fertile soil for the appearance of new optimal church-religious projects. Lastoŭski has a strong belief that "*if we do not want the aliens to be in control of spirituality of our people, we must seek for and find the ways and forms of independent solution of a religious problem. We need to create such a form of Christian church organization that could stand on the ground of our national interests without looking around either to the east or to the west*" (Lastoŭski, 1997: 414).

Among the key imperatives of the Polish national rebirth, J. Stachniuk distinguishes pan-humanism Slavic cultural revolution, “zadruga myth” as an axiological-ideological postulate of a new national worldview and all-Slavic “zadruga religion” of anti-Christian, neo-pagan nature in its essence.

J. Stachniuk’s national revival project is reflected in his specific philosophy “Zadruga”,<sup>2</sup> the main thesis of which is transformation of society along the lines of heroic collectivism and release of the infinite creative potential dormant in it. This, in fact, is pan-humanism in the version of Stachniuk – total emancipation of an individual and his creativity. At the same time, both nationalism and class struggle in this process are secondary and serve only as instrument to attain the given aim. Various groups can realize pan-humanistic heroic social ideal depending on historical conditions.

Collective-heroic national-cultural prospect is contrasted by Stachniuk to present-day state of anti-culture and “Pole-Catholic flow” (*samotok polokatolicki*) permeating all Polish history of the last centuries. This tendency is the most dangerous for the future of Poland since it restrains the worldview horizon of a Pole as a citizen in the frames of his parish (observance) transforming him into “a Pole-Catholic”. A living position like this does not give an opportunity for adequate perception and transformation of the world, adjudging a man – as well as culture – to vegetable existence in passiveness and decadence. Therefore “*the most significant revolution is overcoming Pole-Catholic sentiments. It will be a revolution in the world of spiritual values. Substitution of anti-cultural individuality with heroic individuality must make the content of this revolution*” (Stachniuk, 2006a: 67). Ultimately, the cultural revolution in Poland must lead to release of the “element of pan-humanism” from the captivity of anti-culture, mercilessly amputate all “invalid organs and mentality” of people’s organism. “*The revision of culture should be carried out radically. It does not mean complete negation. Only anti-culture should be withdrawn*” (Stachniuk, 2006a: 72).

As a result of such national-cultural self-purification, a base pan-humanism “zadruczny myth” must come and take the place of anti-culture with its false and pernicious ideas. Its main purpose and main content will be “Slavic super-biology” (*nadbiologia stawiska*) as a result of coping with Slavic bios (as all vegetative in life and thought) by creative-heroic Slavic community. For the first time, namely in this myth creativity inherits its complete self-senti-

<sup>2</sup> Zadruga (Serbian-Croatian) is historically common among South Slavs and refers to a type of rural family community. It includes several generations of ancestor of one father with their wives and children (20-30 people); the zadruga held its property, herds and money in common. The zadruga eventually went into decline beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Large Encyclopedic Dictionary ...). Задру́га (zadruga, zadruczna kuca) is a small community formed of several families related to each other rather by economic and territorial than family ties; it is especially common among South Slavs of Serbian-Croatian tribe. All members of zadruga are rather equal. Currently zadruga in this primeval is in effect only among South Slavs, but it is gradually going into decline... (Encyclopedic Dictionary).

ment and self-awareness, and apart from this, will get the tools for realization of its existence and development. For this purpose, in its nearest history, the Slav world must successively solve the following tasks: to “*release from initial Slavic biological mass the element of creative will*”; to “*create an organization transforming the released creative impulses into a spontaneous activity of super-active biological organism of Slavia*”; to “*defeat hostile forces restraining the process of formation by Slavia the authentic world of culture*” (Stachniuk, 2006b: 164).

The Polish National Cultural Revolution and the whole Polish Nationalism, according to Stachniuk, cannot and must not retreat into their own regional boundaries, but are destined to become a motor of Common Slavic rebirth. The Polish people will become “*a Prometheus of the degraded Slavic World*” (Stachniuk, 2006b: 172), and Polish nationalistic worldview will be the “*resurrection of Slavic soul*”. Particularity in this lies the whole-Slavic historical mission of the Polish culture.

Historical mission of Poland, as the author understands it, has also a specific “totalistic” cultural and political measurement which lies in the author’s conception of Common Slavic sub-national state and even pan-Slavic empire. In general, criticizing the “totalistic temptation” of European culture of the 1930s–1940s as internally growing from it and being an “exclusive” form of use of increasing strength and power of the masses (*mocy sprawczej*) (Stachniuk, *Zagadnienie...*), Stachniuk, however, is influenced by it himself. In his project of future of all-Slavic heroic-collective commonwealth, totalitarian accents are obviously present. We will try to enlist the basic of them.

Firstly, the name itself and centering image-symbol of his philosophy – “Zadruga” as old-Slavic tribal and economic community – refer us to the archaic values of tradition, patriarchal, undivided authority, total collectivism. In its turn, collectivism as an integral feature of author’s script of future life of happiness and prosperity contrasts to personalism and acquires the status of the central idea in “Zadruga” philosophy. Stachniuk perceived collectivism as anti-personality approach to life – identification of own needs with the needs of society. In Stachniuk’s society, all the people must provide the basic need for each individual, and economic motivation related to job must give place to the motivation of moral nature. To make this idea work, a fundamental transformation of public mentality is required (Seradzan).

Secondly, under “Zadruga” ideology, only homogenous society can realize great, creative objectives. Socio-cultural project by Jan Stachniuk is a total state which must cover each aspect of life of its nationals. A state like this must be created around a single, universal, homogenous worldview which will supersede Christian values (Grott, 1989: 57). This worldview will be centered by “creative myth” (*mit twórczyelski*), and the obligatory social institution responsible for creation of corresponding “myth-ideological matrixes” is defined by Stachniuk as a “laboratory of historical-and-creative thought” (*laboratorium myśli dziejotworczej*).

Thirdly, Stachniuk doubts the cultural potential of other Slavs (apart from Poles and Russians), on the basis of which they could realize qualitative transformation of their social and economic life. *“Can we generally account the paralysed with inertness Ukrainian, Serbian, Croatian peoples as the force of history? The only true policy here can be the use of them as a raw material for the melting furnace of Zadruga myth in order to create common – Slavic nation (nadnarod sławski) with the corresponding ethnic and regional specific features”* (Stachniuk, 2006b: 151). Only in Poland or Russia, under Stachniuk, a flame of new life can ignite. The philosopher, however, cherishes hopes that the leader of Slavic world will, nevertheless, be the Polish nation, since namely Polish people *“had the deepest and the most dramatic fall under the burden of Judeo-Christian myth”* and therefore is the nation *“that will be the first to manage to overcome innerness and realize unimaginable in its consequences Slavic revolution”* (Stachniuk, 2006b: 171–175).

Fourthly, the realization of historical mission of Poland will have Slavic Empire (*Imperium Stawskie*) as its logical and organizational accomplishment, able to overcome the “sclerosis of inertness” with all the rest fraternal peoples – Czech, Ukrainian, Serbian, Russian and others – and make them a single common-Slavic nation (*nadnarod sławski*). Namely this nation will have enough strength for the first time and ever to suggest the world a special imperialism, extremely moralistic and aimed at attaining the greatest and the most humanistic ideals of mankind. Paradoxically, but the only way to construct this pan-humanist empire is force or revolution, since *“zadruga myth cannot be realized in a conventional evolution increment into inert history. For complete negotiation of inert history, conquering of political power is imperative”* (Stachniuk, 2006b: 172). From here follows the necessity and inevitability of the Slavic revolution (*rewolucji stawskiej*).

It is indicative that Stachniuk directly connects revolutionary transformations and implementation of a new way of life in Slavic empire with religious attitude to the world. For him, the highest human’s religious task is consolidation of living power of existence, permanent filling of its impetuous rhythm with still new energies (Stachniuk, 1996: 66). Therefore, namely in religious-aesthetic sphere, the original essence of Slavic culture can maximally express itself. Correspondingly, the religious life itself will transfigure. First of all, *“the religious sentiment of the released from inertness Poles, Czechs, Slavs in general must create a new Slavic myth from the elements of their cultural-historic traditions”*, on the basis of which a new common Slavic religion appears (*religia zadružna*). An anti-Christian nature and “heroic attitude” will unambiguously be its principle features.

The new religion will be a “hitherward” religion, the religion of a human’s active life position, sound of health and joy, maximal tension of all physical and spiritual strengths. Churches and monasteries will be replaced with stadiums, gyms and institutions of hygiene to sustain and develop *“optimal*

*biophysical form, perfect condition of muscles, nerves, organs for mystic union with the pulsing existence of creativity sphere*" (Stachniuk, 2006b: 163). In its essence, this is a program of neo-pagan rebirth of both religious-ideological system of traditional value priorities and behavioral models. In other words, this is the program of modern Zadruga as a single cultural-and-political, spiritual-and-religious and social-and-economic common-Slavic neo-archaic community.

Precisely because of its obvious neo-archaic and neo-pagan nature, Stachniuk's renaissance project is not popular and is not in demand with the majority of present-day Polish national-oriented circles for which the immutable values are the Catholic values. In this sense, "zadruga project" which is being developed today by the activists of Wrocław publishing "Toporzeł", including Zrzeszenie Rodzimej Wiary, "Niklot", Narodowy Zespół Koncepcyjno-Studiowy, "Szczep Rogate Serce", Zakon Zadrugi "Północny Wiłk" and others that inspire the activity of a number of neo-pagan groups and unions can be regarded as a kind of "ideological counterweight" to Polish Catholic radical-conservative nationalism.

Let us sum up. As shown by the analysis of philosophical-ideological and cultural-political views by Lastoŭski and Stachniuk, already at the first approximation similarities and differences in their positions are obvious.

Among similarities are their conclusions about a dramatic nature and root causes of the crisis processes in national cultures. In general, these causes can be reduced to catastrophic in its historical consequences "external interferences" of European neighbours in Belarusian and Polish nation sovereign life. Namely the centuries-long aggressive political and religious influences (Russian and Polish) on Belarusian culture (Lastoŭski) and west-European on Polish culture (Stachniuk) paralyzed the national spirit and will to self-development. Both authors are seeking for life-giving sources and reascent impulses in the cultural and religious being of their peoples of pre-Christian age. It was there, in the opinion of both authors, foundations of cultural and ethnic identity, carrying vitality and will for national independence developed and conserved: the historical name of the people, their language, the autochthonous (pagan) values, samples of the optimal state system and religious organization.

However, in the simulation of programs for the future national-cultural development, Lastoŭski and Stachniuk clearly dissent. The former, in our view, evolves from the moderate nationalist positions to the more pronounced nationalist platform, at the same time, in whole, however, trying to split European (including Christian) values and imperatives. In Lastoŭski's opinion, the conditions for an independent and prosperous development of Belarusian (Kryvian) ethnos and state are democratic, possibly federal forms of political and legal system, as well as peaceful and equitable coexistence with neighbours and a large-scale national-cultural construction.

As for the J. Stachniuk's project, it is sustained in a more radical, left-centrist tonality and in the present-day context more likely in the ideological field of European "new right-wingers" as the initiators and theoreticians of "new culture" concept (De Herte, 2009). In this project, the ideas of messianism, pan-Slavism and totalitarianism are clearly traced. In addition, the Polish philosopher went down in history as the founder of national thought and apologist for the "neo-pagan cultural turn" (Seradzian) and as an implacable anti-Catholic thinker, questioning and criticizing the whole system of European-Christian axiological constants. The abovementioned specific features of the both national-rebirth projects find their concentrated expression in the centering images-symbols of "Kryvija" and "Zadruga". Assigning the similar specific "perspective-retrospective" vectoriness of the expected socio-dynamics based on the communal-collectivist and patriarchal, pre-Christian dominants, they, however, do not coincide in the content and ideology.

"Kryvija" in different periods of Lastoŭski's activity is supposed either as an independent national mono-state functioning on the basis of democratic values (even though in specific interpretation by the author) in the European geopolitical space, or as autonomous-national socio-cultural and politico-economic entity within the "Baltic federation".

As for "Zadruga", it, as a historic landmark, presupposes a clear-cut imperial-universalist set to "all-Slavic gathering" and Slavic revival. Here, concrete political-economic and tactical aspects of future of social organism are not of primary value, what matters is the significance of this organism as the only proper and messianic in essence totalitarian paradigm of social and cultural development. If the prospect of "Kryvija" sets in the first place their own national and local-historical landmarks to the process of self-identification of Belarusians, then the program of "Zadruga" puts forward the political and ideological values of Slavic unity, Slavic imperialism and Slavic paganism for Poles.

Time has shown the strength and weakness of both the national-renaissance models. Actualization in a new key (namely, in the context of qualitative social-economic and geopolitical transformations of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) of the "national question", the attempt to solve it on the platform of political and government reforms and addressing the origins and specifics of the national-cultural traditions, open debates on national issues in relevant publications — all this can be attributed to the positive aspects of social and political activities of Lastoŭski and Stachniuk.

The most important serious drawback, among others, was their "romantic fascination" with the concepts "people", "Slavic World", "heroism", "collectivism", "popular democracy", "anthropological features", etc. — i.e. with all that is semantically closer to the ideology of "*Völkische Bewegung*" (Potrzebowski, 1982).

Therefore, both concepts can be characterized (chastising or elevating) on various grounds, including in an extremely wide range of socio-political, historical and philosophical theories. In the case of Stachniuk — from National Bolshevism (Seradzan), National Communism and left national signal-revolutionary totalitarianism (Tomaszewicz, 2000) to the right collectivist extremism (Piskorski). In the case of Lastoŭski — from Belarusian anti-fascism (as national response to the 1930s fascism and Nazism), anti-Polish nationalism (Labyntsev) to even historical dilettantism (Fadeev, 2008). But clearly one cannot deny them in one – in original, bold and optimistic looking at the historical future of the Belarusian and Polish peoples.

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