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## Slovenian and Polish Religio-National Mythologies: A Comparative Analysis

MITJA VELIKONJA

### Religio-National Mythology: Some Theoretical Considerations

Nation-building processes in Central and Eastern Europe differed considerably from those in the West: cultural, linguistic and religious elements were of vital importance. This text is intended to analyse, in a comparative manner, Slovenian and Polish religio-national mythologies, and the role of institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church – ‘*Rimsko-katoliška cerkev*’ or ‘*Kościół Rzymsko-Katolicki*’ – in their creation, development and transformation. I shall begin with a comparison of the similarities and notable differences between the historical backgrounds of the two nations, important for this topic, and continue with a comparison of Slovenian and Polish religio-national mythologies.

The methodology I have applied was developed by American sociologist of religion Michael Sells in his analyses of the ‘Christoslavic’ religio-national mythology of the South Slavs involved in the recent Balkan wars (particularly the Serbs). Sells considers this a dominant form of their religio-national mythological self-construction and self-perception. It is my opinion that this approach can also be successfully applied to analyses of the religio-national mythologies of other Slav nations which, historically, were heavily influenced, indeed dominated, by Christianity and different Christian churches.<sup>1</sup> Each of these nations is familiar with a specific form of religio-national mythology, whose two basic beliefs are:

- (1) that Slavs are Christians by nature (Catholic, Orthodox or other Christian denomination: that is, that *being Slav means being Christian*,<sup>2</sup> *Slavs are racially Christian, Christianity – as the faith of their grandfathers – is the only true religion for them*;
- (2) that any conversion from Christianity is a betrayal of the Slavic race: that is, that those who are so converted *are not true Slavs, there is something wrong with them and their national identity, they have betrayed their ancestors*; and that something has to be done to overcome this ‘problem’ (Sells, 1996, pp. 36, 47, 51).

Religio-nationalistic apologists often follow biblical examples in nation-building processes, because, to quote Hastings,

the Bible, moreover, presented in Israel itself a developed model of what it means to be a nation – a unity of people, language, religion, territory and

government. ... an all too obvious exemplar for Bible readers of what every other nation too might be, a mirror for national self-imagining (Hastings, 1997, p. 18).

It is thus clear that their ultimate goal is a monoconfessional, nationally (and, preferably, politically) homogenised state. However, such religio-nationalist visions typical of some integristic elites and interest-groups inside and outside the various churches were/are not shared by all groups of believers within those churches.

In general, I consider religio-national mythology to be an organised, coherent and dynamic system or set of different myths, beliefs, stereotypes, symbols and images about ourselves and others, specifically concerned with national and religious issues. As with every other sociocentric mythology, religio-national mythology speaks, simultaneously, about how we view others (it is the construction and perception of reality), and about how we view ourselves (and it is also self-construction and self-perception).

I believe that mythology has some very practical roles to play and goals to achieve in society; it is a 'key element in the creation of closures and in the constitution of collectivities' (Schöpflin, 1997, p. 20). In a certain way, it is always a political discourse, albeit narrated in a poetic manner. As such, it has three main functions, all of which are also evident in contemporary societies: the integrative function (which is inwardly inclusive and outwardly exclusive); the cognitive function (which interprets the most important past and present events and foretells future events); and the communicative function (which provides specific mythic rhetoric and syntagma).<sup>3</sup> Further, religio-national mythology basically consists of two types of myths, which exist in a strong dialectical interaction:

- (1) traditional myths: these are oriented towards the past; they are owned by a large majority of the group members and are conservative; they are unfinished stories – in Lévi-Strauss' word, 'interminable';<sup>4</sup>
- (2) ideological myths: these are oriented towards the future; they are directed by small pressure groups and are innovative; they provide particular conclusions to the 'openness' of traditional myths (Velikonja, 1996, pp. 19–30, 1998, pp. 14–16, 2003, pp. 6–9).

### **Historical Background of the Development of Slovenian and Polish Religio-National Mythologies**

Generally speaking, both countries can be placed in the 'Latin (or Catholic) religio-cultural pattern', whose main characteristics are: firstly, a Catholic majority and the dominant position of the Catholic Church; and secondly, rigid religious monopolism and a low level of religious tolerance (Smrke, 1996a, pp. 50–56). An analysis of the historical backgrounds of the creation, development, existence and transformation of Slovenian and Polish religio-national mythologies on the one hand, and of their structure on the other, clearly shows, however, that there are more differences than similarities between the two.<sup>5</sup> Some of them derive from the premodern history of both nations, other from the 'century of extremes' (the twentieth century), and some from postsocialist conditions, which are very specific.<sup>6</sup> It is my intention in this article to expose some of the most important historical differences and similarities (diachronic approach) which will enable us to understand the structural specificities (synchronic approach) of contemporary Slovenian and Polish religio-national mythologies.

## The Political and National History of the Slovenes and Poles

### *Ethnogenesis*

The name Poles (*Polaci*) dates from the distant past: during the reign of Mieszko I (960?–992) the *Polanie* ('people of the open fields') were one of several West Slav tribes settled between the Odra and Vistula rivers.<sup>7</sup> The Poles' sense of being one of the most ancient European nations has been reinforced by their distinguished history and their tradition of statehood. The ancestors of the contemporary Slovenes settled on their present territory (which extended across the southern provinces of present-day Austria) towards the end of the sixth century. Although clear evidence of their singular ethnic identity dates from the Middle Ages (the Freising, Stična and Celovec (Klagenfurt) pastoral manuscripts), the name Slovenes (*Slovenci*) was coined only in the mid-sixteenth century by Protestant writer Primož Trubar and meant 'Slavs of the region'. Usage of the name Slovenes or Slovenia became widespread only in the early nineteenth century. Regional and local identities (Carniolans, Carinthians, Styrians, inhabitants of Lower Carniola, the Littoral and so on) were considered more important.

### *Political History*

The case of Poland is one of grandeur and glory: contemporary Polish statehood basks in the legacy of the Piast Kingdom (ca 850–1370/1386) and the Polish-Lithuanian union (1386–1793), known as the Confederation of Warsaw or *Rzeczpospolita* (Commonwealth). Under the Piast, Anjou and Jagiellon dynasties, and later under elected monarchs from different parts of Europe, Poland became one of the greatest and most powerful states in medieval and early modern Europe and, by the mid-seventeenth century, the largest single state on the continent. The memory of this magnificent political and military past is one that is fostered by the Poles, and has given rise to the myth of lost empire and a craving for the restoration of its former glory (*Renovatio Imperii*).<sup>8</sup>

If the Polish national anthem, the '*Mazurka*', begins with the words '*Poland has not perished yet*' ('*Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*'), Slovenia, as an independent state, came into being only in June 1991 (although it enjoyed considerable internal autonomy as a Socialist Republic within the Yugoslav Federation after 1945). The Slovenes do not have a political or military past to match that of the Poles, but nor are they burdened with the myth of lost empire. The first state created by the predecessors of the Slovenes was known as Carantania (*Karantanija*) and was located in what is today the southern Austrian federal province of Carinthia. Carantania came into being in the early seventh century, but by the mid-eighth century had to bow to the supremacy first of the Bavarians and then of the Franks. Since then the Slovenes, and their forefathers before them, have endured under the (in)secure patronage of multinational states: under the German and Austrian Empires until the end of the First World War, and under Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941 and again from 1945 to 1991. Most Slovenes do not view the modern state of Slovenia as a *Carantania Revived* but as a result of the national liberation processes of preceding centuries, which were particularly intense in the twentieth century.

### *Democratic Political Tradition and Ruling Classes*

As a heterogeneous state, Poland enjoyed a relatively long tradition of democracy (a

system of 'democracy of nobles', known as the 'Golden Freedom' ('*Złota Wolność*'); in 1573 Poland became an elective monarchy with legislative rule by the nobility. Slovenian lands, on the other hand, were always part of a greater and, for the most part, autocratic state. Whereas the Poles had their own nobility (*szlachta*), aristocracy, higher and lower clergy, townspeople and bourgeoisie (including peoples from other ethnic groups, such as Germans and Jews), the Slovenes were without a nobility. Before the nineteenth century the nobility and higher bourgeoisie in Slovenian lands were predominantly of German or Italian origin.

### *Life Under and Disposition Towards Foreign Rule*

For almost a century and a half after the partition of their kingdom in the late eighteenth century the Polish people (*lud Polski*) lived as a national and religious minority under Prussian/German Protestant and Russian Orthodox rule, which regarded their national and religious peculiarity with open suspicion. The situation was different in the Habsburg Empire, where no nationality enjoyed an absolute majority and whose rulers were Catholic. Under the Habsburgs and in Yugoslavia, however, the Slovenes were always a national, but not also a religious, minority (in Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church was the second largest church, immediately after the Serbian Orthodox Church).

Whereas armed conflicts, uprisings and brutal repression were common in Poland during this period (1794, 1830–31, 1846, 1848–49, 1863–64, 1905), the Slovenes remained loyal to the Habsburg Empire and both Yugoslavias (Kingdom and Socialist Federation) although they were at the same time critical of them. Their ultimate goal was more the rightful organisation of both states: their demands, articulated for the first time in the 'United Slovenia' political programme of 1848, were for the cultural and administrative unification of the Slovenian lands under the Habsburgs; in Yugoslavia, the strongest Slovenian political forces strove for the decentralisation of the state. Notions of total national independence gained popularity only towards the end of the 1980s and were realised only in the early 1990s.

### *Nationalism*

The history of nationalism in the case of both Poles and Slovenes was determined by the fact that they were surrounded by neighbours who were, more often than not, hegemonistic and whose rule imposed measures of denationalisation. This nationalism turned against them after independence: in comparison with their rich multiethnic history, both countries are now almost completely ethnically homogeneous. It is no coincidence that several very similar slogans appeared during the pre-independence period in both countries: slogans such as '*Poland for the Poles*' and '*Return to the Poles everything that is Polish*' appeared after 1918 and were directed against Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, Lithuanians and Russians; the slogan '*Slovenia for the Slovenes*'<sup>9</sup> was directed against non-Slovenes – that is, immigrants from other former Yugoslav republics.

By contrast, Slovenes and Poles had quite different experiences of antisemitism. The Polish-Lithuanian kingdom was renowned for its religious tolerance towards the Jews (occasionally being referred to as '*Paradise for the Jews*' or the '*Second Palestine*'). The Jewish community in Poland numbered 2.7 million in 1931 and 3.35 million in 1939. Antisemitic sentiment, activities and pogroms intensified during this interwar period: the second half of the 1930s witnessed an increase in antisemitism

which enjoyed the backing of the state (imposing *numerus clausus*) and Catholic authorities;<sup>10</sup> right-wing politician Roman Dmowski was one such ideologue (Modras, 1994, pp. 23–24; Brock, 1994, p. 364; Crampton, 1995, pp. 172–76). In these circles Jews were associated with communism, masonry, liberalism, secularism, internationalism and other *immanent antinational or anti-Catholic ideologies*. One of the most notorious pogroms – which has recently provoked heated debate<sup>11</sup> – took place in the village of Jedwabne in July 1941, where local Poles torched 1600 Jews because of their alleged collaboration during the brief Soviet occupation.

The *Paradise for the Jews* turned into *Purgatory* and then into *Hell*. The fate of Polish Jews under the Nazi occupation is well documented: only about 11 per cent (370,000) survived. Over the ensuing decades their numbers declined steadily because of emigration to Israel and western countries, antisemitic pressure and pogroms (the most notorious cases being those in Kielce (42 dead), Kraków, Radom and Sosnowiec immediately after the war; antisemitic harassment in 1956; and antisemitic propaganda and campaigning in 1968, when thousands of Polish Jews fled the country).<sup>12</sup> Postsocialist Poland is faced with a curious phenomenon, namely ‘anti-semitism without Jews’ (Mojzes, 1992, p. 305): myths about *Jewish conspiracies* are common among right-wing parties and organisations – during election campaigns,<sup>13</sup> for example – as well as among some Roman Catholic clergy (the controversy surrounding the huge cross which was secretly erected in Auschwitz in 1989,<sup>14</sup> the Jankowski case<sup>15</sup> and so on).

The Habsburg Emperor Maximilian issued several decrees expelling the Jews from Slovenian lands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Only a few hundred Jews have lived on the territory since. The majority may be found in Prekmurje, the easternmost part of Slovenia (and historically part of the Hungarian Kingdom), and in major cities such as Ljubljana, Maribor, Trieste and Gorizia. Nevertheless, antisemitic stereotypes and remarks by right-wing Slovenian politicians and the right-wing press were common until the end of the Second World War. Nearly all the remaining Jews were liquidated during the last months of the war with the assistance of the Slovenian collaborationist police.

### *The Second World War and Collaboration*

In line with the doctrines of the Nazis and their strategy of expansion East and South to the Mediterranean Sea, both nations of *Slavic subhumans* were – in addition to the Jews and Gypsies – first on the list for complete annihilation. Whereas there was practically no Polish collaboration with the occupiers,<sup>16</sup> many Slovenes collaborated with Italian and German forces, and this resulted in a fratricidal war with the Partisan resistance. There were two types of military units: between the spring of 1942 and September 1943 the Voluntary Anticommunist Militia (*Prostovoljna protikomunistična milica*) was under direct Italian military command; and between the autumn of 1943 and May 1945 the Home Guards (*Domobranci*) were under German command.

Polish units fought on different war fronts, from the September War to the Battle of Britain, from the Warsaw Uprising to Monte Cassino, serving in the partisan units of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) and the People’s Army (*Armia Ludowa*). In Slovenia, resistance against the occupation was supported by the majority of the population: between 26 April 1941 and early March 1943, when the communists assumed command, the Liberation Front was a pluralist organisation (comprising communists, christian socialists, patriotic intelligentsia, the *Sokol* organisation and

others). The resistance and partisan forces were very strong in both countries: but whereas Poland was liberated by the Soviet Army, Slovenia was liberated almost solely by Slovenian partisans, with the assistance of units from other parts of Yugoslavia.

### *The Socialist Regime*

Socialism came to Poland after the war from the neighbouring Soviet Union but was not accepted by the majority of the population. Although described as '*National Communism*' during the Bolesław Bierut era (1947–56), the Polish Socialist regime was regarded as having been 'imported' and on some occasions secured with the use of force (as in Poznań in 1956 or in Gdańsk in 1970).<sup>17</sup> For this reason, the leading political force – the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*) – enjoyed no particular respect. In Slovenia, national liberation coincided with the socialist revolution. The socialist regime in Slovenia (and in Yugoslavia in general) changed its style of governance from totalitarianism to authoritarianism in the 1960s, and was generally held in higher esteem by the population than its Polish counterpart because of its characteristics: its defection from Stalin and the Eastern bloc in 1948, 'Socialist Self-Management', its relatively liberal nature, greater openness to western influence, and a standard of living significantly higher than in other socialist countries.

### *The Process of Democratisation in the 1980s*

The most important factors contributing to the democratisation of Polish society in the 1980s were trade unions, and later the broader Solidarity movement (*Solidarność*), and its predecessor the Workers' Defence Committee (*Komitet Obrony Robotników* (KOR) from 1976), and the Catholic Church. The latter often intervened as an intermediary in the strained dialogue between the Solidarity movement and the regime; it spoke out on behalf of workers and demanded political freedom. Although the new primate of Poland, Józef Cardinal Glemp, made assurances to the effect that the Catholic Church had no intention of becoming a 'third power' but merely wanted to serve (Chrypinski, 1989, p. 256), and that it should avoid politics (Monticone, 1986, p. 185), the strong political relationship between both opposition forces was obvious.

Here are some examples. In summer 1980 the entrance of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk was decorated with the inscription '*Workers of All Factories Unite!*' and a large colour photograph of Pope John Paul II (Stefanović, 1980, p. 45). Solidarity's first national congress in the same city in September 1981 was opened with a mass celebrated by Cardinal Glemp. In the first Article of its 1985 programme we find that '*the Solidarity Trade Union is the heir ... to the ethical principles of Christianity, and in particular the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*', whilst Article 13 of the programme refers to the church as '*the highest moral authority*' in Poland (Lisicka, 1992, pp. 162–63, see also Kubik, 1994, pp. 183–238). As Monticone (1986, pp. 112–14) points out, the role of the Catholic Church in the Solidarity movement was twofold: it provided a religious background and served as a political adviser. The situation in Slovenia in the 1980s differed starkly: historian Božo Repe (2002, pp. 98, 99) shows that the Catholic Church was 'ready to sacrifice much, including its open support for the opposition' for the sake of being in 'partnership' with the regime after the difficult postwar period. Protagonists of the democratisation process were civil

society movements, publications,<sup>18</sup> influential associations (such as the Slovenian Writers' Association), independent intellectuals, youth movements, punks. The Catholic Church – with the exception of a few individual theologians – did not play a significant role.<sup>19</sup>

## The Religious History of the Slovenes and Poles

### *Christianisation and Early Centres of Christianity*

The christianisation of the forefathers of the contemporary Poles came relatively late: the baptism of Prince Mieszko I in 966 was in successive centuries interpreted as the '*Christianisation of Poland*', although Christianity had arrived in that area much earlier.<sup>20</sup> The forefathers of the Slovenes were converted to Christianity in the eighth century by missionaries from Salzburg and Aquilea.<sup>21</sup> Whereas there were ecclesiastical centres of Christianity in Poland from the very beginning – the Archdiocese of Gniezno (the '*Cradle of Polish Christianity*', established in 1000), and the dioceses of Poznań (966) and Kraków (1000) – the forefathers of the Slovenes had to look to neighbouring countries (Salzburg and Aquilea) for their early centres of Christianity. Over the ensuing centuries, the Catholic Church became one of the biggest land-owners in both countries.

### *Religious Leaders and Prominent Religious Personalities*

In the middle and early modern ages Poland had powerful and (politically) able high-ranking religious dignitaries.<sup>22</sup> The Slovenes, however, had practically no high-ranking clergy until the nineteenth century: one of the rare exceptions was Bishop Tomaž Hren of Ljubljana, who led the Catholic Counter-Reformation in Slovenia. Low-ranking Catholic clergymen were of local origin and were among the few educated Slovenes: poets, scholars, linguists, historians.<sup>23</sup> Slovenian Protestant scholars<sup>24</sup> from the second half of the sixteenth century were particularly important: they were the first to write, translate and print books – including the Bible – in the Slovenian language and attempted to establish an educational system in the parishes.

### *Religious Pluralism/Monism*

During first 150 years of the Commonwealth Poland represented an outstanding and exceptional example of religious freedom and tolerance in Europe.<sup>25</sup> This tradition gave rise to such epithets as '*New Babylon*' or '*Haven of Toleration*', and was an extraordinary phenomenon in an age when clerical despotism was predominant in most of Europe and the exclusivist principle *cuius regio eius religio* reigned supreme. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church did not enjoy a religious monopoly in Polish society, which was also inhabited by Jews, Orthodox Christians, Uniates, Lutherans, Calvinists, Armenians, Muslim Tartars and others.<sup>26</sup> The only major example of inter-religious war in Poland was that against the Hussites (Taborites) who had also settled in Poland and were defeated by Catholic forces in 1439. The Catholic Church was not supported by the secular power: there was neither religious persecution nor fanaticism (as elsewhere in Europe), the methods of the Inquisition were largely avoided, and few Poles joined the Crusades. Polish kings such as Sigismund III Vasa and his son Władysław IV (between the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries) provide examples of religious tolerance.<sup>27</sup>



In the Slovenian lands the sole exception to the monolithic hegemony of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in the religious field was the shortlived Protestant Reformation between the 1520s and the end of the sixteenth century when the two churches coexisted. While the Protestants – who attempted to establish a provincial church organisation, the ‘Slovenian Church’ – slowly became a majority in the towns and among the nobility, the peasants largely remained Catholic. Radical Protestant sects – the Anabaptists – were persecuted by both Lutherans and Catholics. However, the Catholic Church in Slovenia successfully attacked and reversed the gains of the Reformation with the help of well-coordinated political and military Habsburg campaigns<sup>28</sup> which, however, were for the most part bloodless. Religious uniformity was imposed because the state had a relatively strong central executive authority. In short, the decisive factor in the religious dynamics of the Slovenes was secular power: the Toleration Act was adopted only in 1781 (1773 in the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom) and it took decades to be implemented in practical terms. Some Catholic circles invariably maintained that the Slovenes would be germanised if they remained Protestant and that recatholicisation in fact saved their ‘Sloveneness’. This is, of course, mere speculation if not complete nonsense.<sup>29</sup> The only remnant of Protestants from that time is a small community in the easternmost part of Slovenia (numbering today approximately 20,000), which was in the Hungarian part of the Empire.

Whereas the clerical despotism of the Habsburgs promoted the ‘union of the altar with the throne’, pre-partition Polish rulers identified neither themselves nor the state with Catholicism. In contrast to the situation in the Slovenian lands, ‘militant bishops did not have the support of either King or Sejm and could not use state institutions to enforce their wishes ... conflict with the Protestants was, at most, sporadic, and rarely violent’ (Davies, 1981, vol. I, pp. 166–67). Jesuits were introduced into Poland in 1564 but their presence was less important than in other countries: they did not even have a monopoly in the educational field.

According to Davies (1981, vol. I, pp. 197–98), the triumph of the Counter-Reformation in Poland was largely attributable to ‘arbitrary or external factors’: territories inhabited by Protestants or Orthodox Christians were lost; Calvinists converted to Catholicism rather than to Lutheranism during the Swedish wars in the late 1620s and 1650s; Protestants were under attack from the Muscovites and Ukrainian Cossacks. Thus ‘the work of the Counter Reformers was actually performed by their opponents’. Conversely, Ramet (1987, pp. 58–59) emphasises that the main factors were ‘intrinsic’: the lack of organisation and cooperation among Protestant churches; failure to take root among the peasantry; and failure to produce intellectual spokesmen of the same calibre as the Catholics.

### *Ambiguous Relations with the Holy See*

During the partition period the Curia was opposed and occasionally even hostile to the ‘Polish cause’. Popes such as Clement XIV, Pius VI, Gregory XVI, Pius IX and Leo XIII held ultraconservative positions: they approved the partitions and/or condemned Polish insurrections in 1794 and throughout the nineteenth century. The maintenance of the Holy Alliance was their first diplomatic priority. Thus they ordered the Polish clergy to remain loyal and to cooperate with three different occupiers. Their orders were effective mostly among the higher clergy (Piekarski, 1978, pp. 45–55; Ramet, 1987, p. 62; Chrypinski, 1990, p. 118; Modras, 1994, pp. 19–20, 340; Davies, 1981, vol. II, pp. 212–13). Further, the Curia only rarely

protested against pressures and violence against Catholics and Uniates in occupied territories. It also failed to intervene during the Second World War despite numerous reports from the Polish clergy; on the contrary, the pope consigned the ecclesiastical administration of some Polish territory to German bishops. On these occasions the Curia was clearly acting against Polish national interests.

The Slovenes, as a small nation bordering Italy and invariably part of larger states, enjoyed no special attention from the Holy See. However, the Vatican supported democratic changes in both countries in the 1980s: it was also one of the first states to recognise independent Slovenia.

### *Patriotic Clergy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*

In both cases, the Catholic Church served as a national church which resisted the pressures of the ruling power (the Germans and Russians in the case of the Poles,<sup>30</sup> and the Germans and Italians in the case of the Slovenes) and, in the Polish case, of their churches as well (Orthodox in territories occupied by Russia and Protestant in territories occupied by Prussia/Germany). Representing one of the few remaining bastions of national identity – the Polish *szlachta* having been impoverished or eliminated – the lower ranks of the clergy in particular expressed their patriotism, had high national aspirations and took part in insurgencies. Because of this they were often kept under strict control and even persecuted: for example, over 1000 Polish priests were exiled to hard labour in Siberia between 1864 and 1914 (Modras, 1994, p. 19; Davies, 1981, vol. II, p. 217); Catholics and, in particular, Uniates (Pankowitz, 1995, p. 162; Ramet, 1987, p. 60; Davies, 1981, vol. II, pp. 86–87) were oppressed; Uniate dioceses were abolished; their churches were taken over by the Orthodox, their property was confiscated, their books were burned and their convents closed.<sup>31</sup> In the German part of Poland monastic orders were abolished and property was confiscated; starting with the *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s Catholic clergymen were strictly supervised and a number were imprisoned (Ramet, 1987, p. 61; Davies, 1981, vol. II, p. 127).

Among the more important nationally-minded Slovenian priests of the time were: Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek of Maribor, author of the maxim '*protect two things most precious to Slovenes: the holy Catholic faith and the Slovenian language*'; Matija Majar Ziljski, one of the founders of the 'United Slovenia' programme in 1848; and conservatives Anton Mahnič and Aleš Ušeničnik. The first Slovenian grammar school was founded by the Catholic Church (by Bishop Anton Bonaventura Jeglič of Ljubljana) in 1905.<sup>32</sup> The majority of these clergymen linked Slovenian national identity to Catholicism. In the case of both the Poles and the Slovenes the clergy, together with other important patriotic groups (such as the secular intelligentsia, writers and the nationally-minded bourgeoisie), were able to preserve and even strengthen the national tradition and language under foreign domination. However, there were also cases of clergymen collaborating with the occupiers.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Impact of the Church on Politics in the First Decades of the Twentieth Century*

During this period there coexisted different currents within the Catholic Church, the most powerful religious institution in both countries.<sup>34</sup> Exclusivist circles were intolerant of smaller religious denominations, such as the Jews, liberal Catholics, free-thinkers, secularists, atheists and leftists and, increasingly, of parliamentary democracy as well. For example, '*schismatics*' were harassed during the first Polish

republic, and some of their churches and monasteries were destroyed or seized by the Catholic Church (in the immediate postwar years<sup>35</sup> and during the late 1930s<sup>36</sup>); anti-semitism, including notions of collectively expelling the Jews from Poland (Modras, 1994, p. 283), and theories of *Jewish–masonic–communist conspiracies* were also widespread. Secularism was in some integristic circles treated as *'the plague of our times'*, to paraphrase Pope Pius XI.

The Polish constitutions of 1921 and 1935 guaranteed the Catholic Church, as the faith of the *'overwhelming majority of the people'*, a *'leading position'* among equal religious communities, whilst the adoption of the Concordat in April 1925 (annulled in 1945) secured additional advantages. There were clear indications of the privileged position of the Catholic Church on the one hand (for the first time in Polish history) and of religious discrimination against other denominations on the other (Piekarski, 1978, pp. 11–12, 62; Monticone, 1986, p. 11; Chrypinski, 1990, p. 118; Davies, 1981, vol. II, pp. 419–20).

The situation was quite similar in interwar Slovenia where, under conditions of distinct political and ideological polarisation, the Catholic Church reinforced its position with a medley of different organisations, media, and mass manifestations and celebrations (Pelikan, 1997; Dragoš, 1998). In particular, the communists and liberals came under attack because they were viewed as a threat to the Catholic Church and the nation.<sup>37</sup> However, liberal Catholics – Edvard Kocbek's christian socialists – were also under pressure from conservative and integrist circles because of their anti-dogmatism, anticorporativism and sympathies with the political left. As was often the case in Poland, the anticlericalism of the liberal Catholics was neither antireligious nor anti-Catholic.

The respect, influence and dominance of the Catholic Church in interwar Poland notwithstanding, there were practically no priests among the top political leadership. In Slovenia some of the most powerful political personalities between the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the Second World War were Catholic priests. These were leaders and prominent members of the pro-Catholic Slovenian Peasant Party (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*).<sup>38</sup> In the words of sociologist Kerševan (1996, p. 167) it was a time of *'over-clericalised politics and a politicised Church'*.

### *The Conduct of the Catholic Church during the Second World War*

During the Second World War the Catholic Church in Poland was severely oppressed by the Nazi occupying forces: several bishops and approximately 2800 priests lost their lives, two thirds of the clergy were imprisoned, and some churches were destroyed or turned into arms depots, for example. Many priests joined the Partisan resistance and Polish units across Europe, and some were even decorated.

The situation was much more complicated in Slovenia. Catholic clergymen were persecuted in those parts occupied by German and Hungarian forces; patriotic clergy in the Littoral region, which was awarded to Italy in 1918, resisted the Fascists and Italianisation. Many priests actively aided the Partisans and joined their units, or sympathised with the liberation movement. In the Italian-administered Province of Ljubljana, however, Bishop Grigorij Rožman welcomed the invaders in 1941 and pledged absolute loyalty to their forces. In the years that followed he and a section of the clergy advocated the formation of antipartisan Slovenian forces under the military command of the occupiers and helped to organise them in – as was explained – a *'Crusade against godless communism and partisans'*. Antipartisan troops were labelled *'Christ's soldiers'* and told that they were fighting *'in the sign of Christ and*

*the Cross*'. At the end of the war about 275 compromised or zealously anticommunist priests and seminarians, including Rožman (Dolinar, 1998, p. 224), left the country to find refuge in Argentina, the United States, Italy and other western countries. According to Catholic sources 237 priests, seminarians, monks and nuns were killed between 1940 and 1962.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Catholic Church and the Socialist Regime*

The postwar positions of the Catholic Church in Slovenia and Poland differed significantly. In the case of the latter, the church remained highly respected and preserved its status as chief moral arbiter of the nation and focal point of the opposition. Between 1945 and 1947 it instructed believers how to vote. It repeatedly demanded that the state respect Christian principles and asserted that '*Poland can not be godless ... , should not be Communist and must remain Catholic*' (Piekarski, 1978, pp. 88–92; see also Monticone, 1986, p. 14; Chrypinski, 1990, p. 122; Mojzes, 1992, pp. 281–82). After the communist takeover the church avoided drastic actions, but simultaneously became the 'principal popular counterweight to an unpopular régime' (Davies, 1981, vol. II, p. 225).

The separation of the church and its affairs from the state by the communists was a precedent in the recent history of both nations. Although guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion, in practice the attitude toward religious communities and religion in general was in both cases unfavourable and initially brutal: it included (in)formal pressure, censorship, surveillance, persecution and imprisonment of most anticommunist clerics,<sup>40</sup> systematic antireligious and antichurch propaganda, and the nationalisation of property and large land tenures (1950 in Poland, and 1945, 1946 and 1958 in Slovenia). Religious instruction was abolished from the Polish curriculum in 1961 and the Slovenian curriculum in 1953 (and the Faculty of Theology was expelled from the University of Ljubljana). On the one hand, secularisation was enforced (by the communist régime), whilst on the other, it was a spontaneous result of rapid modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation and improvement in the educational structures of both countries.

Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in socialist Poland and Slovenia/Yugoslavia was under less pressure than were most religions in Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Albania and some other socialist countries (Davies, 1981, vol. II, p. 581; Chadwick, 1992, p. 181). Repe (2002, p. 97) emphasises that the Slovenian socialist regime 'was in regard to the [Catholic] Church in general the most liberal in Yugoslavia', but that 'there were also periods when it was more harsh than others'. Well aware that the Poles held the church in high esteem, the communists allowed the functioning of some prewar and, eventually, newly-established Catholic institutions, groupings and media, as well as the Catholic University of Lublin (reopened in September 1944) and the Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw (1954); chaplains were appointed to the army, prisons and hospitals. The Catholic Church took some appreciable steps, such as the conciliatory 'Letter of the Polish Bishops' to the German nation in 1965.

After the first few years of open conflict, the Catholic Church in Poland found a *modus vivendi* with the new régime: both sides recognised the autonomy of the other in their own spheres and agreed not to interfere with each other. Fierce antagonism between the two lasted until 1956, when it was replaced by what Mojzes (1992, pp. 289–93) has aptly described as 'caged freedom'. Relative normalisation of relations took place only in the 1970s (Piekarski, 1978, pp. 104, 182; Monticone, 1986, pp. 52–105). Even the communists began publicly to recognise the important

role of the Catholic Church in Polish history and viewed it as a partner in political and social debates. Tension and suspicion continued, however. The election of the charismatic Karol Cardinal Wojtyła of Kraków as pope in 1978 and his triumphant five-day trip to Poland in June 1979<sup>41</sup> (and again in 1983 and 1987) helped to strengthen the overwhelming prestige of the Catholic Church and arouse new hope for change.<sup>42</sup> In the 1980s the church outgrew its moral and societal role and became one of the primary centres of political life (Lisicka, 1992, p. 156). This was recognised even by the communist regime: the Party itself ‘declared in 1987 that it felt “more affinity with the social teachings of the Church ... than with Marxism”’ (Kubik, 1994, p. 103).

In Slovenia the Catholic Church lost much of its esteem and popularity and became socially marginalised because of its predominantly clericalist prewar position and the wartime collaboration of some parts of the clergy, and also because of fervent antichurch propaganda in the first postwar years. However, as in Poland, the period of conflict was succeeded by a period of compromises and even accommodation (Roter, 1976; Dolinar, 1998, pp. 227–30).

### *The Catholic Church in the Postsocialist Era*

Religion played a paradoxical role in Eastern Central Europe: although it contributed to the process of democratisation, it also acted as an undemocratic force, predominantly in Catholic countries (Schöpflin, 1993, pp. 520–21). Nevertheless, one thing is for certain: the 1990s witnessed the ‘rebirth of the church as a public phenomenon’, to quote Jarosław Gowin (1999), editor of the liberal and modernist Catholic journal *Znak*. Today there are different currents and views within the church in both countries: from modernist to traditionalist, from open and conciliatory to fundamentalist.

According to the secretary-general of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek (Pieronek, 1998; see also Eberts and Torok, 2001, pp. 142, 143), the Catholic Church in Poland should avoid direct political involvement. In reality, however, the situation is quite different: self-confident and secure, the church enjoys a nearly monopolistic position in religion and has a powerful influence on political developments and everyday life. Cardinal Glemp was even at one time calling for ‘*unanimist democracy*’ (Michel, 1994, p. 126). Despite the church’s self-declared neutrality the clergy openly helped Solidarity win the elections in 1989; in the 1991 elections the clergy explicitly (even forcibly) instructed believers to vote for right-wing parties.<sup>43</sup> The Catholic lobby in the *Sejm* (parliament) achieved some important results, such as a ban on abortion, assurances of ‘*respect for Christian values*’ in the mass media (1992) and the denationalisation of church property. In July 1993 a Concordat between Poland and the Vatican was signed by outgoing prime minister Hanna Suchocka, but was ratified by the *Sejm* only in January 1998. All this led to the conclusion that ‘this Church repeatedly tries to dominate the democratic process rather than participate as one partner among many’ (Davie, 2000, p. 57; see also p. 21). For these reasons Ramet describes contemporary Polish society as ‘democratic but not liberal’.<sup>44</sup>

Some political groups and personalities, for example Lech Wałęsa, have openly utilised religious (Catholic) argumentation, legitimation and imagery for their political ends (Michel, 1994, p. 29; Borowik, 1999, p. 12; Pace, 1994, p. 144). Fundamentalist and often chauvinistic positions are promoted by the popular Catholic radio station *Radio Maryja* (established in 1992, it covers 80 per cent of Polish

territory and has approximately five million listeners)<sup>45</sup> and adherents of Bishop Marcel Lefebvre ('Lefebvrist'). There are approximately 60 local Catholic radio stations, as well as the central *Radio Porozumenie Plus*, which has approximately three million listeners and is supported by the Catholic Church. There is also a Catholic press agency, a television channel (*Niepokalanow*) and numerous printed publications and publishers.

The political role of the church, however, should not be overestimated: some of its political escapades ended in failure. Prior to the presidential elections of 1995 bishops addressed a pastoral letter to the people urging them not to vote for anyone who had held high office under the communist regime; this message was directed solely against one candidate, Aleksander Kwaśniewski,<sup>46</sup> who was nevertheless elected (and continues to enjoy great popularity).<sup>47</sup> The bishops also supported the rejection of the new constitution, which was eventually adopted in the 1997 referendum. Finally, the Polish pontiff had to intervene personally in 1997 and explicitly order Polish bishops not to interfere in politics.

As Gowin (1999) points out, the Poland of the 1990s was faced not with the crisis of faith, but with the crisis of the authority of the Catholic Church as an institution; its major mistake in postsocialist Poland was its 'political engagement'. He openly characterises it as 'clerical', whilst Ramet (2001) considers its hierarchy and clergy 'overwhelmingly conservative'. In the first two years of democracy confidence in the Catholic Church dropped from 87.8 per cent in 1989 to 73.5 per cent the following year and to a mere 52.9 per cent in 1991 (Borowik, 1994, pp. 43–44). In a survey conducted by the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* in 1998, 60 per cent of Poles thought the church's influence in public life was too great.<sup>48</sup> While in November 1992, 81.3 per cent of Poles opposed the church's direct participation in politics, this percentage had increased to 85.8 by the spring of 1996 (Eberts and Torok, 2001, p. 137 (footnote 28), p. 142).

For reasons mentioned above, the role of the Catholic Church in contemporary Slovenian social and political life has been less significant, although it has made unambiguous attempts to regain its prewar influence. Before the 1990 and 1994 elections it openly displayed its political preferences and advised believers on how to vote.<sup>49</sup> As in Poland, however, religious affiliation does not reflect itself in political decisions and the daily customs and views<sup>50</sup> of the people; election results in both countries clearly show that Catholics vote autonomously. Research in Slovenia in 1991 revealed that 25.5 per cent of respondents 'completely agreed' (and 5.6 per cent 'completely disagreed') with the thesis that 'the highest church prelates should not influence the electoral decisions of people'; these percentages increased in 1997 to 61 ('completely agreed') and 12.9 ('completely disagreed') (Flere, 2001, p. 37). Currently the main issues in Slovenia concern the educational system – the introduction of religious instruction in state schools and kindergartens – and the denationalisation process. Whereas the Catholic Church in Poland succeeded in including religious instruction and prayer in classrooms in September 1990 – and, according to Polish sociologist Jerzy Wiatr, the educational system remains its priority<sup>51</sup> – the church in Slovenia has not succeeded in doing the same. The church in Slovenia has had a thriving press and media throughout the 1990s (including the *Ognjišče* radio station, while television channel TV3 was partly owned by one of its dioceses), and religious programmes are broadcast on national radio and television.

### The Structure of Polish and Slovenian Religio-National Mythologies

Contemporary Polish and Slovenian religio-national mythologies are derived from the

historical backgrounds and present situations mentioned earlier. As in other post-communist mythologies, 'their principal function is to unify the public discourse and provide the citizen with an easily recognisable source of identity as a part of a vaguely defined ethnic (or political) community' (Tismaneanu, 1998, p. 7).

The most important myths – which, however, are not equally represented in the two cases – are as follows.

### *Catholic Nations : The 'Immanent Catholicism' of the Slovenes and Poles*

In the 1990s hackneyed constructs such as 'all has come and gone, only the Church remains' reappeared, first implying the notion that the Catholic faith and church are the only possible prospective religious choices for the Poles or Slovenes, and, second, reaffirming the church's dogmas regarding its authority and infallibility. In both religio-national mythologies, religious and national identities are simply equated and both nations are seen as Catholic ('*Polakatolik*',<sup>52</sup> '*Polonus Catholicus*', '*there are no Slovenes but Catholic Slovenes*'<sup>53</sup>). Only after the partitions did the Catholic Church and faith gain epithets such as '*Polish national institution*', '*the Church on the Vistula*', '*the tower of Polishness*', '*the Polish Church*', '*the Polish religion*': portrayed as a monolithic nation-saving institution, it gained power, respect and trust among the Polish people. In Cardinal Wyszyński's ecclesiological concept of '*the Church of the Nation*' the relationship between nation and church is as close as that between body and soul; according to this '*theology of the Nation*', the nation is a product of natural development with God as its primary source.<sup>54</sup> In short, Polish Catholicism grew up national(istic) in its character: fidelity to the Catholic Church become synonymous with allegiance to the nation (Monticone, 1986, pp. 1–3; Nowicka, 1997, pp. 82, 83; Chrypinski, 1989, p. 241, 1990, p. 125.)

According to the integrist logic that '*there are only as many good Poles/Slovenes as there are good Catholics*',<sup>55</sup> other religious denominations and churches and the atheist population within and outside Polish/Slovenian society are treated with suspicion (as being non- or even counter-national); secularisation is treated as an extreme hazard to national existence. This attitude is an open insult to non-Catholic Slovenes/Poles and non-Slovenian/Polish Catholics in Slovenia/Poland. Not being a Catholic is regarded as a possibility, but for individuals only, and definitely not as part of a collective phenomenon. Bishop Pieronek (1998), for example, recently declared that 'many had started to equate Poles with Catholics, but in fact this was not always true since different individual beliefs have always been found in Poland'. Mythological explanations and rhetoric of this kind are more common in Poland than in Slovenia: religious and national symbols – the crucifix and the white eagle – are displayed side by side in public places, many public manifestations or festivals begin with a mass, objects are blessed, '*masses for the homeland*'<sup>56</sup> are celebrated.

### *The Bulwark: Different from our Neighbours*

The Poles lived in a predominantly (and often hostile and cruel) non-Catholic environment: among Orthodox Ukrainians, Russians<sup>57</sup> and Belorussians, Protestant Swedes and Prussians/Germans,<sup>58</sup> Muslim Tatars and (until 1386) pagan Lithuanians. For this reason, their country was often seen as the '*antemurale Christianitatis*',<sup>59</sup> '*Przedmurze Chrześcijaństwa*', the last bastion of western civilisation.<sup>60</sup> They perceived themselves as a front line against pagan Prussians and Lithuanians, then against Muslim Tatars and Ottomans and Russian schismatics, and then, in the

interwar period, against the '*plague of communism*' and Nazi neopaganism; and finally, as Davies (1997, p. 156) has recently pointed out, Poland has now become a 'frontier zone of NATO'.

The '*antemurale*' phrase has been repeated in modern times, for example in the sermons of the traditionalist Cardinal Wyszyński and during the Millennium celebrations when Poland was labelled the '*bulwark of Christianity and western culture*'. For Wyszyński the Catholicism of the masses was the best weapon for fighting communism (Miłosz, 1999). A specific modification of this centuries-old myth in the 1990s is the fear in some Catholic circles of the '*influence of atheisation from the West*' on Polish society. In contrast to those in Slovenia, Polish opponents of membership of the EU seem well organised and outspoken, with access to the media and public demonstrations.

In the case of Slovenia, whose neighbours are all predominantly Catholic, myths of '*antemurale Christianitatis*' or bastion of Latin Christendom failed to emerge. Other factors, such as language and cultural heritage (Debeljak, 1998, pp. 20, 21), were more important in the nation-building process. The bulwark myth emerged in a different, 'cultural', sense: according to some nationalists, Slovenia is the last outpost of '*European culture*' against '*balkanism*', '*orientalism*' or '*byzantinism*'.<sup>61</sup> However, for the contemporary Slovenian Catholic Archbishop Rode, the church is the '*Bulwark of freedom*'.

#### *The Chosen Ones: Religio-National Messianism*

The myth of being chosen by God for a special mission emerged among various Slavic nations, including the Russians, Slovaks<sup>62</sup> and Serbs. Messianism of this kind has also been a prominent theme in Polish religio-national mythology since the partitions (Plumyene, 1982, pp. 169–87; Modras, 1994, pp. 18, 21): the Poles have been portrayed as '*the Christ among Nations*' ('*Chrystus narodów*'), '*the Suffering Nation*', and their history as similar to the Calvary story. Poland's duty is to carry the light of civilisation to the East, according to some messianic visions; according to others it is to regenerate the whole of European culture. Slogans like '*Deo et Patriae*', '*Polonia semper fidelis*', '*Narod z Kościołem*' were particularly popular among nineteenth-century Polish patriotic and romantic poets and writers;<sup>63</sup> however, they continue to be coined in recent history too ('*Sacrum Poloniae Millennium*' in 1966, for example). During his first return visit to Poland in 1979 Pope John Paul II emphasised in Częstochowa (in '*the sanctuary of the nation*', as he called it) that '*We must hear the echo of the Nation's life in the Heart of Its Mother and Queen!*' (Kubik, 1994, pp. 108, 142).

The Slovenes never perceived themselves as an elected nation: there were no constructs such as '*Holy Slovenia*' (although similar integristic slogans, such as '*Mother, Fatherland, God*', '*God Bless Slovenia*' or '*Nation beloved of God*' were popular in prewar and Second World War right-wing political and Catholic circles and continue to be heard to the present day). Slavism was also emphasised<sup>64</sup> in nineteenth-century Slovenian patriotic poems. Instead of Catholic exclusivity and a fate of suffering, however, what has emerged is the notion of 'culture': in the messianic words of the publicist Josip Vidmar from 1932, Slovenia must become '*what it is already by its nature – the temple of fairness and reason*', and Slovenes will create '*on their territory a New Athens or a New Florence*' (Vidmar, 1995, p. 92).



*Vox Populi Vox Dei: Mythic Interpretations of Historical Developments*

Throughout Polish history a number of dramatic historical events have been portrayed as 'miracles', the 'work of Providence' and 'proof of heavenly protection'. In this kind of mytho-poetics, political and military events are not merely explained but also justified and legitimised. For example, the Siege of Vienna in 1683 was interpreted as having been won by God: the triumphant John III Sobieski wrote to the pope: 'Veni, Vidi, Deus Vicit' ('I came, I saw, God conquered'). The partitions of Poland, *Finis Poloniae*, were seen as divine retribution and interpreted as 'Babylonian Captivity', 'Descent into the Tomb' or a 'Journey through Hell': the punished nation must suffer – thus purifying itself – and only then shall it be ready to rise from the ashes, cleansed and renewed. In other words, 'the Polish nation is the chosen one because it has suffered so much without being guilty of wrongdoing' (Mojzes, 1992, p. 276). The Holy Virgin became the 'Victress' after 'saving' the monastery of Jasna Góra from a Swedish siege in 1655 and the Polish army in the battle for Warsaw on Assumption Day, 15 August, 1920 ('Cud nad Wisłą', the 'Miracle on the Vistula') Similar explanations may be found in the preamble to the Constitution of 1921.<sup>65</sup>

Such examples are rare in Slovenia. However, executed anticommunists and collaborators during and after the Second World War have recently been persistently named 'martyrs' by some right-wing politicians, Catholic dignitaries and publications, while according to them the Catholic Church in Slovenia should be called the 'Church of the Martyrs' (Pust et al., 1994, p. 447).

*Alone Among Villains: The Demonisation of 'Adversaries'*

An important part of every political mythology is the portrayal of the enemy and his conspiracies: in this respect, I find the first part of the title above, which is also part of the title of the book by a contemporary Polish radical conservative Henryk Payak (1999), to be symptomatic. In certain circles in both countries the socialist regime is demonised as a 'communist Reich' or as representing the only 'Dark Ages' in the histories of these nations,<sup>66</sup> and generations which grew up under socialism are regarded as 'Godless', 'lacking the correct values', 'morally collapsed' and so on. Extreme integrists in both countries have been expecting an 'arousal from slumber', 'spiritual regeneration', an 'emergence from the catacombs'. Whereas radical conservative Catholics allow themselves to judge and criticise everything and everyone they disagree with, criticism of (or sometimes merely scepticism about) their views and conduct is labelled as 'antichurch' or 'animosity' towards the church, and their authors disqualified as 'militant atheists', 'sociologists' (because national and also international empirical sociological studies show quite different results from those desired by some radical Catholics they use this term in a pejorative sense), 'remnants of the old regime', 'part of the neocommunist continuity' or 'domination' (or even 'monopoly') 'of the old forces'. According to Archbishop Franc Rode (who replaced the moderate and conciliatory Alojzij Šuštar in 1997), public space in Slovenia has been conquered by the 'the ideology of atheistic messianism'. He is convinced that 'there is seemingly no difference between the present and former regimes; instead of Marxism we are now ruled by liberalist laicism'.<sup>67</sup> Liberal and progressive Catholic individuals and groups are – in the case of Slovenia – for the most part ignored by the Catholic Church.<sup>68</sup>

After the collapse of the last major adversary – socialism – certain Catholic circles in both countries have found a new enemy: pluralistic culture. They attack what they refer to, in clichés, as 'materialistic liberalism', 'atheisation from the West', the

'epidemic of consumption', the 'culture of death', the 'cultural march', 'Red shadows', 'neocommunist continuity', the 'domination' (or even 'monopolisation') of the 'old forces', 'relics of the past', in Poland even 'Zionist-Masonic conspiracies'. One of most typical representatives of Slovenian Catholic conservatism, the writer Alojz Rebula, rejects multiculturalism as a 'medley of postmarxist semi-intellectuality' (in a debate in Ljubljana in September 2002 about the situation of Slovenian literature in the Trieste region). The next step in such discourse is self-victimisation: it is the opinion of certain Catholic dignitaries that 'the state behaves towards the Catholics as though they were some kind of game, to be shot at by anyone', or that Catholics are treated as 'second-class citizens', that they are a 'persecuted species', that believers 'do not enjoy equal rights in society', that the Catholic Church 'has no access to the media', that it is 'excluded from public discourse', that the present situation resembles that after the Second World War.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile non-Catholic religious movements and ideas are labelled as 'foreign sects', 'false prophecies' or 'antinational'<sup>70</sup> and are classified together with socio-pathological phenomena such as alcoholism, crime and drug addiction. All these different groups and ideas are seen as having one common goal: to uproot Christianity from Slovenia/Poland. The misleading and dangerous logic that there exists only one type of antagonism, namely, between faith and nihilism, or between Catholicism and non-Catholicism, has reemerged. In short, the complexity of contemporary life is reduced – to quote one Polish priest – to a mythic binary 'struggle of Good against Evil' (Michel, 1994, p. 119).

#### *Protected by Mary: Strong Popular Devotion to the Holy Virgin*

In both Poland and Slovenia the national cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary is very strong: for religio-national integrists, both nations are 'Mary's nation'. One consequence of the Counter-Reformation was that the Marian cult reached a new intensity and featured in the affairs and rhetoric of the state (Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 171; Piekarski, 1978, p. 166). Veneration of her increased remarkably, with a growth in the number of Marian shrines in the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom.<sup>71</sup> The most venerated symbol of Polish Catholicism is the Black Madonna of Częstochowa.<sup>72</sup> The Mother of God was officially crowned as 'Queen of Poland' on two occasions: in Lwów Cathedral in 1656<sup>73</sup> and in Częstochowa in 1717.<sup>74</sup>

After the Catholic restitution the Marian cult flourished in the Slovenian lands as well. The most important local centres of pilgrimage are Brezje (called 'the Slovenian spiritual centre', 'the true centre for all Slovenes' or 'the Slovenian spiritual resort' by some clerics), Sveta gora near Gorica, and Ptujška gora, each with a venerated image of the Holy Virgin. In Slovenia more churches are dedicated to *Mati Božja* than to any other personality from Christian mythology. In Slovenian religio-national mythological rhetoric she has become 'the Slovenian Mother', 'the Slovenian Soul', 'the Queen of the Slovenes', 'the Slovenian "First Lady"', 'our Protectress', 'Christ's and our Mother'.<sup>75</sup> From 1992 Slovenian archbishops tried to expand her cult to all Slovenes through an annual consecration of the Slovenian nation on Assumption Day.

#### *More 'Rustic' than 'Roman': Folk Religiosity and Saints*

Hinting at a specific religious syncretism, Władysław Piwowarski, a Polish researcher of traditional religious beliefs, used this phrase to describe Catholicism in rural areas. For him, 'the faith of the villagers is based mainly on tradition' (Piekarski, 1978,

pp. 170–75). It adopted many local and popular features: Miłosz even thinks that ‘Catholicism in Poland is primarily a religion of the masses and is based more on ritual than on philosophical reflection’ (Miłosz, 1999). In both countries many prechristian religious elements have survived to the present day in more or less pure form or within Christian practice. Folk Christianity and the ‘folk church’ are characterised by very specific, unorthodox devotional practices and popular pilgrimages. Another important feature is the veneration of numerous saints and popular personalities from Polish/Slovenian religious history, many of whom have been canonised or beatified (more than one hundred in the case of Poland,<sup>76</sup> while the first Slovene – Anton Martin Slomšek – was beatified only in September 1999) and others of whom have received flattering titles like ‘*Primate of the Millennium*’ (Wyszyński) or are considered martyrs of the faith (for example, Fr Jerzy Popiełuszko, brutally murdered in October 1984).<sup>77</sup>

### Conclusions

Religio-national mythologies have played a significant but – as with any hegemonic mythology – controversial role in the past and present of these two nations. As the analysis shows, Polish religio-national mythology is based more on the religious (Catholic) component, although other components (such as a distinguished and also suffering history, language, cultural heritage) may have been employed as well. The Catholic Church in Poland gained a reputation as the ‘*bastion of national identity*’ against foreign occupiers and unfavourable regimes, mainly because of traumatic historical periods – the partitions, the World Wars, socialism. As Mojzes points out, in ‘no other East European country has a single religion played such a dominant role’ (Mojzes, 1992, p. 272; Monticone, 1986, p. 1). Kubik (1994, p. 119) is also convinced that the Catholic Church in Poland ‘acts as a creator, repository, and propagator of national, civic, and ethical values to a degree rarely found in other national churches’.

On the other hand, in Slovenian history ‘we cannot find one essential era that was harmoniously Catholic’, in the words of the Slovenian christian socialist France Vodnik (1983, p. 75). It is clear that other components such as language and culture came to the fore: the religious factor itself was not as strong in the nation-building process, because of the ambiguous role of Catholicism in Slovenian national history and a lower degree of trust in the Catholic Church today.<sup>78</sup> Comparative international empirical studies from the 1990s show that ‘in terms of the distribution of responses in the religion section and in terms of its values, Slovenia ranks with or close to the Netherlands, Hungary, Federal Republic of Germany, etc. on the European values continuum’ and that ‘it is quite removed from the value samples and belief findings for Italy, Poland, that is, countries with a marked Catholic cultural tradition’ (Toš, 1999b, p. 282). For these reasons, it is clear that religio-national mythic constructs, rhetoric and practices in Poland are considerably stronger and more widely established in public life than in Slovenia.

During undemocratic times the churches demanded ideological, political and cultural pluralism, but since the introduction of democracy it has often happened that radicals within the churches have demanded religious, political, cultural and other types of homogeneity by using the discourse of the conflict (*‘us against them’*). In an atmosphere of ecclesiastical triumphalism and pre-Second Vatican Council rhetoric – we need only recall the pope’s statement in Rome and Prague in 1990 that ‘*God won in the East*’ (Vrcan, 2001, p. 43) – we can observe the very apparent temptation for some of these figures to make Catholicism the privileged criterion for national

identity, regardless of its real historical role. Religio-nationalistic integrist ambitions and politics can be observed in both societies: tendencies to catholicise the concept of the nation and to nationalise this (universal!) religion legitimise each other, reinforce each other and merge.

This is one of focal points of Adam Michnik's criticism of 'aggressive religious integrist', as he calls it in one of his essays following the electoral victory of left-wing parties (Michnik, 1997, pp. 235, 299). For him Poland – and surely Slovenia too – is not threatened by the restoration of a socialist regime.<sup>79</sup> The real danger lies in extremists: 'postcommunist populism and Stone Age anticommunism'.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, Leszek Kołakowski warns against those who 'would like to have an ideological or theocratic state, albeit of a different kind' and adds that 'this is unproductive day-dreaming – a theocratic state will never exist'.<sup>81</sup> In other words, totalitarian ambitions and uniformist tendencies of any colour are equally dangerous for the pluralist, democratic development of modern societies.

Paweł Hulka-Laskowski, a distinguished interwar Polish Protestant writer, said that 'Not one great Pole throughout history has dared to claim that Polishness is wholly confined to Catholicism and that outside Catholicism there is no Polishness' (Piekarski, 1978, p. 208). Similarly, Vodnik (1983, p. 84) wrote in 1939 that 'The notion that there are no Slovenes but Catholic Slovenes is already mistaken in principle because Catholicism and nationality are concepts which do not overlap; nor is it historically correct because the differentiation of ideas within our nation cannot be denied'.

In the 1990s the Slovenes and the Poles alike finally gained their freedom from oppressive regimes and foreign domination. Both societies – numbering almost 39 million in Poland and two million in Slovenia<sup>82</sup> – are faced with an entirely new position and are in the midst of an accelerated process of accession to the European Union. Catholicism in both nations stands at a crossroads: between the principle of universalism and the claims of local national culture; between its intimate, moral and social dimensions and the (meta)political dimension; between 'ecclesiastical absolutism' (Roter, 1976, pp. 125–28; Mojzes, 1992, pp. 7–8) and sincere acceptance of cultural and religious pluralism; between patronage and openness; between the temptation of Catholic *reconquista* and *aggiornamento*; between traditionalism and modernism; between exclusivism and a conciliative orientation; between serving and ruling. The Catholic Church must adapt to new, increasingly differentiated situations and accept the fact that religio-national mythology is only one of many mythological constructions and perceptions in contemporary Slovenian and Polish societies, and that it cannot count on monopoly. It simply cannot cover all spheres of social and political life and all world-views any longer; it can no longer be the sole and privileged centre of interpretation or/and integration. All such quasi-organic ambitions and exclusivist efforts under current conditions can be not only unproductively regressive, but even very dangerous, creating tensions, polarisation and conflicts. There are limits of which not only the opponents of such efforts but also their advocates must be aware.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sugar, 1994, p. 34, points out that in Poland the identity of the church and nationality 'was possibly even closer than in the Balkans'.

<sup>2</sup> In this article mythological rhetoric, syntagma, sayings and catchwords are quoted in italics.

<sup>3</sup> According to Schöpflin, 1997, p. 20, 'myth is vital in the establishment of coherence, in the

making of thought-worlds that appear clear and logical, in the maintenance of discourses and generally in making cosmos out of chaos’.

- <sup>4</sup> In the introduction to his renowned book *The Raw and the Cooked* he states: ‘Since it has no interest in definite beginnings or endings, mythological thought never develops any theme to completion: there is always something left unfinished’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1994, p. 6).
- <sup>5</sup> As Smrke and Uhan, 1999, p. 214, have illustrated, the two countries present different variants of this Latin religious pattern: whilst Poland finds itself between the traditional (conservative, inertial, premodern) and the reactivated (revitalised, renewed), Slovenia finds itself between the reactivated and the post-Latin religious pattern (the ‘post-Latin’ pattern includes such phenomena as the abandoning of the integrist pre-Second Vatican Council logic and activities of the church, the laicisation of political and everyday life, the autonomisation of religious beliefs, the spread of non-church religiosity, the (political) autonomy of Catholic believers, the acceptance of religious pluralism and the existence of a variety of world-views).
- <sup>6</sup> For analyses of the latter, see Staniszki, 1999, and Mastnak, 1992.
- <sup>7</sup> Other tribes included the Wiślanie, Mazowians, Pomeranians and Silesians.
- <sup>8</sup> An important consequence of this longstanding Polish independence, and the high level of national self-awareness and economic prosperity of the nobility, was the development and lasting tradition of various cultural institutions in the sciences and arts. Polish talents were able to study and work in their own language and on their own land, and thus to contribute to the Polish cultural heritage.
- <sup>9</sup> Used in the early 1990s by the right-wing Slovene National Party (*Slovenska nacionalna stranka*). For an analysis of Slovene chauvinistic hate-speech, see Kuzmanić, 1999.
- <sup>10</sup> For the antisemitic stance and statements of the primate August Hlond and some other high-ranking Catholic dignitaries see Modras, 1994, pp. 35, 346–47; for antisemitic rhetoric (*gangrenous limb, unjust aggressors*) on the part of some Polish Catholic clerics see *ibid.*, pp. 283–84.
- <sup>11</sup> The Catholic Church first sided with those who rejected the proposal by President Aleksander Kwaśniewski publicly to exonerate the Jews for this (instead, Józef Cardinal Glemp proposed joint prayer by Catholics and Jews). In May 2001 the episcopate expressed regret for this episode in a special mass in Warsaw. However, representatives neither of the Catholic Church in Poland nor of the European Jewish Congress participated in the commemorative ceremony in July 2001 (see for example ‘La Pologne demande pardon aux juifs de Jedwabne’, *Le Monde* (Paris, 12 July 2001).
- <sup>12</sup> 56,000 Jews lived in Poland in 1950; 16,000 in 1968; and only 8000 in 1982.
- <sup>13</sup> Antisemites exposed the Jewish origins of some Polish politicians including Bronisław Geremek, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jacek Kurón and Kwaśniewski; some even those of the pope Wojtyła, Wałęsa, thirty per cent of the Polish Catholic clergy, the majority of the bishops and all three cardinals (Tismaneanu, 1998, pp. 85, 104, 105).
- <sup>14</sup> See *Frontier* (Oxford, Keston Institute), 5, 1998, pp. 6–7.
- <sup>15</sup> The most notorious case in recent times was that of Henryk Jankowski, the prelate (senior clergyman) of the Gdańsk Cathedral of St Brygida and an early supporter of the Solidarity movement, who was suspended by Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski in November 1997 for antisemitic remarks (including statements that the Poles ‘*can no longer tolerate governments made up of people who have not declared whether they come from Moscow or from Israel*’, that the ‘*Star of David is implied in the swastika as well as the hammer and sickle*’, and regarding Jewish liability for the Second World War). See for example Tismaneanu, 1998, pp. 104, 105.
- <sup>16</sup> On rare attempts at Polish collaboration see Woods, 1968, pp. 18–19.
- <sup>17</sup> In Michnik’s words, the basis of Polish Marxism-Leninism was ‘the Soviet Union and its belligerent Red Army’ (Michnik, 1997, p. 232).
- <sup>18</sup> *Mladina, Tribuna, Katedra* and *Nova revija*.
- <sup>19</sup> As has been acknowledged by theologian Anton Stres, in Kerševan, 1996, pp. 43–44.
- <sup>20</sup> In typical rhetoric about mythic origins, Catholic sources explain the history of Poland with

it all began with the Christening (Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 21). In fact, that year was a turning-point which heralded rapid mass christianisation. See also Simpson, 2000, p. 11.

- <sup>21</sup> The christianisation of the forefathers of the Slovenes, together with three traumatic fratricidal wars in the late eighth century, is the subject of one of the most popular poems, *Krst pri Savici* (*Baptism by the Savica River*), by the great romantic Slovene poet France Prešeren.
- <sup>22</sup> For example, Jakub Świnka, Paweł Włodkowicz, Mikołaj Traba, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Mikołaj Rej, Jan Łaski, Ignacy Krasicki, Hugo Kołłątaj and Stanisław Staszic (for more, see: Piekarski, 1978, pp. 20–55; Davies, 1981, vol. I, pp. 70, 125–26, 135, 138, 166, 183, 357–59, 530–31; Davies, 1981, vol. II, pp. 220–21).
- <sup>23</sup> For example, Marko Pohlin, a grammarian and writer in the late eighteenth century.
- <sup>24</sup> Trubar, Jurij Dalmatin, Adam Bohorič, Sebastjan Krelj and others.
- <sup>25</sup> Orthodox and Protestant religious minorities were denied full political rights only after 1718 (Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 514).
- <sup>26</sup> Catholics represented approximately 45 per cent of the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom in 1660 and 43 per cent in 1772.
- <sup>27</sup> When the papal legate demanded from King Sigismund the Elder (in the first half of the sixteenth century) that religious minorities be persecuted, he replied 'Permit me to rule over the goats as well as the sheep' (Modras, 1994, p. 9). Or, to put this phrase less graphically, '*Sum rex populorum non conscientiarum*'.
- <sup>28</sup> Almost all Slovene books were systematically burned and Protestants were persecuted and their churches and graveyards destroyed.
- <sup>29</sup> The absurdity of this view becomes clear if we consider that the activists of the Counter-Reformation burned all the first Slovene books (except for the Bible), which were all edited by Slovene Protestants.
- <sup>30</sup> As Davies points out, masses traditionally ended with the singing of the patriotic hymn *Boże coś Polskę* (*O God who hast Poland saved*), composed by Fr Alojzy Feliński in 1816, which includes the line *Restore, O Lord, our free country* (Davies, 1981, vol. II, p. 19; see also Piekarski, 1978, p. 60).
- <sup>31</sup> 114 convents, according to Piekarski, 1978, p. 60.
- <sup>32</sup> In the novel *Kaplan Martin Čedermac* by the Slovene France Bevk, first published in 1938, we find an archetypal figure, the Catholic priest Čedermac, who resisted the pressure of italianisation during the Fascist period. Bevk found inspiration for this character in the patriotism of many contemporary Slovene Catholic priests from the Littoral region of Slovenia.
- <sup>33</sup> Some higher Polish Catholic dignitaries were not only loyal to the occupiers but also supported them on various occasions: in 1792; during the Kościuszko insurrection in 1794; in 1830–31, 1846, 1848–49 and 1863–64 (see Piekarski, 1978, pp. 45–60; Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 526). Some of them were even executed, for example three bishops in 1794 (Piekarski, 1978, p. 47; Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 539). Some of the Slovene Catholic clergy openly collaborated with the occupiers during the Second World War.
- <sup>34</sup> According to a census taken in 1921, 63.9 per cent of Polish citizens were Catholics, 11.1 per cent were Uniates, 10.5 per cent were Orthodox, 10.5 per cent were Jews and 3.7 per cent were Protestants (Bender, 1992, pp. 514, 515); in 1931, 96.8 per cent of the population in the Slovene *Dravska banovina* (governorship) of Yugoslavia were Catholics, 2.2 per cent were Protestants and 0.6 per cent were Orthodox.
- <sup>35</sup> The Orthodox cathedral in Warsaw was demolished, for example.
- <sup>36</sup> There was a well coordinated so-called 'derussification' campaign in which state institutions, the army, police and some clergy took part in (although the Catholic Church was not officially involved). It resulted in 1938 in the closure or destruction of many Orthodox churches, chapels and other church buildings, mass conversions and the polonisation of the Orthodox population in the eastern provinces. The campaign was condemned by foreign countries, Orthodox churches and Polish liberal circles, but had been all but forgotten by the time of the 60th anniversary of these tragic events in 1998.

- <sup>37</sup> Radical Catholics advocating Catholic totalitarianism emerged in both countries in the late 1930s. In Poland there was a circle around the journal *Pro Christo* led by Fr Jerzy Pawski (Modras, 1994, pp. 79–81); and in Slovenia around the journal *Straža v viharju*, popular with young right-wing extremists. A typical passage (from the issue of 28 April 1938) reads: ‘Only the totalitarian, active and whole man embracing Catholicism can save mankind, because it is able to save the whole man, his soul and his body, from evil and distress’.
- <sup>38</sup> Janez Evangelist Krek, Anton Korošec (both of whom were very charismatic and popular with the people, the latter even being named ‘Father of the Nation’), and Fran Kulovec.
- <sup>39</sup> Most fell victim to communist violence, but many were killed by German and Italian forces and Serbian and Croatian quislings (Pust *et al.*, 1994, pp. 445–47).
- <sup>40</sup> In Poland 900 priests, eight bishops and Stefan Wyszyński, the primate of Poland, were arrested (Mojzes, 1992, pp. 286–87); in Slovenia 250 priests were arrested (Pust *et al.*, 1994, p. 10).
- <sup>41</sup> The trip coincided with the celebrations marking the 900th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Stanisław, bishop of Kraków, patron saint of Poland, ‘the premier symbol of necessary ecclesiastical resistance and counterbalance to state power’ (Kubik, 1994, pp. 130–33).
- <sup>42</sup> For an analysis of the whole visit see Kubik, 1994, pp. 129–52.
- <sup>43</sup> The involvement of the church in the 1993 and 1997 elections was minor, however: see Eberts and Torok, 2001, pp. 133–43; Mach, 1997, pp. 71–78; Kubik, 1994, p. 254.
- <sup>44</sup> For Ramet, ‘Slovenia and the Czech Republic show the greatest sensitivity to liberal values in the region, but even here, there are limits’ (Ramet, 2001).
- <sup>45</sup> Its editor, the charismatic Fr Tadeusz Rydzyk, was publicly admonished by Cardinal Glemp for politicisation and insubordination in the spring of 1998. Contrary to the official position of the Catholic Church in Poland, which supports accession to the European Union, *Radio Maryja* opposes it (as it opposes the market economy). See for example Davie, 2000, p. 111.
- <sup>46</sup> There are reports that Cardinal Glemp denounced him as a ‘neo-pagan’, whilst Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk described his thinking and behaviour as ‘hysterical and traumatic, the result of an anti-religious and anti-God complex going back to the seeds of Marx and Lenin’ (Ramet, 2001; see also Borowik, 1999, p. 15; Eberts and Torok, 2001, pp. 140–42).
- <sup>47</sup> Furthermore, former prime minister Jerzy Buzek is a member of the small Polish Lutheran community.
- <sup>48</sup> *Frontier* (Oxford, Keston Institute), 2, 1998, p. 2.
- <sup>49</sup> Kerševan, 1996, pp. 14, 44, 91–94. For the presence of the church in the media coverage of the last election campaign in Autumn 2000, see Dragoš, 2001.
- <sup>50</sup> Today approximately 96 per cent of Poles and 70 per cent of Slovenes are self-declared Catholics. However, a less significant percentage believe in some basic Christian/Catholic dogmas (the resurrection, redemption, heaven, hell), whilst, on the other hand, the extent of ‘superstitious’ beliefs (reincarnation, astrology, fortune-telling, horoscopes) is surprisingly high (Smrke, 1996b; Smrke and Uhan, 1999, p. 220; Gowin, 1999). The proportion of those who attend mass one or more times a week in Slovenia was 21.7 per cent in 1968, 11.8 per cent in 1978, 12.4 per cent in 1988 and 13.9 per cent in 1998 (Toš, 1999a, pp. 164, 166).
- <sup>51</sup> In an interview with the daily newspaper *Delo*, 24 December 1998.
- <sup>52</sup> This was the title of a journal published by an antisemitic and nationalist political party in interwar Poland, Dmowski’s National Democratic Party (popularly called *Endecja*), which was supported by many Catholic clergy.
- <sup>53</sup> Quoted by Vodnik, 1983, p. 75, from *Mladost*, a Catholic journal of the 1920s.
- <sup>54</sup> Chrypinski, 1989, pp. 260–63; 1990, p. 128. In other words, the nation has temporal and transcendental dimensions, and the church and the state must serve the nation. In this sense I find the title of one of his books *Kościół w służbie narodu* (*Church in the Service of the Nation*) symptomatic (see also Bartnik, 1999).
- <sup>55</sup> Surprisingly, similar statements were made by critical minds such as Adam Michnik, for whom ‘Poland was and will be Catholic; the only question is what the force of this

Catholicism will be' (Michnik, 1999), or the early twentieth-century Slovene writer and social democrat Ivan Cankar, who stated that 'If I were Russian, I would be Orthodox; if I were Prussian, I would be Protestant; because I am Slovene, I am Catholic' (Vodnik, 1983, p. 98).

- <sup>56</sup> Masses for the homeland are also celebrated on the National Day in Slovenia.
- <sup>57</sup> Memories of the massacres of Poles and Jews during Ukrainian and Russian peasant and Cossack uprisings, and of pogroms during the partition period and the Second World War, are still vivid. One old Ukrainian saying went '*The Jew, the Pole and the dog are all of the same faith*' (Strumiński, 1995, p. 142).
- <sup>58</sup> The sociologist Max Weber said 'Only we Germans could have made human beings out of these Poles' (in Davies, 1981, vol. II, p.134). According to the interwar politician Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz 'Germany will destroy our body' whilst 'Russia will destroy our soul' (Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 109).
- <sup>59</sup> This epithet was also applied to two other states claiming to have saved the West, namely Hungary and Croatia.
- <sup>60</sup> The inscription on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris in honour of the election of Henry Valois as king of Poland in 1573 describes Poland as the most solid European fortress against barbarian peoples (Davies, 1981, vol. I, p. 159).
- <sup>61</sup> For example, the Islamic community requested permission to build a mosque in Ljubljana (for a significant number of Muslim immigrants in Slovenia, predominately of Bosnian and Albanian origin) as long ago as 1969. Renewed initiatives in the mid-1990s were rejected as being '*contrary to the Slovene Central European cultural tradition*'.
- <sup>62</sup> For Jozef Tiso's perspective, see Hoensch, 1987.
- <sup>63</sup> For Kazimierz Brodziński, Poland 'shall rise again' as Christ did. In Adam Mickiewicz's works we find wishes like '... the Nation shall arise, and free all the peoples of Europe from slavery'. In his *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* (*Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims*), for example, we find biblical intonations of Polish history: foreign rulers 'conspired together ... . And they crucified the Polish Nation and laid it in its grave, and cried out "We have slain and buried Freedom"... . For the Polish Nation did not die. Its body lieth in the grave; but its spirit has descended into the abyss, that is, into the private lives of people who suffer slavery in their own country ... . But on the Third Day the soul shall return again to the body, and the Nation shall arise, and free all the peoples of Europe from slavery.' In other works Mickiewicz writes about 'Poland – Christ, crucified nation, lamb amongst the wolves', and identifies Polish history with the Old Testament history of Israel. In one of his poems Juliusz Słowacki calls Poland 'sacred and godly', and describes it as a 'quiet and innocent victim, the lamb sacrificed for the sins of other nations, Holy land'; it has a mission to defend 'freedom and brotherhood'. For another poet, Zygmunt Krasiński, death becomes a promise of future resurrection. Polish (and for some, also Slavic) Messianic belief was also shared by such contemporary philosophers and thinkers as Stanisław Staszic, Andrew Towiański and August Cieszkowski, who was sure of the divine mission of the Catholic Church and of the Polish nation; whilst Józef Maria Hoehne-Wroński was of a more panslavic orientation. For an analysis of the philosophical aspects of Polish romantic nationalism, see Walicki, 1994.
- <sup>64</sup> In a famous poem by Davorin Jenko we find the line '*Charge forward, banner of Glory*' (or '*of the Slavs*' – *slava* in the original); in his poem *Zdravljica* (*The Toast*) Prešeren urges '*let Slavs henceforth go hand-in-hand*' towards their destination, but also that '*God shall grant long life to our country and all Slovenes*'.
- <sup>65</sup> '*In the Name of Almighty God! We, the people of Poland, thanking Providence for freeing us from one and a half centuries of servitude ... .*'
- <sup>66</sup> According to a public survey conducted in the late 1990s, 22 per cent of the respondents thought that the Catholic Church in Slovenia had been 'continuously persecuted' over the previous 40 years, 45 per cent thought that it had been 'periodically persecuted', and 25 per cent thought that it had 'not been persecuted at all' (Potočnik, 1999, p. 85).
- <sup>67</sup> A quote from his sermon on Assumption Day, 1999.



- <sup>68</sup> They gather around the liberal Catholic *Revija 2000* (*Review 2000*) or in the small Christian Social Union (*Krščansko-socialna unija*). The most prominent Catholic critics of the Catholic Church's current policies and activities in Slovenia are the anticlerical Bishop Vekoslav Grmič and the publicist and Academy member Taras Kermauner.
- <sup>69</sup> For more examples and an analysis, see Velikonja, 1999a, pp. 24–29.
- <sup>70</sup> This is regardless of whether they are of local prechristian or genuinely of foreign origin. On Polish neopaganism, see Simpson, 2000; on Slovenia see Črnič, 2001, pp. 155–58; on postsocialist countries in general, see Barker, 2001.
- <sup>71</sup> The principal shrines were or are at Świeta Lipka, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Piekary Śląskie, Chełm, Berdyczów in Ukraine, Borune in Lithuania and Gietrzwałd.
- <sup>72</sup> In the words of the poet Leszek Serafinowicz (Jan Lechoń), 'You, whose image one sees in every Polish cottage, in every church, in every humble shop, in every proud hall ...' (Davies, 1997, p. 147; see also Pelikan, 1996, pp. 78, 79).
- <sup>73</sup> According to Davies, 1997, p. 146, that was 'a key moment in the growth of the myth of the *Polak-Katolik*, "the Catholic Pole"'.
- <sup>74</sup> The kingdoms of Hungary and France also adopted the patronage of the Holy Virgin and became *Regnum Marianum*.
- <sup>75</sup> An article in the supplement to the Catholic weekly *Družina* (16 August 1998, p. 11) symptomatically ended with the inspiring declaration 'Slovene, do not be afraid, your Mother is the best of all!'.
- <sup>76</sup> Some of the most popular are St Wojciech, St Stanisław, St Jadwiga, St Jacek, St Casimir, St Stanisław Kostka, St Jozefat Kuncewicz, St Andrzej Bobola, Maksymilian Kolbe and Edith Stein.
- <sup>77</sup> There were 250,000 mourners at his burial (Monticone, 1986, p. 193; see also Mojzes, 1992, p. 300).
- <sup>78</sup> According to a public survey from 1998 79.9 per cent of the respondents had 'little' or 'no' trust in the Catholic Church and the clergy, whilst only 11.2 per cent declared 'complete' or 'significant' trust (Toš, 1999a, p. 183).
- <sup>79</sup> During one of his many visits to Slovenia he picturesquely referred to communism as the 'dead tiger' (the daily newspaper *Delo*, 19 March 1999).
- <sup>80</sup> Michnik, 1997, pp. 235, 237; he calls it also 'Neanderthal anticommunism'.
- <sup>81</sup> Quote from the ceremony at which he was decorated with the Medal of the White Eagle by President Kwaśniewski in May 1998 (the daily newspaper *Delo*, 28 May 1998).
- <sup>82</sup> In 1999 the per capita GDP in Poland was US \$8500 and US \$10,800 in Slovenia; GDP real growth was 5.2 per cent in Poland and 3.8 per cent in Slovenia.

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