

Summary

Stanisław Tarnowski: A Draft Portrayal

This book focuses on selected areas of Stanisław Tarnowski's creative output and his contribution to public life. He was a key figure in Kraków Conservatives' circles (the Stańczyks), rector of the Jagiellonian University, a politician, social thinker, publicist, literary historian, literary and theatre critic. Tarnowski had a major impact on the intellectual face of the conservative faction of Kraków. He became something of an institution and enjoyed great popularity with some, while at the same time triggering resentment in others. His opponents came from liberal and democratic circles, whereas his supporters were members of the nobility and gentry social elite from Kraków and the Polish Galicia region.

This book is composed of four chapters. The first, i.e. Stanisław Tarnowski's Contribution to Galician Public Life, presents his biography, political and social career in the background of the transformations that the region underwent in late 19th century and early 20th century. This presentation is built around the focal thematic points, i.e. the private and public history of the Tarnowski family, and the fate of the "Przegląd Polski" paper, as well as the circumstances that lead to the creation of the *Teka Stańczyka* [the Stańczyk's Portfolio political pamphlet] and how it was received. In this way, Tarnowski can clearly be seen as an influential initiator of numerous cultural, social and political initiatives, as well as a renowned figure already during his time, a codifier of "the policy of reason" put forward by the Stańczyks as a policy to be put into practice in the then autonomous region of Galicia.

Chapter Two, i.e. Nobility and Peasants, focuses on social issues, the relationship between the gentry and the common folk and the meaning of these two social strata in the history of the Polish nation. In his journalism, Tarnowski clearly

applied the social class lens and assigned the leading role to the nobility, although he did not spare them any criticism and pointed out various weaknesses that plagued the upper class. He bemoaned several aspects of modernisation that lead to the diminishing political and cultural importance of the nobility and gentry. The peasantry comprised a particularly important strand in Tarnowski's journalism. He pinned down various transformations that contributed to the gradual emancipation of the peasants. He did not hesitate to criticise numerous pathological phenomena as far as the nobility's attitude towards the peasantry was concerned. He was in favour of the peasantry broadening their national awareness, so that they would not fall victim to radical ideological currents. Nevertheless, Tarnowski was a conservative whose understanding of the social structure took shape in the late 19th century. Therefore, there were numerous new political and economic developments of the early 20th century that he was not capable of understanding or he had no intention to accept.

Chapter Three provides an interpretation of Tarnowski's opinions on the social impact of Catholicism on the history of Poland. As a devout Catholic and fideist, he always defended the Catholic Church's interests and went as far as to equate Catholicism with the nation's soul. He also perceived religion as the most efficient antidote to social class conflict and resentments.

The book closes with a chapter devoted to Tarnowski as a critic and specialist in aesthetics. The material used here comprises his theatre reviews and other papers dealing with the stage, which in actual fact all come from the modernist period. Tarnowski was not in favour of the modernist artistic currents, yet his remarks on the contemporary drama and theatre are marked by considerable insight and reflect the ideological and aesthetic value system that he consistently remained faithful to.

Translated by Rob Pagett