

## REVIEWS

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**MIECZYŚLAW RYBA: *KATOLICKI UNIWERSYTET LUBELSKI. KORZENIE, POCZĄTKI, ŹRÓDŁA TOŻSAMOŚCI* [THE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN. ITS ROOTS, BEGINNINGS, AND THE SOURCES OF IDENTITY], WARSZAWA–RADZYMIN 2018, p. 176**

A lot of interesting publications are published with regard to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. One of them is the book written by Mieczysław Ryba, a professor at this university, entitled: *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski. Korzenie, początki, źródła tożsamości*. (*The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Roots, beginnings, sources of identity*). The subtitle speaks for itself.

The first chapter discusses the specificity and the risk coming from the era when the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin was established, and the second one has a meaningful title: *Na ratunek katolickiej kulturze* (*Rescuing the Catholic culture*). The third chapter presents the role and influence of the academy (Pol. *Wszecznicca*) in Lublin, whereas the fourth and last one raises an important question: *Polska katolicka czy laicka?* (*Catholic or secular Poland?*).

The work contains very interesting annexes, i.e. the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII *Aeterni Patris* and John Paul II *Fides et ratio*, the reflections of Rev. Idzi Radziszewski entitled *Uniwersytet katolicki w Polsce* (*the Catholic University in Poland*) as well as the comments of two cardinals: Desir Mercier and Stefan Wyszyński. All annexes included therein still hold true. *Słowo wstępne* (*The preface*) written by Przemysław Czarnek, Lublin Voivodship Governor and a professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, also includes interesting content.

This book is very important and useful, as it shows how, after a long period of national captivity and seizure, the reborn Poland had to start from scratch in 1918. World War I led to great material, moral and civilization devastation in the country. The destruction affected various Polish social structures, including church and educational environments. The losses suffered in this area regarded mainly the process of depolonization promoted by the partitioning powers, and

the subsequent indifference and disengagement regarding religion and secularism, which undercut the philosophical roots and spiritual values. Thus, the future of Poland depended mostly on broadly defined public education, e.g. a new type of work at the grassroots (p. 55–71).

The country which broke away from the bonds of captivity, with an enormous effort healing the material and moral losses inflicted directly by World War I, had to heal at the same time the wounds suffered for almost 150 years of partitions. For this purpose, it created not only relevant administrative institutions, but also employed proper staff.

Building national awareness after 1918 in Polish society which was independent but ethnically not homogeneous coincided with the time which can be called the dusk of positivism. Positivist thinking existed in the awareness of well-educated Polish people immediately after the fall of the Romantic outbreak which – with no doubt – was the January Uprising.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Polish well-educated people, intelligentsia, were under an overwhelming influence of evolutionary scientism proclaimed in the Western Europe by Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, Ernest Renan and other philosophers, biologists and representatives of social sciences. This movement was represented by the vast majority of writers and scholars, primarily by Aleksander Świątchowski. Deprecation of armed struggles for freedom emerged from the ideology of positivism. The program regarding the work at the grass roots was highlighted instead. With its agnosticism, and often anti-clericalism, positivism accompanied the beginnings of socialism and national democracy in Poland. It is worth noting that many well-known politicians were educated under the influence of such movements, and one can easily say even that the majority of the well-educated people, at best indifferent, were permeated with them.

Aware of the dangers of positivism, Rev. Idzi Radziszewski decided to study natural sciences and philosophy of nature. In the struggle with positivism, Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier established the Leuven movement. Rev. Radziszewski and Rev. Jacek Woroniecki were under the influence of Leuven. Both of them provided grounds for the ideological foundations of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin created in 1918, the purpose of which was to educate a number of Catholic intelligentsia in the reborn Poland (compare chapter No. 2, p. 37–54).

The starting position for the economic development of the reborn Second Polish Republic was not less difficult than concern about the ideological background which corresponded to the traditions and beliefs of the majority of citizens. The effects of the war needed to be overcome in the economic and moral area.

The reviewed dissertation, including a well-chosen and interesting annex, confirms that university is a very prestigious word. It is the essence of democracy and one of the most important institutions of the entire rich culture of the Western world. It is confirmed, i.a. by the text of Prof. Henryk Kieres:

*Uniwersytet: arcydzieło ludzkiej kultury (University: a masterpiece of human culture)* (p. 11–14).

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin is an extraordinary institution and the crown of the Church in Poland (compare p. 91–95). A hundred-year history of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin confirms how this university loves young people with rare generosity, understanding and sacrifice. It makes possible for young people to undertake challenges such as seeking the truth in a noble, intelligent and rational manner, as well as understanding such concepts as family and love.

Certainly this position will not leave its readers indifferent to the future of all universities, and not only of the University in Lublin celebrating its beautiful anniversary.

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