

Kazimierz Twardowski of Blessed Memory: Philosopher and – “Happy Man”*

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With the passing of the late Kazimierz Twardowski, one of the strongest individuals of the pre-war generation departed from the world, and at the same time, one of the most characteristic figures of Lvov.

The brother of the well-known representative of Poland in Vienna, Minister Juliusz Twardowski, and the paternal cousin of the current Archbishop of Lvov, the late Kazimierz Twardowski grew up in Vienna, where he graduated with honours from the famous Theresianum and attended university there. He was a student of Franz Brentano, whose student was also the first president of Czechoslovakia, T.G. Masaryk. Brentano, a positive and critical mind, possessed by a passion for independent pursuit of truth, was an ex-Catholic priest. One could analyse the interesting and analogous influences that this Viennese scholar exerted on the views and philosophical direction of both Twardowski and Masaryk – however, due to lack of space, we will limit ourselves to highlighting only the fact itself.

After graduating, Twardowski became an assistant professor at the University of Vienna, but just a year later, he was transferred to Lvov, where he became an extraordinary and soon an ordinary professor of philosophy at the Jan Kazimierz University. He devoted intensive and rich activities of his entire life to this university and the Lvov region.

He left behind a rich legacy of scientific works in the fields of logic, psychology, and history of philosophy, as well as numerous valuable contributions to scientific terminology, on which he, with his characteristic passion for precision, placed special emphasis and to the establishment of which he made great contributions in the field of Polish philosophy.

* I. Pannenkowa, *Ś.p. Kazimierz Twardowski. Filozof i – “człowiek szczęśliwy”*, “Polonia” 1938, Vol. 15, No. 4801, pp. 8–9.

However, his main claim to glory lies not so much in his scientific work, but in his organizational and pedagogical activities.

Endowed with an inexhaustible sense of initiative and extraordinary organizational skills, he continually established new cultural and educational institutions or revived old ones that were fading away, as soon as he assumed leadership over them. Thus, his name is associated with the founding of the Słowacki Girls' Gymnasium, the Public University Courses, as well as the era of the flourishing of the Society of Teachers of Secondary and Higher Schools. He belonged to the group of initiators and workers to whom Lvov owed its pre-war intellectual renaissance and vibrant cultural life the most.

Famous, and stricter, was his philosophical seminary, access to which was difficult, and where he gathered only carefully selected students. Not limiting himself to the seminary, he also ran a voluntary Philosophical Circle at the Academic Reading Room. The level of this Circle is evidenced by the fact that the person writing these words, for example, gave a lecture there on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, based, of course, on the reading of the Greek original. The seminar involved reading and commenting on classics such as Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Schopenhauer, and others.

These readings, summaries, and discussions under Twardowski's guidance were a first-rate school of rigorous thinking and expressing oneself, where every unnecessary or inadequate word was attacked, where the point was always to express every thought and only thoughts as faithfully, precisely and concisely as possible, without any rhetorical, poetic, or other effects.

Twardowski was an extraordinary educator. He was also the most kind-hearted guardian of youth, especially those students with whom he shared a common "love of wisdom" – which is exactly – philosophy.

After the meetings of the Philosophical Circle, everyone would gather at the Scottish Café, where over a coffee or perhaps a more substantial meal, discussions would continue more freely. Over time, the professor began to host social gatherings (evening teas) at his home for a closer circle of students. There, conversations and music flowed: Twardowski was musical and played the piano himself.

From this philosophical circle and these social gatherings emerged, founded by the late Twardowski, the Polish Philosophical Society, to which the undersigned had the honour of belonging.

It should be noted that Twardowski established also the first laboratory of experimental psychology in Poland, where I also worked from the very beginning.

Towards the female students, including myself in particular, he was initially rather sceptical and reluctant. However, over time, he changed and later treated me kindly, even encouraging me to pursue an academic path. Unfortunately, a series of circumstances prevented me from doing so.

Here is a detail typical of the university relations of that time in general, and of the late Twardowski in particular.

When, after the acceptance (and publication in “Przegląd Filozoficzny” [Philosophical Review]) of my doctoral thesis, I passed the so-called *rigorosum*, both in philosophy – the main one, and in mathematics – the additional one, I returned to Zakopane, where I had been staying for a few months. I did not buy out a doctoral diploma. I believed that I should meet the requirements, but that it would be beneath my dignity to apply for the title and pay for it! Besides, I had other things on my mind at that time! I was absorbed in work for the Union of Rebirth, and soon I was about to go to Warsaw in these matters.

However, the late Twardowski explained it to himself differently. He knew that I was acquiring an education while simultaneously working to support myself. He knew that I sometimes struggled, and he imagined that I simply ran out of money. He was mistaken: I was already earning enough, maybe even more than today. Nevertheless, about two weeks after passing the final exams, I received the following letter from Twardowski while I was in Zakopane: “Dear Madam! Assuming that it might be difficult for you to pay the fee for the doctoral diploma at the moment, I submitted a motion at the Senate meeting for your exemption from this fee. The motion was accepted. The diploma is available for collection at any time. Best regards, etc.”

In the face of such touching memory and concern, I naturally accepted the diploma.

It was only later that I realized that, alongside his undeniable kindness and goodwill, the late Twardowski had another motive here: I was the first woman to earn a doctorate in exact philosophy in Lvov, and it appears that this was also a first at Polish universities overall, particularly under Twardowski’s mentorship. Whenever we met thereafter, he would remind others of this, not without pride, stating, “Here is my first female doctor.”

A female doctor – it’s not much. Twardowski could boast of something much greater: at all Polish universities, in Warsaw, Poznań, Cracow, Lvov, and Vilnius, chairs of philosophical sciences are filled by his students, not to mention Polish philologists, Germanists, natural scientists, and other specialists who were also

his students. In Warsaw alone, as many as six university professors are recruited from his students and alumni.

This is exactly what I was telling him about when, finally, at the end of May of last year, I visited him, as usual, in Lvov. I expressed the belief that he could be proud of such an excellent result of his pedagogical efforts. He responded:

“Yes indeed! You see before you a happy man. I have achieved what I set out to do. I have created a spiritual family for myself from this large group of philosophers whom I have nurtured and with whom I am in constant contact. My daughters are married, and I have six grandchildren, healthy and well-developed. What more could a man want?”

Eight months later, he passed away.

Then, when I saw him for the last time, he was already very ill. Yet, he still got up every day, read and wrote. In the last months, he apparently couldn't get out of bed anymore. He suffered greatly before his death.

In my memory reside the last words I heard from him: “You see before you a happy man...”

That was the speech of a philosopher. Did it also once again precisely express the feelings of a man? I don't know. I doubt it...

The fact is, he accomplished a great deal in very difficult Polish conditions. Honour his memory.