

ELEONORA ZIEMIĘCKA'S PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF MILD-NINETEENTH CENTURY IDEOLOGICAL DISPUTES

SUMMARY

The present work constitutes a monograph of Eleonora Ziemiecka. The presentation of the thinker's philosophical views serves both to deepen the knowledge about the period between the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863, and to improve the understanding of Messianism and the so called national philosophy.

Eleonora Ziemiecka deserves attention for a number of reasons. First of all, she was the first woman in Poland to bravely enter the field of philosophy, at that time reserved exclusively for men.

Secondly, she played a significant role in the history of Polish philosophical thought of the time, in the area of controversy between Christianity and German idealism, strictly speaking, between Polish religious thought versus Hegelism and national philosophy.

Third, she played a role of an inspirer and organizer in the disputes inside the Polish Roman Catholic camp.

The current of Roman Catholic thought was not ideologically uniform, as some historians put it, especially those who evaluate everything in the terms of the struggle of classes, camps and ideologies. With the decline of scholasticism, during Enlightenment, Roman Catholic philosophy divided into many schools and currents. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was, in Poland like elsewhere in Europe, intensely searching for its ideological identity. In this search, Eleonora Ziemiecka played a key role, contributing many inspiring and innovative conceptions and finding her own interesting solutions. It is the main purpose of this work to follow these trends and throw light upon them.

The final reason why the subject should be taken up is a lack of a broader monograph of the first Polish woman-philosopher, who also deserves remembrance on account of her profound love of science and philosophy.

The paper aims at introducing, ordering and analysing Eleonora Ziemiecka's philosophical views. However, it does not concentrate exclusively on her figure, but also shows the background of philosophical and social thought at that time, especially Messianism and national philosophy.

There are numerous references and comparisons to contemporary twentieth century thought. Taking up this set of problems was caused by the existing disruption between the modern philosophy and religion. It is philosophy that plays a key role here, usurping reason for itself. Generally, what philosophy searches for in religion is reason. Without articulating it directly, philosophy charges religion with a lack of reason. Philosophy demands that religion be scientific, which is a misunderstanding, since religion in its essence is something different from science. Contemporaneously, this area is being an object of a lively interest of philosophy of religion.

The present work not only presents Eleonora Ziemięcka's thought, but also aims at confirming the thesis that she was not merely a participant of the Polish Christian philosophical movement, but also its prominent inspirer and organizer. While editing „The Pilgrim", she managed to gather around her a significant and representative group.

Ziemięcka's writings are significant and comprise a wide range of problems. The paper takes into account both the preserved manuscripts, dissertations and journalistic articles, and, to some extent, translations. Ziemięcka's editorial, journalistic and translational activity incommensurably outgrew the strictly philosophical and scholarly one.

Therefore, it is justified to emphasize her function as a defensor of faith and of the endangered national values.

In characterizing Ziemięcka's position in Polish philosophy, the whole of her production should be taken into account.

Her views underwent a constant evolution since she eagerly followed the development of European philosophical thought and quickly reacted to the new solutions. She managed to abandon her false solutions in time to situate herself in the area of orthodoxy. She could criticize even those whom she had earlier recognized as her masters and guides, and who themselves were not able to give up their earlier, unorthodox conceptions.

The structure of the paper has been dictated by the stages of Ziemięcka's production. A proper understanding and characterization of her heritage is only possible through the analysis of her intellectual biography. That is why the first chapter shows the conditioning in the process of shaping her image. What is noteworthy, Ziemięcka's achievement is a fruit of her own lonely search and reading.

Chapter Two shows the period of Eleonora Ziemięcka's fight with German idealism and national philosophy. It emphasizes her inspiratory leading role in the organization of a front of Roman Catholic renewal. She skilfully included in her works the production of such outstanding and experienced Polish minds as, e.g., Józef Kalasanta Szaniawski, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Aleksander Przeździecki and Władysław Wężyk. The deficiencies in Polish philosophical thought were made up by translations of the luminaries of Christian thought in the West.

Chapter Three deals with the characteristics of the mature views of Eleonora Ziemięcka included in *Zarysy filozofii katolickiej* (An Outline of Roman Catholic Philosophy), *Studia* (Studies), and other works written in the last years of her life. The analysis supports the thesis that Ziemięcka, in her search aimed at evolving a philosophy that would, on the one hand, be optimally rational, and, on the other hand, fall within the limits of Christian orthodoxy. Subsequently, Ziemięcka's understanding of philosophy, ontological, theoretical and cognitive views, her views on the attitude of philosophy towards religion, and her critical attitude towards traditionalism are discussed. Finally some attention

has been given to Ziemięcka's vision of society with a personalist approach to man, which was especially important at the time of the unsuccessful January 1863 uprising.

The last chapter deals with the critical evaluations, opinions and reviews of Ziemięcka's works, both those published during her life and during the almost 130 years after her death. The review shows that „that first Polish woman in a gown of a philosopher" has been an often recalled figure and that her thought has never been forgotten and is still alive. The monograph leads to a general conclusion that Ziemięcka had an extremely interesting, striking personality. With her philosophical, translational and editorial work she made a remarkable contribution to Polish philosophical thought of the nineteenth century. Today, the fact of her being a woman inspires respect and regard.