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Ignacy Daszyński, *Pamiętniki*, part 1–2, introduced and edited by Kamil Piskala, Muzeum Historii Polski, Warszawa 2017, pp. 430 and 453.

**B**orn in 1866 in Zbaraż, a city known from the books by Sienkiewicz, participant of the Polish patriotic youth underground in Galicia; author of articles in provincial periodicals; student of the Jagiellonian University (expelled for involvement in demonstrations of young scholars) and of the Lviv University in the Austrian partition; in 1892, co-founder and one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party in Galicia (between 1897 and 1899 renamed the Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia and Silesia); editor of Polish socialist periodicals in the Austrian partition; leader of Polish socialists in the Vienna State Council; member of the Krakow City Council; activist of the Supreme National Committee during the Great War; in November 1918 appointed prime minister of the radical Provisional People's Government of the Republic of Poland in Lublin; in the Second Polish Republic leader of the unified Polish Socialist Party, leader of its parliamentary representation at successive Sejms, Speaker of the Sejm, deputy prime minister and member of the Council for State Defence; first an admirer, and then, following the May Coup d'état of 1926 and the imposition of authoritarian rule in Poland, a declared opponent of Józef Piłsudski and patron of the parliamentary opposition (however, his funeral in 1936 was attended by thousands of mourners from the political camps that usually fought each other fiercely, who gathered in spite of their differences to pay tribute to his lifetime legacy and achievements). Listed above are just some of the most important public roles that Ignacy Daszyński played in the recent history of Poland.

This outstanding politician was also a talented and hard-working chronicler, fully aware of the importance of recoding in writing his

own activity and of the dramatic but interesting times in which he had to live and act, as evidenced by the two-volume memoirs, reissued in print after nine decades. The first edition of the book was published between 1925 and 1926. The present edition has been compiled and introduced by a young but already renowned historian, author of a number of valuable publications, member of staff of the Department of Late Modern History of Poland at the University of Lodz, Kamil Piskala PhD, researcher on the history of the socialist movement and thought in Poland and Europe. The book has been published by the Polish History Museum.

Ignacy Daszyński's *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs] cover the period from 1866 to 1921 (part one deals with the period from 1866 to 1907, part two – from 1908 to 1918). The author divided the text into chapters, composed, in turn, of subchapters. In part one, I. Daszyński included his childhood reminiscences; his participation in the first youth 'conspiracies'; his years as a student at Polish universities in Galicia and Western Europe in Switzerland; the evolution of his world view, his ideological accession to the socialist movement and the repressions he experienced as an unruly young socialist and 'free thinker'; involvement in the publishing of left-wing press and in the establishment and transformation of the first social democratic organisations in the Austrian partition; participation in elections to the Vienna State Council and local councils; work in Parliament and in the City Council of Krakow; and finally, socialist activities.

In addition to the accounts of events and processes in which Daszyński was involved, this part of his memoirs also offers his reflections on political, social and economic issues concerning Galicia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Polish lands, as well as Europe and the world.

In the second part of *Pamiętniki*, which covers the last years of peace before the outbreak of World War I, the leader of the Polish socialist movement included recollections that attest to the great dynamics of changes in the political situation in Galicia (and in the entire Habsburg sovereignty), in the Polish territories of the two other partitions, as well as on the international arena. In the excerpts from the memoirs that deal with the times of World War I, the author focused his attention on issues related to the 'Polish cause' and its fate in the years of the global conflict, mainly related to the activities of the Polish Galician irredent and activist circles, but sometimes also forming part of a great international politics.

Just as in the first part of his memoirs, Daszyński, who meticulously reported the events he witnessed and in which he was involved did not shy away from sharing with the reader a broader, yet deeper, political reflection on the situation on Polish territory and on the prospects for the 'Polish cause', as well as on the changes taking place on the fronts of the Great War and in the international balance of powers in Europe.

The unquestionable advantages of the recollections of I. Daszyński are: their logical, clear construction, proposed in the original by the author himself, which greatly facilitates reading; a dynamic narrative that attracts the reader's attention, in which descriptions of historical facts and processes coincide with the author's interesting opinions and assessments; and finally, I. Daszyński's talent as a meticulous chronicler, and at the same time a perceptive, intelligent observer of all phenomena – those in which he was directly involved and those that he had no other choice but to face as a passive witness.

The significance and value of reading these recollections both for a professional historian, a member of the guild united under the name of Klio, and for an amateur enthusiast of the latest history of Poland and the Old Continent is also a testament to the author's skill. The memoirs of Ignacy Daszyński, a conspirator, later the leader of the Polish socialist movement, an experienced parliamentarian, and finally the prime minister of the 'Lublin government', not only a spectator, witness and observer, but first of all one of the leading actors (and sometimes scriptwriters) of the great historical drama, for which Polish lands of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries became the stage, are an invaluable source of knowledge for a researcher of the era.

It should also be stressed that, although Daszyński wrote down his reminiscences late in life, that is in the mid-twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, his memory was excellent at the time. The evidence of the intellectual capacity of the senior member of the Polish socialist movement is the abundance of facts in the account, its sometimes extremely detailed nature, and finally – the accuracy of the presented assessments and reflections.

Finally, it is worth noting that the publication in question has been carefully compiled. Kamil Piskała prefaced *Pamiętniki* with an extensive introduction, offering the reader an insight into the character, activities and views of Daszyński set against the backdrop of his time, as well as into the circumstances of the writing and

the nature of the recollections of the leader of Polish socialism. He also included an editorial note explaining the methods he used to prepare the source text for publication. The memoirs are accompanied by numerous, clear and exhaustive footnotes, which specify and explain the facts and assessments presented by I. Daszyński. In addition, the publication has been enhanced by the inclusion of a handful very interesting illustrations from the era (the indices of which are placed at the end of each of the two parts of the publication). The second part also contains an index of people who appear on the pages of the discussed book.

It is worth adding that Ignacy Daszyński's *Pamiętniki*, edited by K. Piskala – based on the following publications: I. Daszyński, *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs], vol. I, Związek Robotniczych Stowarzyszeń Spółdzielczych 'Proletariat', Kraków 1925, and idem, *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs], vol. II, Drukarnia Ludowa, Kraków 1926 – have been published as part of the series *100-lecie niepodległości* [100 Years of Independence]. As part of this undertaking, previously unpublished sources or those published a long time ago – memoirs, diaries and journals – written by leading figures in the political and public life of the Second Republic of Poland are now released.

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