

Summary

The doctoral dissertation titled „Polish socio-political, cultural and religious organizations based in Sanok in the period 1868-1918” consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the introduction. The author (Marcin Smoter) first describes the territory of the town of Sanok and the consequences that followed from annexing the neighbouring commune of Posada Sanocka. Sanok of that time (1868-1918) was a multiethnic and multicultural town. Unfortunately, the Poles, Jews and Ruthenians (the Ukrainians) had their own political, economic and educational priorities that often clashed. Mutual animosities among those nations were additionally fuelled by nationalistic tendencies that began rising at the turn of the 20th century and that undermined the harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups and tolerance for differences.

It should be duly stressed that the real substance of the dissertation is in the remaining three chapters. Chapter Two is titled „Socio-political organizations”. Its first part is devoted mostly to Sanok branch of Gymnastic Society „Sokół” („Falcon”). This organization was established in Polish territory in 1867 in Lwów (Lviv). „Sokół” was to play an immensely important role in preserving Polish identity and in the fight for independence. It was an organization that sought to integrate Polish society around the slogan of fraternity and the love for the mother country. „Sokół” members were not only intent on promoting physical strength and fitness but also reviving the patriotic spirit among the Polish youth and adults to prepare them to first fight for Polish independence and later to be ready to defend it. It is worth mentioning that apart from showcasing „Sokół” the second chapter also describes scouting and paramilitary organizations present in Sanok.

Chapter Three is entirely devoted to cultural organizations the role of which was to arouse the patriotic spirit among Polish people. As early as in 1868 the Pedagogical Society was brought to Sanok. Its principal goal was to raise the level of education in Galicia and particularly in rural areas. Among the cultural organizations in Sanok the most prominent role was to be played by Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej (Society for Folk School) that was brought to Sanok in 1893. It had a distinct and openly national character. Its goal was to promote not only education but even more importantly Polish identity and culture.

Chapter Four of the Dissertation focuses on religious organizations. Among them many fraternities. The main reason for joining them was to ensure eternal salvation for the members and their close families. Membership in one of fraternities inspired lay people to be

more responsible for the Church and its mission. Apart from fraternities an important role in the town's life was played by the St Vincent à Paulo Society of Charitable Ladies in Sanok.

The considerable autonomy that Galicia enjoyed led to the flourishing of various Polish organizations that had not been allowed earlier on. There is no doubt that the townsfolk of Sanok took advantage of the opportunity given to them and one can rightly claim that they rushed in great number to join the numerous Polish organizations within which they frequently found their ways to fight for independent Poland.

Marcin Smoter