

AN EVALUATION OF THE "O SKUTECZNYM RAD
SPOSOBE" OF STANISLAS KONARSKI

by

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ABSTRACT

While the rest of eighteenth century Europe, with the exception of England, was subject to autocratic rule, Poland enjoyed a rare privilege--that of electing the sovereign. In other respects, however, she was not to be envied. Politically she was no longer of consequence except as a pawn in the hands of foreign interests. Her great nobles and lesser gentry alike were content to bask in the remembered glory of past ages; clergymen were, for the most part, lazy, corrupt and ignorant; yeomen had been reduced to serfdom; there was no army to speak of; the towns were in decline; wars had depleted the treasury and commerce and trade hardly existed. Worst of all was a general apathy combined with devotionism rather than religious fervour, and the spurious belief that God was on the side of Poland and would take care of her whether the Poles helped themselves or not.

For some time, however, thinking men had worried about this state of affairs and many wrote down their ideas on the subject. It remained for a Piarist father, Stanislas Konarski, to attack the very root of the evil--bad forms of government in general, and the iniquitous unanimity principle in particular.

His four-volume work, "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie" ("On Effective Counsels in Government"), which appeared in the 1760's, not only subjected the problem to minute analysis, but also offered a "prescription" for Poland's ills: but by the time the nation was ready to act on Konarski's ideas it

had only a scant four years of freedom left. The fruits of his work were seen only after the First Partition.

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"Thou Veto, Veto used for evil
ends, when wilt thou have to
stand before the throne of God
and be changed into thy proper
'Vae to!'"

Jablonowski

PROLOGUE

As the curtain rises on the beginning of the eighteenth century, the stage is dominated by three 'stars'--autocrats all--the French Roi Soleil, Louis XIV, the Russian giant, Peter the Great, and Prussia's first king, Frederick I. Austria is heading for a Grand Monarchy, yet to dawn with the accession of Maria Theresa in 1740; and the so-called 'Germany' and 'Italy' are, although nothing but conglomerations of principalities, autocratically-minded. England, however, seemingly unmindful of the accepted order of things, is busy despoiling the Crown of many of its age-old powers.

Strangely enough, the great rulers of the day find their autocratic regimes supported in many of the writings of the 'philosophes' who, while wishing to see changes made, are in no particular hurry to achieve the desired goal of as much freedom as is compatible with civilized living, at the price of revolutionary action. Most of the rationalist philosophers greet the dawning century optimistically. It is as if they were viewing the tragedy of errors through rose-tinted glasses, and the drama were, by its very nearness, distorted into, at most, a satire on manners.

The 'philosophes' believed that humanity is basically good and the finale must needs bring a happy solution of all entanglements. They witnessed irrational scenes but, like idealistic critics blinded to all but their visions of perfection (though conscious of the defects these were to

replace), they were carried away by Utopian dreams and neglected such earthly matters as prescribing practical means for the attainment of the envisaged ideal.

Not interested in the precise forms of government, they longed to see society emancipated from wearisome tradition; but if it was to be only their great-grandchildren who were to be vouchsafed this great joy, that was preferable to forcing the issue. They would have liked to see a government acting in accordance with the laws of Reason, but seemed to have no objections to monarchy as an institution. If it was based on rational principles it was as acceptable as, for instance, democracy. They even rationalized the power-drives of the eighteenth-century monarchs saying, "To be very good you have to be very strong."¹

With such support, monarchs who interested themselves in the work of the philosophers--and most of them seem to have found it advisable to do so--felt that all they had to do to steer their realms on the prescribed course, was to rule as if the people were an enormous family and the sovereign a kindly but omnipotent pater (or mater)--familias. But already the curtain was falling on Act I and the protagonists were soon to be forced to change costume and even character, as prescribed by the plot.

Against such a background the single scene of Poland's struggle for survival, involved in this study, is laid.

¹ Stuart Hampshire, The Age of Reason, New York, The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1956, p. 47.

UNHAPPY POLAND

By the time Peter the Great made himself sole ruler of Russia, Poland had ceased to play a dynamic role in external affairs. She had enough to cope with in Cossack wars, the threat of Islam, and troubles of all kinds at home. In 1697 the interregnum after Sobieski's death had nearly ended in the election of the Prince Conti, but a flood of Saxon troops pouring into Silesia and bribes in the right places, paved the way for the crowning of the Elector of Saxony as Augustus II of Poland. In spite of Russia's alarming development, Augustus secretly allied himself to Peter in order to take advantage of the youth of the Swedish king and wrest Ingria and Livonia from him.

Unfortunately for Augustus, Charles XII was a military genius. He defeated Peter at Narva in 1700 and declared the Polish throne vacant; and, in an election held on July 12, 1702, Stanislas Leszczyński, Palatine of Poznań and Charles' choice, was chosen to succeed Augustus. But the ex-king visited Russia and Charles renewed the war, this time invading Saxony in order to strike a blow at Augustus in his hereditary domain. At Altranstadt on September 24, 1706, Augustus renounced his crown and recognized Leszczyński as king. Then, with all the self-assurance in the world, the Swedish armies marched into South Russia, where Hetman Mazeppa had promised them aid against his liege lord, the

Tsar. But Peter had learned from past mistakes and the invading troops were decimated at Poltava. Never again would Sweden dare to challenge her vast neighbour to the East.

With the Russian triumph came the restoration of Augustus, and most Poles thought of themselves as basking in the sunshine of security. In the South, all threats of war with Turkey had been ended in 1699 by the treaty of Karlowitz, and Austria was not considered to be dangerous. In the East was a staunch ally of the King, to the West a disjointed Germany. The Northern kingdoms had problems of their own; Sweden was licking her wounds and Prussia, though a source of some anxiety, struggling with growing-pains.

But Poland had underestimated her ruler and soon the calm was broken by nothing less than civil war. This was exactly what Augustus planned when he made arrangements for Saxon troops to stay in Poland "in case of war with Turkey." His secret hope had been that the soldiers' insolent behaviour would arouse popular resentment and cause a revolution which he could quell and thereafter be able to rule exactly as he pleased; not hemmed in on every side by the ridiculous concessions previous kings, weaker in moral fibre than he, had made. Not for nothing had he been named Augustus the Strong! An uprising there was, under Ledochowski and other nobles, who conspired at Tarnograd to rid their homeland of the hated Saxons. Cities were depopulated, agriculture, commerce and industry came to a virtual stand-

still, and the whole affair grew much too big for Augustus to handle. In desperation, he begged Peter for help and the insurrection was quashed. But at what cost to Poland! By the Treaty of Warsaw of 1715, Russia was now openly given the right to interfere in Polish affairs both at home and abroad. She did not delay long in claiming her pound of flesh, nor was there enough patriotic feeling left in Poland to oppose her. So it was that in 1717 not a voice was raised to denounce the measures contained in the Warsaw Treaty which abolished existing confederacies and prohibited future formation of such organizations. By it, further,

- a) the Saxon troops were ordered withdrawn from Poland within 25 days' time,
- b) the authority of the hetmans was reduced to military matters only,
- c) the administration of the army was entrusted to a subdivision of the Treasury Department,
- d) the regular army was reduced to 24,000 men, 18,000 in the Crown and 6,000 in Lithuania,
- e) the tenure of state offices was reduced to two years and the duties revised,
- f) and finally, the building of new dissident churches was prohibited.¹

For the rest of Augustus' reign a 'jedz, pij, popuszczaj pasa'² hedonism prevailed, punctuated by attacks

¹ E. Lewinski-Corwin, Political History of Poland, New York, The Polish Book Importing Co., 1917, p. 285.

² "...eat, drink and let out your belt."

of jitters, such as the unfortunate Toruń affair, and the explosion of eleven out of eighteen Diets. Poland's name became synonymous with lack of spiritual stamina; and though Augustus died in 1732 and may thereby have found peace, there was none for his hapless kingdom.

For the aging king, seeing that it was impossible to alter the anti-hereditary-monarchy laws, tried to pave the way, at least, for the election of his son. His plans received a rude set-back when Leszczyński's daughter married Louis XV of France, thus giving her father powerful support. Then Augustus tried to manoeuvre things so that his son might claim the Austrian throne, being son-in-law of Emperor Joseph I. But Vienna was too watchful and, with the then-allied Russia and Prussia, formed the union of the "Three Black Eagles" to oppose the election of either Leszczyński or the Saxon.

In spite of this, Leszczyński was elected on September 12, 1733. To this there was also internal opposition. A body of nobles, headed by Prince Wisniowiecki, declared Augustus III king. Russia, to whom the new Augustus promised Kurland, and Austria, to whose succession he renounced all claims, were won over and, protected by Russian and Saxon troops, he was crowned on January 17, 1734. For two years war between the two factions raged; each supported by self-seeking foreign powers. But, finally, the Dzików confederacy supporting Leszczyński was defeated and he abdicated, returning to France and accepting the title of Duc de Lorraine

which he was to find much less exacting than that of Rex Poloniae.

.....

How had a once vigorous nation sunk so low? As ever, it is the past that holds the answer, and, when causes are once again subjected to the light of criticism, the eighteenth century torpor seems inevitable.

A vertical section of Polish mediaeval society resembles nothing so much as a slice of cake topped with whipped cream and garnished with a cherry--namely, peasantry bearing an as yet not too burdensome icing of clergy and nobility, and the pyramid of hierarchy soaring thence to its peak, the King. Theoretically, in Europe this title was conferred by the Holy Roman Emperor, but in Poland it was always granted by no less a figure than the Pope.

Casimir the Great was an absolute ruler, but already he found it necessary to form a Council of Treasurer, Chancellor, and Marshal--each with a deputy--aide which he consulted regularly although he was not legally bound by its decisions. Until Batory, with Zamojski's help, established two elective tribunals, one for the Crownland, one for the Duchy, the King was supreme judge, and Commander-in-chief of the army. Later he convened dietines and Diets and decided what would be discussed at them, and appointed ambassadors to foreign courts, such envoys being responsible to the Diet. There were very few things he could not do without the assent of the State except go abroad, marry

and divorce. But, as foreigner replaced foreigner on the throne, and because of constant wars, the Crown was gradually divested of many of its powers.

Polish nobles were already from the twelfth century a fully-developed privileged class, holding land from the King in exchange for knights' service. They were soldiers first and then tillers of the soil, organized in family associations. By the end of the sixteenth century, approval of the Diet was required for the conferring of nobility, and, as caste-consciousness developed, there were determined attempts to restrict admission to the class. After Jagellonian days, the magnates' power in State matters was considerable, since the king needed native advisers.

Only nobles had the right of full citizenship. They alone could acquire land both in the city and country. Their property could not be confiscated unless such action were prescribed by due process of law. They paid no taxes, making, instead, 'voluntary' contributions to the Treasury. Only nobles could hold high office, be it civil or ecclesiastical. They were protected by a kind of Habeas Corpus, elected the King and delegates to the Diet and qualified as candidates for the throne. Such were the privileges of this upper-crust Polish society. They seem to have been too great and the numbers of the gentry too large, for overwhelming pride was the order of the day and the class as a whole lacked cohesion, constantly engaged as it was in private feuds. Views on life and a noble's role

in Poland's affairs were parochial and patriotism was often replaced by self-seeking localism. Many wearied of even their knightly duties, so that Poland's wars had to be fought by mercenaries. To most of the gentry, their prized 'zlota wolność' (golden liberty) meant nothing else than freedom from all obligations and duties. Could they really be blamed for preferring not to leave their idyllic country-gentlemen's lives except perhaps for the fold of the Mother Church whence it was often but a step to high State office. Hardly fewer than those of the nobles were the privileges enjoyed by the Roman Catholic clergy. Membership of the Senate was an ex-officio right of all diocesan bishops and most offices, including the Chancellorship, were open to churchmen.

In early years the Roman Catholic Church had been a unifying factor, giving Poland sorely-needed organizers and teachers and rapidly bringing her into line with the rest of the world. But, as elsewhere in Europe, early asceticism and piety eventually gave way to less spiritual preoccupations. The unsettled state of affairs made it necessary for bishops and abbots to have their own bodies of men-at-arms and Church lands grew through tax-free endowments, so that the spiritual leaders of Poland were as rich in earthly possessions as the high-born members of their flock--better off really, since ecclesiastical courts had laws of their own, and men of the cloth were not expected to bear arms.

As may be expected, when the shepherds-in-chief found themselves 'forced' to devote more and more time to things temporal, the lower clergy lost their bearings and indolent ignorance was the order of the day. It was chiefly because of lack of leaders and internal unity that the Reformation did not triumph in Poland.

Skarga's view of salvation through unity of faith became popular, and gradually most erring souls, tempted by the Reformation, were brought back to the True Faith. Poland could rest on her spiritual laurels. Surely, spared the horrors of the Thirty Years War, she must be the chosen of the Lord. Yet never had the atmosphere been more propitious for quackery. Astrologers and charlatans used every means of prognostication, while exorcism was a profitable side-line for the clergy. The monastic houses were crowded by frightened men and women seeking refuge from threatened plagues and disasters.

Of course the peasant had to face whatever might come wherever he happened to have been born. The 1520 Statute of Toruń, a tightening of the old vassalage ties, made serfdom legal throughout Poland. There were no State laws as to the number of days of labour due to the landlord, so this and all other questions were delivered entirely into the hands of the owner of the estate, whose domain was, to all intents and purposes, an independent legal and economic unit.

The peasant had now no independence and could not leave his land. He had to buy all necessities of life from

his landlord and sell him all that his small holding produced. All the same, nowhere could he be sold, and he could own property, even to buying more land and passing it on to his children. Brutal landlords are known to have been as numerous as elsewhere, but the lot of the serf was for a long time better than that of his non-Polish equals. There was more land and therefore more to eat. By the seventeenth century, however, grinding bondage set in with the sharpening of the need for labour and the beginning of production for export. Magnates increased their holdings and those of the serfs dwindled proportionally, while the number of days of free labour soared. Still, the fact that foreign peasants settled in Poland as late as the eighteenth century is some indication that things were worse elsewhere.

Poland was becoming Westernized, but very slowly. By the fifteenth century a money-economy had nearly replaced the ancient barter system, banking had been introduced, and foreign trade developed to such a degree that in 1393 a great flotilla came to Danzig to load supplies for plague-ridden West Europe. But, since Poland was inhabited chiefly by farm and forest folk, business was almost restricted to the buying and selling of produce--grain, wool, leather, honey, lumber, and so on. Such industry as existed was mainly of the manor variety; most articles used by landlord and peasant alike being produced on the estate itself.¹

¹ Dr. W.J. Rose in Poland Old and New (published in 1948), says that it is only five generations since industry (as we know it) began advancing into Poland from the West!

Nothing has, as yet, been said of a crucial factor in national life--the towns. Unless there exist, in a broad plain such as Poland, centres of law and order, a centralized administration is impossible, since every man is a law unto himself.

From what one finds in contemporary records, it appears that for a while, after their development from trading-stations, towns in Poland did serve the above lofty purpose. We also know that they were clean and that life within the walls was quiet, moral and industrious. There were sanitary regulations. Private property was sacred. Poorer folk were helped to build better homes by being exempt from taxes. Each city had its hospitals, almshouses, and a free public bath. Later, municipal water-works provided each house with water. Refuse was collected regularly and carted away for dumping beyond city limits. There was even an excellent postal service!

But this sunny state of affairs had a dark lining. The descendants of German settlers brought in after the Tatar invasions allowed themselves to be deprived of representation in the Diets. Only a very few towns had the right to send deputies. Each city was chiefly concerned with its own affairs and satisfied when it got a commercial advantage over a rival. They [even] neglected to ensure their defences against the nobles' egoism, and the latter soon began a selfish customs policy by which the burden of customs duties was laid on other classes. The nobles even stooped to founding suburbs which would compete with the

towns. Within cities, they bought buildings they could use as emporia and thus gain extraterritorial privileges. Not content with this, "In 1565 they proposed legislation which would open the country to imports of manufactured goods, thus forcing down the prices charged by local dealers; while at the same time asking for the right to handle the export of farm produce themselves, to the exclusion of the Polish burghers."¹ Tariff was non-protectionist and the comparatively few existing Polish industries were ruined.

Nor could the towns withstand the changes caused by the fall of Constantinople and the discovery of sea routes to the East. Frictions were such that in the guilds a gradual decay of the old patriarchal relations began. The very success the cities had enjoyed previously, attracting hosts of foreign merchants and immigrants of every creed and nationality, was a partial cause of decline, for unassimilated new-citizens were indifferent to Poland's fate, and foreign merchants presented serious competition to the landlocked Poles.

Since only a healthy development of the towns could have counteracted the arrogant individualism of the szlachta, this twilight of the towns was calamitous.

If the social structure of the Commonwealth was becoming a curiosity throughout Europe, the administration was by 1700 a scandal. The government was entirely in the hands of a blindly selfish nobility, and State interests

¹ W.J. Rose, Poland Old and New, p. 59.

were usually overshadowed or indeed obliterated by personal. So petty-minded was the all-powerful magnate class that deputies to local dietines were forbidden all initiative, and, because of this "right of referendum," were helpless in all dissensions. Thus the Parliamentary system, deprived of a strong and independent executive, never attained to majority rule.

In the eyes of the public, of course, the whole procedure deemed to be completely 'parliamentary', and the King, who appeared at all meetings of the Sejm, was responsible for everything. But, in reality, he had only enough executive power to permit him to be blamed for adversity. The real executive power lay in the hands of responsible, life-tenure ministers, the Chancellor, Treasurer, Hetmans, Marshal and lesser figures, who could not be dismissed or be given orders by the King. From the days of Jan Casimir to those of the third Augustus, such ministers were completely free to administer politics, each one guided only by the wishes of his supporters.

The Sejm had received its final form as far back as the reign of Casimir IV. The Royal Council, or Colloquium, of Piast times, attended by clergy, barons and relatives of the regnant Prince, became the Senate or upper house of up to 140 senators--bishops and high provincial and central officials. The gentry's district dietines elected deputies who formed the lower house.¹

¹ Each district had its own sejmik, and inter-district councils were held occasionally to discuss mutual interests.

There was no written Constitution. Laws were sanctioned by ancient custom and eventual legislation, so that by Vasa's reign there was a rigid State institution that changed little till the end of the eighteenth century. Nor were there appointed times or places for sessions of the Diet. Worst of all, in an era of at best poor communications, many matters (such as taxation) could not be settled without unanimous approval first of the Diet and then also of all the sejmiki. This pernicious mandate system was a carry-over from ancient days when the Royal Council had to get the consent of every local assembly for measures concerning nobles' indemnities. "The theory was that the privileges of the magnates formed not only the objective law of the country, but the subjective right of every individual whom they concerned."¹

From the times of Sigismund III the Sejm extended its control over both internal and external policy of the then still actively-executive King and, through its passiveness, successfully prevented Polish participation in incidents crying for a stand by the Commonwealth. The nobles wished neither aggressive nor defensive wars--except for sporadic forays in the East--and even begrudged the effort of retaliatory action. Two hundred years of this kind of policy was to result in Poland's gradual shrinkage away from the Baltic and the Black Sea. But this does not seem to

¹ E. Lewinski-Corwin, A Political History of Poland, p. 200.

have perturbed the nobles, since there was an almost complete lack of militant or even passive nationalism--as evidenced by various divergences in the Dual Kingdom and lack of anxiety as to the preponderantly non-Polish character of some voyevodstvas. Not a single session was devoted to carefully-planned colonization to strengthen the borders.

Here is what a certain Abbé F.D.S. who set out for Poland on July 30, 1688, had to say of the Polish Diet. "There is no assembly in Europe more subject to disorders, more distracted by cabals and frictions, and, in fine, more corrupted by bribery and base practices, which is the reason that the Diet of Poland seldom concludes upon what they sit and deliberate about, though it should be of the greatest importance imaginable."¹

A this-was-good-enough-for-my-father-and-is-good-enough-for-me attitude prevailed, with indifference to everything not directly threatening home and family. Civic consciousness and any conception of the price of independence were lost in surrender to understandably attractive but disastrous lazy existence.

¹ W.R. Morfill, Poland, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1893, p. 190.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

The source of Poland's troubles was a régime too democratic for those days, surrounded as the country was by rapacious and autocratically-ruled neighbour States. Seeds of decay of monarchical power had been sown already in the reign of Bolesław the Wrymouthed who believed in the principle of seniority combined with *dividere et imperare* and therefore divided his domain into five parts, one for each of his sons, the eldest to be Grand Duke of Cracow, and *primus inter pares*. The young Grand Duke, however, preferred unity and tried to restore it by depriving his brothers of their shares. His attempts were viewed with consternation by both the clergy and the nobles who at an early date realized that strong central power was detrimental to their interests. In the civil war that ensued, the Grand Duke of Cracow was defeated. He was permitted to retain the title of *Dux Poloniae*, but henceforth church and nobility were guarantors of such privileges as he possessed, and his security depended on the smoothest possible relations with his high and mighty subjects.

In 1180 Casimir the Just was invited to summon a Council at Lenczyca. Here, in return for his renunciation of all rights to the personal property of deceased bishops and special levies for the maintenance of his representatives, the seniority principle was abolished and perpetual right to

Cracow vested in his descendants. The Duke also agreed to summon similar councils whenever important State issues arose. The clergy were soon to obtain more rights when, by the Gregorian reforms, the temporal ruler was no longer permitted to appoint bishops.

With the death of Casimir the Great the native Piast line, now ruling a recently-unified Poland, came to an end. This was the beginning of an unbroken series of regressions of royal control. Casimir had proposed as his successor Louis of Hungary, his nephew, whom he considered to be the right man to deal with the many problems inevitable in the process of stabilizing Polish affairs. The nobles were not slow to take advantage of this and, when Louis had been duly crowned, demanded that in consideration of their having chosen him rather than a native prince he

- a) restore lost provinces (singled out for special mention was Pomerania)
- b) promise never to use Polish troops in Hungarian wars
- c) reserve Polish offices for the native nobility
- d) never interfere with such privileges and exemptions as were then in force.

Nor did Louis' worries end there. Like his predecessor, he had not been blessed with a son, and when he proposed that one of his daughters succeed him, the situation was used by the ever-vigilant magnates for the extraction of another

set of concessions. At Koszyce in 1374, Louis signed the Privilege of Kassa by which the nobles were freed

- a) from all but a small land-tax
- b) from doing unpaid military service beyond the borders of the realm, and, indeed, from serving at all except in emergencies;

while the King had, from now on, to make certain arrangements with the nobles before his titles and prerogatives were recognized. Most important of the clauses was one by which exemptions formerly granted only to individuals were now extended to include the entire class of nobility.

In 1386, soon after Władysław Jagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania married Louis' younger daughter, Jadwiga, thus effecting a dynastic union of the two countries, he was obliged to add new clauses promising the nobles

- a) the right to elect judges to certain courts
- b) payment for military service abroad
- c) power of jurisdiction over their peasants.

By the Privilege of Czerwinsk of 1422, nobles also obtained inviolability of their possessions and, feeling their mettle more than ever, they soon pressed for more concessions.

These were granted them in 1430 by the Privilege of Cracow, better known as "Neminem Captivabimus (nisi jure victum)", a sort of Polish Habeas Corpus. It was decreed that the King might not arrest any noble except

- a) on the verdict of a court,
- b) if caught in the act of murder, theft or arson.

In addition, coining of money by the King had first to be approved by the nobles. In return, they recognized the claims of Jagiello's son to the throne.

The year 1454 brought the threat of new war with the Teutonic Knights. Unfortunately for the King, the nobles' former spirit of chivalry had waned and, when a general muster of magnates and lesser nobles was called, only a few (aside from those from the threatened territories) appeared at Nieszawa. Such as did, came to discuss politics and to haggle anew. In order to obtain the support of even that fraction of the nobility, Casimir IV had to sign the Statute of Nieszawa which is really the beginning of an accepted 'Constitution' regulating the relationship of various levels of society, and which

- a) abolished the use of common law in courts of Justice,
- b) provided for the election of all judges by nobles,
- c) introduced the general application of the Wislica Statutes (as amended since the reign of Casimir the Great),
- d) exempted nobles from the jurisdiction of the King's court except in cases of rape, arson, theft and murder,
- e) limited the rights of peasants, townsfolk and Jews and placed a penalty on aid to runaway serfs,
- f) assured that the King have no right to declare war without the consent of the local land

assemblies,¹

- g) provided that no new constitution or law applying to the nobles be promulgated without the dietines' consent,
- h) requested the King to attend such assemblies in person or by proxy,
- i) gave power to the local assemblies to elect representatives to the general assemblies, one in each part of the Commonwealth, to be called by the King,
- j) asserted that it is only by working in conjunction with general assemblies that the King might pass laws,
- k) advised that representatives of general assemblies meet at Piotrków at regular intervals to confer with the King on State matters.

How slowly the wheels of the chariot of State must have rolled at a time when a national 'Parliament' was, as yet, only a project!

It was King Jan Albert I (1492-1501) who decided to ignore the past custom of applying to each dietine separately for approval of measures and in 1493, since he needed money to try to dislodge the Turks from Black Sea strongholds, called the first Regular Diet at Piotrków. True to tradition, both in 1493 and at the more famous meeting of 1496 when additional funds were voted, the nobles demanded

¹ dietines.

payment for 'services rendered'. Therefore

- a) nobles were exempted from tariff duties,
- b) peasants were bound to the land,
- c) landlords were permitted to represent their serfs in court,
- d) no peasant was to appear in court unaccompanied by his landlord,
- e) peasants could send only one boy to study in the city,
- f) they could no longer go to neighbouring states for seasonal work.

In view of the changing face of Europe at this time, it is easy to realize why the magnates were so eager to obtain life-and-death control over their peasants. From 1496 there was no question of the monarch's regaining central control of power through the support of the now completely enserfed bulk of his subjects.

But some good did come of the Piotrków Diets, for it was decided that the Sejm was to meet once a year, or at least biennially. There existed, however, the usual fly in the ointment; from the start, the dietines clung to the mandatory system--the idea that their delegates should report back to them and obtain their confirmation of all legislation before it could become valid. Communications being, at best, bad, and human nature being such as it is, the result was crippling delays and the vicious principle that any sejmik could veto what the rest of the country had agreed to.

Worst of all, never was any provision made to hear the will of all save a few cities, or of any peasants whatever.

On the death of Jan Alexander, Grand Duke of Lithuania, was elected and the pact of union renewed on a new basis of complete equality for the Crownland and Duchy. Since Alexander had inclined to oligarchy, he had, in 1492, consented to subject all of the Grand Duke's activity to the control of a council of Lithuanian magnates; and in 1501, by the Mielnik privilege, the decree was extended to give Polish magnates the same control over the actions of the King who thus became little more than President of the Senate which, in the name of the people, could now refuse obedience if it found the King tyrannical.

How frustrating kingship must have been is once again illustrated by the events of 1505 when the "Nihil Novi" (constitui debet per nos et successores nostros sime communi consiliorum et nuntiorum terrestrium consensu) statute was forced on the sovereign, this time as the price of support in a campaign against Muscovy. The decrees of the March 23 - May 29 Radom Diet contained the germ of the Liberum Veto, and the entire legislative power passed into the hands of the nobles.

- a) nothing new was to be undertaken without the unanimous consent of the three estates - King, Senate and dietine-representatives (Izba)
- b) no noble, on pain of losing his status, was to engage in trade or commerce,

- c) a proposal to create a regular army was violently opposed, since armies have been known to become powerful weapons of their traditional commanders-in-chief, the Kings,
- d) readiness to defend the Republic was solemnly affirmed,
- e) most of the few representatives of the towns were excluded from the Diet.

It must be noted that, although the privileges granted were supposed to belong to the nobility as a class, in reality, because of economic factors, they affected only the magnates and not the equally-noble lesser gentry whose indignation and dissatisfaction grew yearly, and who, in vain, looked to the King for justice. But so dimmed was the Crown's lustre that in 1562, when the then reigning Sigismund Augustus made an important move, the event was enthusiastically acclaimed and joyfully recorded, but remained a pathetic exception. It was the one occasion when King and lesser nobles stood up to the magnate-class and defeated it.

The issue at stake was the elimination of the abuse of the 'usus', the retention of life-grants of land by the families of deceased nobles. At the time, there was no State budget, only a Royal Treasury fed by revenue from Royal domains. Each time a tract of land was granted as reward for services to the Crown and not returned on the death of the recipient, the Treasury grew slimmer.

The nobles were aware that, should the Treasury be depleted, heavier taxation would ensue. Be the motive what it may, they kept pressing the King for an 'Exekucia Praw' (Execution of Rights) regarding both magnate and Church-held tax-free lands. After long vacillation, Sigismund declared himself, appearing at the Diet in simple grey costume rather than the magnificent garb of a magnate. Resistance was furious but the measure went through. In the sequel it was only partly enforced.

In 1572, Sigismund August, last of the Jagellons, died, and with his death ended the election of Kings by formal ratification of an heir. Then began 'Viritim', free-for-all elections at which every noble of the realm, representatives of chief cities and all vassals except the Duke of Prussia could vote, and unanimity was needed for validity. Poland became a bone of contention to be worried by greedy neighbours and national factions, each unscrupulous in the methods employed to assure the success of its own candidate.

The elected sovereign was even less free than his 'approved' predecessors for, in 1572, a bill called Pacta Conventa or the Henrician Articles, was passed. Besides two clauses aimed only at the recently-elected Henri de Valois, it contained the following clauses:

- a) the King was to have no voice in the election of his successor,

- b) he was to adhere to the terms granted to the Dissidents - under which we must remember that all non-Catholics were included,
- c) war was not to be declared, nor a military expedition undertaken, without the consent of the Diet,
- d) no taxes were to be imposed without the consent of the Diet,
- e) the sovereign was to have a permanent council consisting of five bishops, four palatines, and eight castellans, who were to be changed every year and elected by the Diet,
- f) a general Diet was to be convoked every two years or oftener if it was necessary,
- g) the duration of each Diet was not to exceed six weeks,
- h) no foreigner could hold any public office,
- i) the King must neither marry nor divorce a wife without the consent of the Diet.

This document has often been called one of the chief causes of Poland's final downfall. The agreement was too enlightened for its age, and for autocratic neighbours; it could have been successful only if supported by all classes of the nation and strong alliances.

Nevertheless, the nobles stubbornly insisted on limiting 'Nationhood' and the vote to their own class,

riddled as it was by petty internal struggles and oblivious of anything but momentary caprice and the protection of their 'złota wolność' (golden liberty). It was but one step to the acceptance of the unanimity principle in sessions of the Diet as the very fountainhead and chief expression of personal liberty.

Begun as a whim, the *Liberum Veto* ended as a fanatically-sustained and fiercely-defended cult. In 1607, no less a person than Piotr Skarga was instrumental in exploding the Diet because Dissidents were given equal rights with the Catholics. In 1637 the deputy George Lubomirski protested against the prolongation of a session that had had to be agreed to unanimously. But it was only after the otherwise unmemorable Siciński's personal 'Sisto activitatem' prevented the prolongation of the 1652 session, and the more characteristic dissolution by Olizar before the legal term ran its course that the explosion of Diets became a veritable curse, in spite of the general acceptance of the majority principle at ecclesiastical conferences and confederacies. In 1688 Dombrowski disrupted the session even before the Marshal's election. It was chiefly the deputies of eastern provinces who resorted to the veto. Of seventy persons using it, 28 were from Lithuania, 24 from the Ukraine, 3 from Red Ruthenia, and 8 from Mazovia, and they were chiefly members of the magnate class. To them, from now on, "*Liberum veto est lex legum et frater*

legum."¹

Such a state of affairs makes one feel that the then common Polish belief in Heaven's particular favour should have been countered by "Whom the Lord wishes to destroy he first drives mad."

¹ Władysław Konopczyński, Stanisław Konarski, Wydawnictwo Kasy Im. Mianowskiego. Instytutu Popierania Nauki, Warszawa Patac Staszica, 1926, p. 186.

PRECURSORS

The one man brave enough to subject both the causes and the effects of Poland's unchecked decay to meticulous observation, study and criticism, and finally to prescribe a cure was "a man who knew the mind of Greece as Plato and Aristotle interpreted it, who was familiar with the great spirits of Rome as the best of scholars alone can be, who sat under the most distinguished Italian teachers of his day, who moved among the men and women of France at the time when they were turning the world upside down: finally, who drew from the stream of wisdom set forth by Bacon and Locke and Newton."¹ Together with Załuski, Stanisław Konarski was a pioneer of enlightenment in Poland, introducing French philosophical literature with so much success that the land was soon acquainted with adaptations and translations of Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire. This "preceptor of Poland" was savagely attacked for the growth of Deism since he recommended that Piarist libraries be equipped with the works of Galileo, Newton, Leibnitz, Wolff, Descartes, Bacon, Locke and Voltaire.

It is possible that, as a churchman, the great Piarist had some qualms about exposing the Roman Catholic Polish mind to the work of men who denied, or at the very least, questioned the validity of Church authority in all

¹ W.J. Rose, Stanislas Konarski, London, Jonathan Cape, 1929, p. 62.

fields of study and endeavour. Nevertheless, as a scholar, he felt that the risk was worthwhile, for all the above-mentioned names, together with a host of others--from the Greek philosophers to the most recent--were recommended by him for inclusion in the curriculum of his "Collegium Nobilium" founded in 1740. Such were the results of Konarski's study both of the needs of his country and of the educational theories of Quintillian, Rollin, Comenius and Locke.

Konarski's educational work and his endeavours in the field of politics complemented each other, since both the education he planned and the political measures he advised were aimed at one thing only--the salvation of his beloved homeland. One wonders in what direction his energies would have been channelled had he been a Jesuit.

It would be exciting to find out exactly when he realized the urgency of the cause to which he was to devote his every effort. Was it being exposed to the works of foreign philosophers that opened his eyes to the canker at Poland's heart, or did he study them only in order to find the cure? Although mists of time shroud the answer to such speculation, the names of some of the philosophers studied by Konarski are known.

Living from 1530 to 1596, Jean Bodin was perhaps the greatest political thinker of the sixteenth century. He eloquently asserted the rights of the people and freedom of conscience. In 1576 his most influential work, "Les six

livres de la République," was published. Ten years later it appeared in Latin, thus becoming available to all scholars. His chief thesis is that monarchy is the best form of government and citizens are never justified in rebelling against their ruler. Bodin supported the King in every situation and saw salvation only on the suppression of party-politics to absolute sovereignty. To his "a state is an aggregation of families and their common possessions ruled by a sovereign power and by reason."¹ Discipline and obedience are the price of any association and "all mankind may be regarded as a series of associations."²

To Bodin "sovereignty is supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by the laws"³--except those of God and nature. He divides monarchy into despotism, royal monarchy and tyranny and asserts that the second is not only the best form of monarchy but of all kinds of government, since democracy, though closer to natural law, is spoilt by inefficiency and aristocracy by the vesting of power in a minority. Monarchy is best because all subjects are equally responsible to the king who can demand public service from all. The Senate is indispensable to every state, but must not be permitted to interfere in the monarch's powers. As to suffrage, Bodin is emphatic in his

¹ William Archibald Dunning, A History of Political Theories, New York and London, 1910, p. 86.

² Ibid., p. 92.

³ Ibid., p. 96.

support of the majority principle.

His views were so broad and liberal that he was branded an atheist. But now the main interest of "Les six livres" lies in its having dared to examine the institution of the State. Perhaps this was the impulse Konarski needed to begin his own magnificent work.

Next in chronological order in the list of thinkers whose work has found an echo in that of Konarski is St. Robert Bellarmine (1543-1621), a Jesuit cardinal and controversialist. It was he who engaged James I of England on the theory of the Divine Right of Kings which the churchman attacked furiously. In his "De Controversiis," he supports the right of Popes to depose rulers. But, because he claimed that pontiffs have only indirect power in temporal affairs, the book was listed in the Index.

His "Disputations" cover all the sorest issues of the day. In regard to monarchy, the cardinal, like Bodin, believes that it is the best possible form of government, and of all types of monarchy, limited sovereignty is best. This last thesis is in complete agreement with Konarski's own thinking.

Perhaps the most important influence on Konarski's work was that of John Locke (1632-1704), although in the field of education the Piarist owed more to Rollin. Locke was the chief representative of revolutionary Whig philosophy and, therefore, concentrated on the means to restrict sovereignty rather than to eliminate it. His "Two Treatises on Government" have been considered as the point of departure

for modern ideas. He made eighteenth century philosophy a discipline based on normal powers of observation and on common sense judgment. To him it was obvious that the "natural state" is intolerable because of the weakness and viciousness of most of humanity. That is why it unites in "civil states," in which the rights of individuals to life, liberty and property will be maintained and protected. Society determines the nature of and the punishment for offences against natural law. This to Locke is the sole function of political authority.

A corollary to the above is the idea that the will of the majority is a prime necessity for corporate action. How often was Konarski to deplore the lack of this essential in Poland!

In his study of modern political theories, Konarski included the works of lesser luminaries, such as the Abbé de St. Pierre (1688-1743), abbot of Tiron and member of the Academie Francaise. His writing is full of diatribes against politics as then perpetrated, and the existing laws and social institutions. Unfortunately, although the Abbé's philosophy seems to have influenced Rousseau, much of his output was hopelessly visionary.

Much more effectively than the venerable abbot did Charles De Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) in his "L'Esprit des Lois" subject social, religious and political institutions to searching analysis. In his work principles of law are substituted for abstract discussion

and, by means of definitions and analysis, prudent solutions for the amelioration of the lot of the people are proposed. The magical prestige of absolutist monarchy is stripped away, for Montesquieu's ideal was the English constitutional monarchy.

The appealing combination of wit and wisdom in the philosopher's "Lettres Persanes" made this satire on all institutions attractive to most intellectuals and it was widely read. Here Montesquieu classified governments into

- a) republics (democratic or aristocratic)
- b) monarchies
- c) despotism

and asserts that each of them has its particular 'principle'. Republics have political virtue, that is, love of country and of equality; monarchies have honour, a deep sense of the rights and privileges of each class and individual. Despotism rules by fear.

One of the chief points made by Montesquieu and one with which Konarski must have agreed wholeheartedly is that "the principle of aristocracy is corrupt when the nobility cease to feel the perils and responsibilities of their political power more than its delights."¹ To him, liberty can exist only when possessors of governmental power are, unlike the Polish magnates, subject to limitations.

¹ William Archibald Dunning, A History of Political Theories, p. 407.

Very popular in Poland became the writing of the supreme mocker, François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire (1694-1778), whose polemical genius has rarely been equalled, and who was utterly ruthless in his ridicule of the follies of government and society. Equally interesting to Polish intellectuals were the publications of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1717-1778), who saw in the French monarchy "the greatest misery for the greatest number." But the philosophies of these two Frenchmen who helped to consolidate the Enlightenment appeared too late to influence Konarski's work.

.....

Most venerable of the Piarist's Polish predecessors was the eminent Jesuit preacher, Piotr Skarga. Already a century before the birth of the Piarist, Skarga attacked the principle of the *Liberum Veto*. In his "Kazania Sejmowe" (Sermons to the Diet), he eloquently describes the inevitable fatal consequences of the lack of union among the nobles and upbraids them for their unpatriotic behaviour, hurling Jovian thunderbolts at their quarrels, blind godlessness, selfishness, and the many vicious practices current at sessions of the Diet. But, for some reason, he does not formulate any 'prescription' of principles for parliamentarism and, strangest of all, "praises completely *mal à propos* the wise man who is not inclined to numbers and majority."¹

¹ W. Konopczyński, Stanisław Konarski, p. 186.

Because to him monarchy is an assurance of stability, he supports the institution. Ignorance he sees as the greatest evil of the day. It is the butt of most of his attacks. This being the case, and Skarga's work being among others used as a basis for discourses in Piarist schools, it is not surprising that Konarski began his efforts to bring about a Polish Renaissance with the foundation of a school.

A man whose "counsels as to the ways and means of making the veto harmless or unnecessary were very useful and far ahead of his time"¹ was Stanislas Dunin Karwicki, a Republican who supported Leszczyński before his first election. His "De Ordinanda Republica" written in the early years of the eighteenth century stayed in manuscript form for over a century but was widely circulated and read. He was the boldest of the veto's opposers but even he did not dare to denounce it openly and suggest that it be banned. But there were certain times when he felt that it should definitely not be used: for instance, during the election of the Marshal and during interregna when, Karwicki says, candidates should be elected by majority vote of the voyevodas, and the King be elected by deputies rather than Viritim.

He would like to see banned from the Sejm certain 'explosion-prone' categories of nobles such as the banished and dispossessed, or those known to be in someone's pay. Measures should be undertaken, he says, to prevent irregularly-appointed deputies from having recourse to the

¹ W.J. Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 236.

Liberum Veto. For all elections, he feels, the majority principle is right; but he has no objection to the use of the unanimity principle at the voting of instructions to delegates. However, his work does contain a passage on the desirability of giving the King the power to summon the same deputies as often as he pleases, thus, in effect, voiding the veto.

Among his other suggestions are

- a) a permanently-elected Diet whose members would serve for several years
- b) no foreign candidates for the throne
- c) the king should have the assistance of a permanent council
- d) the machinery of the dietines should be altered so that they might the more surely represent the will of the people.
- e) the Sejm would do better work if it were divided into four houses - Law and Order, Justice, Treasury, and War.

Karwicki's only sin is the absence of ruthlessness in his work with which we know Konarski was familiar, because Karwicki's name is among others in a list the Piarist reformer made of people who discussed the effect of the veto.

Among the speculative writings comparing the current situation in Poland with that of France, is a highly interesting book by Jan Lipski, Bishop of Cracow, and later Cardinal and Vicechancellor. His "A Pole talks with a Frenchman"

was published anonymously circa 1732 and is full of shrewd observations on the sorrily confused election procedure and scepticism about the institution of free elections in general; so much so that, at one point, the author has the Frenchman say, "I'd not exchange our French freedom for your Polish one. In my country, everyone who behaves well sits "sub ficu sua" free from care, enjoying his possessions with complete freedom, limited, however, by God's law and that of the Crown."¹

The author is completely pro-monarchial in his beliefs and so disgusted with the rowdyism and confusion prevalent at sessions of the Diet that he compares the actual state of Polish 'freedom' with that of St. Raymond whose lips were padlocked by the Saracens so that he might no longer preach Christianity.

Published around the time of Lipski's candid "Conversation" was Jabłonowski's "Scruples without Scruple." Like the Cardinal, Jabłonowski was a monarchist. He was also a senator and knows exactly how scandalous was the situation in the Diet. His work is pessimistic in tone for all the author could see in Poland's future was a yawning chasm, into which she would unavoidably be plunged unless something were done about the Liberum Veto and the many abuses of public funds. But he could see no salvation because, in his opinion, the evil had penetrated too deep--the magnates were completely deprived of any sense of duty. Only the

¹ Konopczyński, Stanisław Konarski, p. 44.

miraculous appearance of a formidable enemy might bring about a change, reviving patriotism and reuniting the country, thus ending the existing anaemic anarchy.

Probably circulated among delegates to the 1743 Sejm was Stanislas Poniatowski's "A Landowner writes to his Neighbour," a serious reflection on the pressing needs of the country. Among other points it urges that

- a) the poor be exempt from all taxes, and be instructed to prepare one son for public service instead
- b) hostels and hospitals be built for the aged and sick even at the expense of monasteries
- c) the number of saints' feast-days be reduced because these innumerable 'holy days' stop work and injure the national economy
- d) provisions be made for defence, and the monasteries be forbidden to accept anyone under twenty-five years of age, since the ordaining of so many youths of military age was one of the reasons for Poland's weakness.

Like all other thinking citizens, Poniatowski worried about the Liberum Veto, but limited himself to suggesting passive resistance. He is "ready to leave unanimity for the time being, as long as the explosion of sejms is forbidden."¹

While preparing to write his own "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie," Konarski also studied Lubomirski's "De Vanitate

¹ Konopczyński, Stanisław Konarski, p. 186.

Consiliorum" which, as the title implies, was a criticism of Sejm procedure. But closest in tone and content to the Piarist's work was that of an ex-King of Poland, Stanislas Leszczyński.¹ His "A Free Voice Ensuring Freedom" may have been written as a loftily-philosophical and not very practical election pamphlet for 1733, but remains as a lasting indictment of the eighteenth century Polish State. How broad was the scope of the work will be realized from the chapter headings: the Clergy, the King, the Ministers of State, the Senate, the Nobility, the Form of Councils, the Grand Diet, the Interval between Diets, and in Part Two - the people, the Army, the Treasury, Justice, the Police, and the Election of Kings.

One of the shrewdest of Leszczyński's observations is that the nobles are so worried about potential danger from the King, that they cannot perceive the danger from themselves. Polish liberty is now nothing but licence, he says elsewhere; liberty carried to excess may degenerate into servitude, as the best medicine may become a poison in excess doses. And among the vices he singles out for mention are perjury, divorce, luxury, inveterate and inexprable hatreds, and usury. Magistrates, says Leszczyński, use their authority to oppress rather than to punish, while "tribunals are without justice, councils without union, the army without discipline, and the Treasury without money"!

¹ This is not surprising because "both internal and external evidence point to Konarski's having collaborated in the work". (Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 44.)

Leszczyński calls for a perpetual Diet, because between the biennial sessions nothing is done, since every measure requires the Diet's consent. Of the Diet he has this to say, "tumult and confusion reign, so that it looks as if chance rules Poland."

The one source of this misfortune "is that we feel we get great advantages from our privilege of exploding our Congresses, and we imagine that we cannot abolish this privilege without mortally wounding liberty." Yet, the ex-King insists that he has no intentions to do anything but uphold and defend this privilege and the decision of affairs "nemine contradicente". Some reservations are, however, made by the author: the veto should not be valid if all the Corps of State approves a matter, and dietines should never be exposed to the possibility of explosion. He also adds that if the "nemine contradicente" principle is adhered to, it must be balanced by that of "nemine absente".

Towards the end of Part Two from page 159 on, he lists the following abuses:

- a) bad use of Church property, which is the patrimony of the poor
- b) abuse of the power of Kings, for whom it is too easy to do evil, and too difficult to do good
- c) dangerous division of the authority of the Republic in several jurisdictions which can neither establish new laws nor execute the old ones.
- d) excessive power of the Ministers of State in certain cases, always insufficient for the good

of the Republic

- e) lack of power and prerogatives in the Senate, for the good of public property
- f) liberty destroyed by the means it uses to support it
- g) the natural talents of the citizens stifled by the general disorder, and by the very nature of the various professions in which one cannot advance through merit
- h) crimes of the State which are tolerated and unpunished
- g) blind desire to embrace incompatible professions whose distinction is essential in a State
- i) instability of public Assemblies which makes all Councils useless
- j) the badly understood power of exploding Diets
- k) impotence of the Republic to perpetuate itself and be regenerated in the creation of its Magistrates
- l) uselessness of Councils, because of their brevity as much as because of the form observed there
- m) offensive war prejudicial to every Republic
- n) insufficient forces in comparison with the extent of the kingdom and the power of Poland's neighbours
- o) indigence of the public Treasury
- p) annual changing of Judges of the Tribunals; incapability of these Judges

- q) sparseness of money, for want of commerce
- r) oppression and slavery of the people
- s) want of order and police in every part of the government
- t) impracticable form of the usual election of kings.

Valuable and interesting as Leszczyński's two volumes are, one is struck by the fact that, like all his predecessors, he never struck really deep enough. Of course, one must remember that the "Głos Wolny" was not as free as the title leads one to believe, because the author was bound by his political ambitions and could not afford to irritate the illustrious folk of what he hoped was again to be his kingdom too much. So it was left to Konarski to perform the radical operation on Poland's malignant growth.

PIARIST AND PATRIOT

Who and what was this man Konarski, this priest who was the greatest of all Polish patriots? His life was a succession of achievements, every one of which would have made a lesser mortal rest on his laurels. It almost seems as if he were afraid to allow himself a moment's rest, so aware must he have been both of Poland's great need, and in all humility of his God-given abilities to help his beloved homeland. No one could have taken the parable of the talents more to heart, consciously or otherwise, nor the dictum "of them, to whom much is given, much will be asked."

It seems fitting that he was born in 1700, the year of Narva, the great defeat of Russia, Poland's age-old enemy, since all his work was designed to create a new, noble, justly proud and fearless Poland, one that would never cower before the threat of sheepskin-clad foes. He could not know how little of his desperate work was to be crowned with the laurels of success--but even so, he would have rejoiced at the spirit of partitioned, war-torn Poland--the moral elan and fervent patriotism he had hoped to ignite, which was fanned by misery and desperation into a steady flame which has lasted to this day.

As so often happens, Jerome, the last-born child of George and Helena Konarski, was the one singled out by Destiny for special favour. Circumstances were propitious

for early blossoming of patriotism and devotion to the Church. Love of homeland was natural since Konarski's native province of Sandomir was full of impressive castles, monasteries and churches, which spelt 'tradition' and recalled the Golden Age. Tolerance could be learnt from the religious record of his family, which had been Protestant in sympathies for nearly 100 years. Patriotic pride was the motto of Sandomir, birthplace of many Confederacies designed to further Poland's interests, and to thwart their betrayal by the petty or self-seeking. As for service, that ideal must have been innate, since Konarski's family (middle-class gentry) had a noble record of military service at home and abroad.

Jerome was just a lad of nine when his parents died and he had to leave his home. But the seed had been sown and even the years of poor and scarcely-nationalistic schooling that followed could not erase the vivid impressions of his childhood. Neither in the Piotrków grammar school whither he and his two brothers were sent by their uncle, nor in the high school in Podoliniec which he entered at fifteen was there much designed to inspire a budding patriot. Essentials of the traditional subjects were taught, adequately enough; but what was uppermost in the graduate minds and hearts of the Piotrków school was dislike of the Jesuits--ancient rivals of the Piarist fathers in the educational field. Jerome left the sword-play common in encounters of students of Jesuit and Piotrków schools to others for he was busy making up his mind as to his vocation. At fifteen he was

admitted to the Piarist order as a lay-brother and from now on was to be known as Stanislaus A.S. Laurentio. Two years of novitiate, which included some teaching, ended in his being ordained, and permitted to prepare himself seriously for a Piarist's work--education. To this end he began to study philosophy, while continuing his work in Latin, and teaching all the while. 1719 saw the publication of his first work, The "Decada Lyrica," an imitation of Horace; and two years later his talents were so well recognized, and his prowess in rhetoric so well remembered by his former school-master, Father Slegielski, that he was called to be 'magister' in the Warsaw College where for four years he held the chair of Eloquence and Poetry, while assiduously engaged in his study of the classics, and making occasional public appearances as an orator.

His worth became increasingly apparent to his superiors and when they decided to send a man to the Piarist Collegium Nazarenum in Rome to study the great changes taking place in that institution, their choice fell on Konarski. In 1725, at an age when the youth, become a man, was weighing himself in the scales of his conscience, that Stanislaus arrived in the Eternal City and became exposed to the new trend in education--the discarding of scholastic methods and the acceptance of the Cartesian spirit of scientific investigation, coupled with a distinct effort to raise the profession of teaching to its deserved status. In this college, founded

fifty years before by Tonto, Konarski discovered how ignorant he was--he knew nothing of mathematics or modern language and little history or philosophy.

How avidly he must have studied the philosophia recentiorum and how well he must have assimilated it is proved by the fact that after only two years in Rome the foreigner was given the same chair in the Nazarene College as he had held in Warsaw. He was honoured further by being made deputy to the Rector, Paulius Chelucci. Since Chelucci also held the chair of Eloquence in the Academia Scientiae, the young Pole also had contacts with this institution of learning.

However much Rome taught him, and it must have been here that Konarski's educational convictions became crystallized, he felt he had to see another civilization, that of Paris and France. So in 1729 we find him in the Northern Capital of science and elegance. No time could have been more propitious. A Polish lady, daughter of Leszczyński, was Queen of France, Paris was becoming acquainted with the thoughts of Locke, Montesquieu had recently published his "Lettres Persanes," and Rollin had just given the world his thoughts on Education. Here Konarski, who felt his ignorance of the ways of the world, began his true mental renaissance, meeting famous writers and teachers, and visiting such educational establishments as the College of Plessis and that of the Four Nations.

The time came when he had to go back to Poland: but after six years abroad the man his Order had sent to the West to learn new ideas and then teach them at home seemed in no great hurry to embrace his profession anew. Indeed, he neglected it for ten years of writing, politics, and diplomacy; and tasted the gall of disappointment not once but thrice. Yet all this was part of the process of ripening and he was to come out of it equipped for his great Destiny.

First he devoted time and energies that could ill be spared to the editing of the Volumina Legum, a compendium of all Polish laws and statutes which took something like ten years to complete. In the introduction to the first volume, in which he reviewed the significance of legislation for Poland, we have a foretaste of his later criticisms of public affairs. For him the work was to prove invaluable because it acquainted him intimately with the causes of Poland's decline.

Then the Piarist father became involved in the Potocki-Czartoryski struggle over the proposed Hetmanship of Stanislas Poniatowski, and cannot but have known that the explosions of the 1729 and 1730 Diets were part and parcel of the Potocki's "efforts to paralyze the machinery of government,"¹ and make it impossible for Poniatowski to receive the mace of office. Attached to the Czartoryski "reform party," Konarski even composed a bona fide political pamphlet, "A Landowner Talks to his Neighbour," discussing in

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 83.

dialogue form the right of a king to appoint anyone he pleased as Hetman, and containing three main ideas:

- a) All nobles are equal (or should be so treated, whether lesser gentry or magnates).
- b) The dignity of the kingdom is what matters most.
- c) The explosion of the Diet was iniquitous, since the public was anxious to have the Seyms succeed in interrupting the Assembly's activities, the guilty ones were undermining the peoples' independence.

The "truant" Piarist was, amazingly enough, even entangled in the diplomatic complications following the death of Augustus II--so much so that he offered to write in favour of the candidacy of the late king's son. What is so peculiar about this is that the writer might well have preferred to support the cause of his countryman--the ex-king Leszczyński--who was seeking re-election. Since the interrex, Primate Theodore Potocki, had swayed the convocation Diet's decision in favour of the Polish candidate, Konarski's offer was readily accepted, and very soon "The Reflections of a Friend" which took as its point of departure the doubtful legality of Theodore Potocki's having taken an oath of support for Leszczyński from the Diet, was published and distributed--to such effect that it was the Saxon who became King of Poland.

Nobody is as yet quite certain what caused the patriot to support the Saxon candidate, but the most likely explanation is that Konarski may have been obeying his Piarist

superiors. As a "former" supporter of Leszczyński, he was "persona grata" in the ex-king's camp and his volte-face would surely ingratiate him among the supporters of the Saxon. Thus the future of the Order would be fairly safe, no matter what the outcome of the election might be. It is an established fact, however, that very soon after the "Reflections," he was back among the patriots, denouncing in a series of Latin letters the idea that anyone but Poles could have Polish welfare truly at heart.

In 1733 anxiety, the strain of work and of the times he lived in, ended in his being confined to bed. On recovery, Konarski was appointed secretary to George Ożarowski, special emissary to the Court of Louis XV from the Dzików Confederacy (under Jan Tarło) which was still fighting for Leszczyński's re-election, and for which the help of France was needed. Since Ożarowski was soon struck down by illness, Konarski had to shoulder the burden and suffer the realization of France's diplomatic finagling when Cardinal Fleury assented to a Franco-Polish offensive/defensive alliance while the first draft of a Franco-Austrian treaty lay in Vienna.

France was thus the scene of his second disillusionment. Konarski was exposed to international political intrigue, for all the fair promises he and his colleagues received were but "de la poudre aux yeux"--to blind them to the great betrayal of their country at the Councils of her neighbouring States. If the disastrous 1732 Grodno Diet

was Konarski's first disappointment, opening his eyes to the depths of degradation in national life, this ill-starred mission abroad was the second, and he returned home to Cracow, there to renew his vows and settle down perhaps with a sigh of relief as professor of Humanities, Political Science, and Modern Languages and as father confessor to the students of that city's Piarist College

"Yet little or no peace was allowed him. On one hand a throng of interests crowded in upon him, on the other, his work as teacher was not big enough to absorb him. He had clearly not yet found his proper life work. Better said, he could not yet create it, for that is what really great men must do."¹ And so he, though busy enough, champed at the bit. For helping Ożarowski with diplomatic reports and fulfilling the duties of his new position of assistant to the Provincial General--Jastrzebski (1737), teaching for a while at Radom College, defending the order from Jesuit attacks--were not his calling. To add to his misery, there came charges of sedition--based on a confidential memorial to the French agent Fénelon, in which, as loyal supporter of Leszczyński, he had given his views on the interregnum. This was hardly a document to please the Saxon ruler and his supporters. And as if this all were not enough, he must suffer poverty, for the bounty promised for his service in Leszczyński's cause was suddenly stopped. He could only

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 93.

swallow his pride and ask Jan Tarło, Palatine of Poznań, a relative and almost foster-parent, for intercession in the "affaire de sédition" and beg for a small loan. Finally, he heard of the displeasure of his superiors with his partisan activities. A Piarist is meant to be a teacher, and he had been absolved from purely religious functions, the better to perform his educational duties. Yet he had been busy disrupting the Order's public relations; a serious offence, when the Fathers' success could only rest on public support, especially in those days of conflict with the Jesuits.

But the man was made of noble stuff and all he suffered served only to clear his vision, and point out an undertaking worthy of his efforts. From the day when the Chelm Chapter appointed him successor, or assistant to the General, he began to see that thorough-going Reform of the Order was essential, if it was to survive and be a useful educational force. Knowing this, he quietly began training men eventually to be his staunch supporters, even arranging periods of study abroad for the ablest. But for all his knowledge of what should and could be done, he must mark time and try to satisfy all the varying interests, in whose mesh he was trapped. So we see him, at Tarło's request, sent on a compromising mission to beg the commander of Kamieniec to admit officers of the Russian army, then marching through Poland, to war on Turkey. Potocki, the Grand Hetman and Tarło were responsible for this and Konarski, indebted to Tarło, to use a Russian proverb, "Fell like a chicken into the soup." He was instructed by his General not to leave

the cloister or publish anything on public affairs, and above all, "not to expose the congregation in future to any odium."¹

Sobered by these restrictions, which must have been religious, he reached a turning point. From now on the diplomat and publicist are replaced by the educator--unremitting in his self-appointed task of wiping the stains off Poland's ancient escutcheon in the one way he saw open to him--teaching. He was lucky in that all was prepared for him. His superiors saw his fitness for the work of reforming educational methods, and in 1740 permitted the establishing in Warsaw of the "College for Gentlemen's Sons," to be modelled on Rome's Nazarene College. Long ago, Konarski had made notes on the working methods and constitution of the Collegium Nazarenum, and he now found enthusiastic support in his Governors, Jastrzebski. He was doubly fortunate for, in spite of his reputation as the Piarist "enfant terrible," when Jastrzebski died in 1741 it was Konarski who was appointed to succeed him. But in 1747, after a brief visit to Rome's educational institutions, Stanislaus resigned his Headship in his brother Ignace's favour, in order to devote himself entirely to the Collegium Nobilium and the vast amount of writing necessary before the project could be completed. First came the unpublished but already effective

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 99.

"Ordinations" or list of reforms, then a Latin grammar based on Comenius' methods and, for the upper classes, "The Correction of our Speech."

Side by side with all this went his ever thwarted efforts to find the means to erect a suitable modern building. Finally, using some of his own money and 1,100 ducats left him by Jastrzebski he leased the garden next to Warsaw College and on May 28, 1743 the Marshal of Poland laid the cornerstone. But it took 11 years and constant efforts by Konarski himself and a special commission for the raising of funds before the Collegium was ready for use. Meanwhile, he and his subordinates taught the new curriculum as best they could in a wing of the old Warsaw College, with an ever-increasing number of students, many of whom were later to do yeoman service to their land, aware as they were made by Konarski's example of their duty as citizens.

Of course, his health suffered and as early as 1746 Konarski was back in France for a "rest," spent chiefly in writing and raising funds. He knew, of course, that his work in the Collegium was but a single spark in the general murkiness of Piarist education, but on his return to Poland in 1748 he was shocked by the state of affairs within the Order. He allowed nothing to prevent him from seeing no less a person than His Holiness Pope Benedict XIV and persuading him to ordain a general inspection of the Order. For this he had to brave the hostility of the Polish Governor Kamienski, and the Roman General Del Becchio: but his zeal would brook

no obstacles and at last Konarski had the joy of seeing a careful investigation of every facet of Piarist teaching methods and teacher-training. The whole work culminated in the final draft of the "Ordinations," begun ten years before and now replete with minute detail.

The year 1754 saw the formal opening and dedication of his now completed model school. Thus "the plant was provided for turning out a new type of educated gentleman: the kind of man a needy nation could safely look to for guidance."¹ It was hardly Konarski's fault that his dream of the "leader-citizen" was not to bring his country all the benefits it might have done. Time and circumstances were against him, for shadowing the country even then was a sword of Damocles--the threat of Partition.

If he was aware of such a possibility, it must have made him work the more feverishly.

His "Collegium" would turn out a class of leaders, sensitive to the needs of their nation and capable of taking the helm of the ship of state. But they would need sign-posts and guide-lines to help them steer the country clear of abysses that yawned on every side. And so he again turned to his desk, leaving the running of the College to others, and dedicating most of the next eight years to the compiling of four small but meaty volumes, his "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie," or "Effective Counsels in Government," published

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 121.

between 1761 and 1763. They were intended to stir up public awareness of all existing national evils by body blows dealt with sledge-hammer ruthlessness.

This done, he was to live another eleven years in semi-retirement, occupied chiefly in refuting the many attacks on his person and his policies. He found time to write "The Religion of Good Men" attacking the then popular Voltarian idea that religion is of and for the ignorant, since to him it was axiomatic "that without good habits and religion to secure them a man cannot be a good citizen or public servant."¹ Like his other works, this was not to go unchallenged. The Papal Nuncio Durini took offence and accused him of crimes and heresies, including that of wishing to wipe out national liberties.

Actually the nuncio, an ultra-Catholic, could not forgive the patriots for having stood by the king in the affair of the Bar Rising (1768). This had been caused by the king's resumption of negotiations with Russia, and one condition of the proposed alliance had been the restoration of Civic rights to Protestants. Konarski's 1767 defence of Roman Catholics versus Dissenters made his stand perplexing but one must remember that he was an advocate of "concentrated" leadership, apparently even if the leader happened to be a foreign king.

All the while, Konarski was under fire for his championing of the "philosophia recentiorum," odious to the

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 140.

Roman Catholic church, since materialism, realism, scepticism and Deism, were generated, robbing her of her flock. And all the while he fought the evils he saw, his last piece of writing being an attack on the powers that had brought about the first Partition, embodied in, an epithalamion on the wedding of Ignace Potocki, one of his former pupils.

Alternate abuses and honours were showered upon him, but when he died in 1773, the nation was united in doing him honour. It was a Jesuit, Father Zachariewicz, who pronounced the funeral tribute with probably no feeling of hypocrisy or incongruity, since there had been few men of such blameless ideals and aspirations and with such selfless, wholehearted and unmalicious suggestions for their achievement. Nor have there been many who lived less for themselves alone.

ANALYSIS OF THE AILMENT

The student of Konarski's work can but speculate as to why his master-piece, the "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie" ("Effective Counsels in Government") was not published earlier than January 1761.¹ It has been established, chiefly on internal evidence and that of letters to the author, that the first two columns were written between 1744 and 1750 and circulated in manuscript. Whatever the reasons for delay and the fact itself perhaps regretted (by those who feel that, had the volumes appeared ten years earlier, the Partitions might have been avoided), one can at least be glad that the books were published, read, and discussed, arousing much ire and considerable approval. Konarski's chief aim was to get something done; to have prominent citizens at least ponder the problem no matter what their reaction might be. His was the task of stripping the scales off eyes blinded by personal contentment; theirs would, he hoped, be the active promotion of his plan. And if he took ten years to consult worthy and illustrious folk, gathering ideas and opinions, these became the basis of his own final judgment, so the period cannot be considered one of stagnation.

The first volume appeared anonymously but the author's identity was unmistakable. His views were already well-known and the style of writing--exhortative, repetitive,

¹ W.J. Rose gives his views on pages 242-245 of Stanislas Konarski.

full of erudite references and quotations, at times devastating in accusation, sometimes almost pleading, always intensely warm and human, above all, the style of a trained orator who wrote as though he were addressing an audience, plainly revealed the authorship.

The first volume is in twenty-one chapters, the last being a fairly lengthy conclusion in which nine main points are made. Each chapter begins with a brief summary of the contents,¹ perhaps aimed here at busy people who might find the work more palatable in précis form (although the Piarist would have preferred that every word be taken into account). So the whole work opens with a moving appeal that no judgment be made for or against the book, until it has been read carefully, "For," says Konarski, "how can you judge a thing which you have not well and diligently weighed?" And he ends the introduction thus: "I call on your judgment and justice, I call on your love for your fatherland. May God grant you health!" This personal touch is preserved throughout the entire work.

Konarski compares the Polish realm to a building or a ship that has been repaired hurriedly and sketchily whenever need arose, the patches being no guarantee of safety, but rather the opposite, because they hid the fact that "the whole edifice should be rebuilt from the ground up." He assures us that anyone who looked into the matter would find

¹ This practice, usual for the age, is maintained throughout the four volumes.

conspicuously needed alterations. For instance, he begins: people mention that the administration of justice, cornerstone of the welfare of any State, leaves much to be desired. Then too, Poland is weak, with military strength hardly proportional to her dimensions. The Treasury and Department of Public Finance continually suffer losses and money depreciates steadily. Trade is not one-thousandth as vigorous as it should be in so abundant a land, nor are there sufficient consumer-goods to satisfy the needs of the population. Add to these the decay of town-life, unsuitable training and education of the gentry, weakened authority of the Senate, corruption of the Royal court, interference by local and foreign factions, "abominable disorders" in the Diet and dietines, upheavals of interregnum periods, and a thousand more public evils, and one may conjure up a fair picture of the calamitous condition of the realm. "But," the author points out, "what is the use of just naming them (the evils) and not doing something about them? To the willing, help is always close at hand."

Yet the reader is warned that no remedy is possible for separate wrongs unless the root of all the evils be eradicated. An unnamed patriot once said: "Everything rises from one poisoned source--the bad form of councils," Konarski reports. This statement was the point of departure for his own investigations, he admits, adding that his work is really only a compilation of various reflections, and that he has used the opinions of wise and worthy men, sorting them

into some semblance of order.

Now comes his own summary of the problem, the focal point of his work. All the aforementioned evils can be treated only through proper channels of government. For this one needs councils. Poland has a six-week Sejm every two years, but, if the truth be made public, she has, in fact, no Sejms "And is it surprising that without such council we are perishing?" Worst of all, there is complete freedom to transgress every law. This cannot be otherwise when the Sejm, legislator, defender and executor of laws, is constantly being exploded. True enough, occasionally there is a successful session, but what purpose does it serve when everything achieved in it is upset by the failures of the following sessions?

"Blacker days than those upon us now are in store unless something is done," the author warns; and, having painted as grim a picture as anyone might need to be convinced of the urgency of the matter, he next lists thirteen suggestions he has heard concerning the means of achieving a successful end of each Diet. He then attempts to prove the ineffectiveness of each.

In the opinion of some Polish citizens it was the niggardliness of the court that was responsible for the troubles in the Diet. It was not enough, these men believed, for the king to exhort deputies to greater efforts, to reason with them about their duty to land and "constituents." He should support such persuasion with liberal gifts and the

awarding of badges of office to the right people. To Konarski the idea was intolerable for, moral considerations aside, it should be obvious to all that people slighted by the king would surely find a way to explode the Sejm out of spite. Or else the monarch might have to satisfy troublesome elements at the expense of people worthy of honour or reward. Nor is it likely that the Privy Purse could ever hold enough to sate the greedy.

Nor did Konarski agree with the opinion of those who felt that it was the magnates who were at the rest of the problem. It was the "pans," such men insisted, and the rivalry of the great families that caused all of Poland's distress. Each magnate had his own adherents and the gentry followed their lead. "This is indubitably the case." Konarski agrees, but demonstrates that the magnate is really at the mercy of his supporters who are corrupt enough to transfer their allegiance if well paid. So one cannot entirely blame the scions of Poland's greatest families, particularly since there are opposite sides to nearly every problem. They are entitled to vary in opinions and loyalties and are no worse than the nobles of other nations. "Large fortunes always bring much evil and little virtue." Besides, is it humanly possible that all the magnates be forever friendly and forget all private interests and ambitions? Irreconcilable parties have always existed and will always exist, so it seems useless to base Poland's welfare on

human passions. "What sort of a Diet is this where one must beg, persuade, promise, pay and reward people not to ruin their country?" the Patriot cries. But it is not, he insists, the people who are at fault, but the institution. "Even Heaven's angels would not be able to ensure the success of Seyms under the present circumstances!"

Three more suggestions are summarily dealt with. The first, ie., the proposal that matters on which there is general agreement be put through and all others discarded. Konarski can see no value in settling a host of trivial affairs while momentous problems are forever left unsolved. Nor can he, a disciple of liberty, agree to the idea that delegates whose oratory is weaker should not be heard. It would be equally wrong not to hear delegates unless their arguments were obviously lawful and right. "Has the Law not a thousand interpretations?" Konarski asks.

Chapter eight of Volume One is devoted to a discussion of the sixth suggestion, taken from Lukasz Opaliński's "Conversation of a Curate with a Landowner" (1641).¹ This is important enough to warrant a brief resumé of the main points.

- a) In order to save time, a Marshal (to be elected on the first day of the session) is to propose the agenda in proper order.
- b) Difficult matters should be discussed by a special committee before being presented to

¹ Opaliński, who died in 1662, was a marshal of the Crown-land.

the whole House.

- c) Matters concerning the Republic are to take precedence over all others. A list should be drawn up to determine which affairs are to be considered public and which private; which may be contradicted and which may not. Protests are to be forbidden in regard to questions that have already been settled.
- d) The House of Deputies is not to sit more than eight days alone; a deputy must defer to the general decision of others even if this decision is against the opinion of his voyevodstve; none may interfere with the Sejm for private reasons, but only with well-expounded public motives.
- e) Sejms must begin by settling complaints as to interpolations.
- f) There should be severe punishments for disturbing the Sejm.
- g) Sejm courts are not to take up all the Diet's business.
- h) Sessions should be secret.

Much of the above has Konarski's full support but he does quarrel with point c). One may, he argues, agree with part of a protest, but would it be possible to list all the types of contradictions that might arise? Also, if one ponders the question, such legislation would be a violation of the "Free Voice." Furthermore, "It seems to me to be unreasonable to permit protests only on some points. For,

as long as it is permissible to obstruct Seyms for any reason at all, they will continue to fail, and if one is muddled through it will benefit us little."

He can see no need for separate deliberation by the House of Deputies since most of the allotted eight days are wasted. Were the House to meet in the presence of the Senate, it would have the advantage of the latter's information on various points, as well as a restraining and guiding influence.

In discussing "acceptable" reasons for exploding Seyms, Konarski does not attempt to contain his wrath. "I cry out to this in a voice that might be heard all over Poland - NONE AND NEVER ANY!"

He first points out that people always give so-called important public reasons for exploding Seyms. But these are only cunning camouflage for private interests. There can never be, he avers, reasons grave enough to warrant ruining public councils. "I ask myself and let us weigh it, please - who are these heads, these subjects, these people who explode councils and Seyms? Are these the wisest of the deputies? Are they the most important men? Is there nobody wiser, more respectable and upright than they?" Boldly, he declares that it is only the hirelings who are heard, not their masters, who are too ashamed of what they are doing to do it themselves.

Next he attacks the idea of "Bom poseł wolny" (I am a free deputy). This is, according to the author, how the hired exploders of Seyms think: "If my reasons (for explosion) seem insufficient, I shall give the one reason with which all will have to agree: 'Because I may, because this is my opinion, because this is how I want it, because I am answerable for my view to nobody.' If anyone disagrees, he is against liberty." This warped thinking is the basis of the "Liberum Veto" (Free Veto) and the support of the "Głos Wolny" (Free Voice) is the fundamental principle of the present form of government.

But what would happen, Konarski asks, should we allow the disruption of councils for "good reasons" alone? Could deputies still not find dozens of acceptable arguments? Whatever is proposed, a clever man bent on exploding the Sejm will counter with a "good" reason, or else, while the House stops to deliberate on this or that protest, the time allotted for the session will lapse and the Diet adjourn, unsuccessful even without being exploded.

The Piarist's attitude to "Conversation of a Curate with a Landowner" seems, not unjustifiably, slightly patronizing. "All is rather good but I can see nothing effective," he writes.

He passes to the examination of the proposal that persons suspected of exploding Seyms for bad reasons be tried and, if found guilty, punished accordingly. Konarski is in favour of the idea in principle, and scrutinizes it minutely. He decided that a special Tribunal should be set up, with

members elected by majority vote of the voyevodstvos. There should be four deputies from each voyevodstve, and four senators, if they are to sit for half a year; eight for quarterly sessions. "How wonderful it would be," Konarski muses, "if such a Tribunal were fortunate enough to frighten people to the point where there are no more crimes against the State." But even so, he would keep this body as a sort of "scarecrow," like the Bastille, Siberia, the Castel Sant-Angelo, Spandau and so on in other countries. In his opinion, no well-governed State can do without such a preventive measure.

But enthusiasm fades before cold reason and Konarski realizes that the nobles would never agree to the establishing of such a Tribunal since it would appear impossible to them for a Court to try only crimes (chiefly that of corruption) and never interfere with their precious "głos wolny." Moreover, evil will find a way; and the terror inspired by the Tribunal would only lead to more cunning and greater care on the part of the exploders. The source of the trouble is the legality of explosion, provided that it is supported by acceptable reasons. "Explosion, under any circumstances, should be made unlawful" he declares.

Three flimsier suggestions of means to ensure successful Seyms follow and are refuted as neatly as the others.

- a) People should be permitted to explode Seyms only in plenary session, before King and Senate. This would make deputies less prone to use the Liberrum Veto.
- b) If a Seym is about to be exploded, let it be adjourned, thus ensuring that at least what has already been decided will stand.
- c) Have Congresses or Conventions like the 1710 Council of Warsaw instead of Seyms.

The first method might, the author says, be adopted, were there not a dearth of brazen men. Siciński exploded the Seym (in 1652) in the presence of the King and Senate. The very Seym that advised the above deterrent was exploded by Zabokrzyski in the Senate. The second suggestion is useless since severe controversies may arise over the very suggestion of adjournment and culminate in explosions. Moreover, if someone were really determined to explode a Seym, he would find a means to do so before the session could be adjourned. Finally, since the threat of explosions arises usually only over major issues, adjournment, like a previous suggestion, would only result in their never being settled. Conventions are, to Konarski, diametrically opposed to the very basis of the Republic's system of government. The Warsaw Council was an emergency wartime measure. It succeeded, but this is no reason to substitute it for the usual type of Council. The Piarist is equally outspoken against "mounted Seyms," i.e., Confederacies. None were known to have occurred except at elections of Kings, although up to five ordinary Diets in a row had failed. He concludes with the pithy retort of Bishop

Sianiawski of Cracow: "I do not know that horse's heads will do better than our own."

The suggestion that Confederacies replace ordinary Seyms is discussed carefully although the author, unlike many Poles, did not see in them the only means of saving Poland. He would have preferred "to regulate and establish forever all future ordinary Seyms; to examine and strengthen effective means of preventing explosion." But, realizing that no Sejm of the existing type would legislate for the success of future sessions, he admits that one Confederacy will be necessary--a special meeting of King and nobles, "wishing only God's approval and good for the nation, and having but one aim - the mending of ordinary Seyms and bad forms of Council." But, Confederacies, being "last straws," should not replace Diets; it should be realized that, as soon as a Confederacy is over, the land is again without government.

It is in discussing the last suggested method of retaining Seyms that Konarski discloses the impetus which led to the writing of "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie," his discovery of the reason for the explosion of the 1732 Warsaw Sejm,¹ namely, personal gain. "No Sejm," Konarski insists, "has been exploded except for money." This point is made in connection with the suggestion that the severest law be passed, branding frequent exploders traitors to the Republic.

¹ The story is given in detail by W.J. Rose in Stanislas Konarski, pages 232-234.

The tale he has to tell is so repugnant to the author that he quickly passes to a eulogy of the unselfish deputies of the 1732 Diet, men who would not accept the proffered bribe. Only then does he begin his criticism of the thirteenth proposed method. Most people both at home and abroad, he says, know who the real culprits (purchasers of explosions) are and why they do it, but it is no use passing laws against them. They would only become more furtive; besides, to be effective, a law has to be executed. But Poland, having no Sejm, has no organ to supervise the execution of what legislation there is. Nor will there be one as long as we do not assure the success of Sejms.

Summing up his reactions to all thirteen proposed methods, Konarski says, "It seems to me that it has become evident that not one of them has anything fundamental or sure in it." That is his reason for the following discourse. "Polska nierządem i nieporządkiem stoi." (Poland stands by misrule and disorder) was a well-known eighteenth-century maxim and the author understood the position of people who felt there was no remedy for the evils of the day. "Where there have been disorders, they have turned into customs. So they despair of the Republic and wish to leave her to her fate." But he preferred to think of those who, although unsuccessful in their efforts, kept on working. "It would be a poor owner indeed," he writes, "who would not try to fight a fire

engulfing his house while there is any hope of saving anything."

There were also those who hoped that Poland's neighbours would not let her fall because her freedom was in their interests.¹ Some were even sure that, because of this, other nations envied Poland's disorder. To Konarski, this was an untenable position. "A private home, family, village, city, all fall through disorder," he cries, quoting Seneca: "Whatever swerves from its regular groove flies into the abyss without hope of a good end." And now the man of the Cloth speaks. "God gave order to things. To God and people alike, disorder and confusion are hateful. Should they be dear to the Poles?" Then, barbing his words with sarcasm, he continues, "We see how we 'stand' in disorder, how smoothly things are going, and how much other lands have to envy us for. We are, rather, a laughing-stock."

He sees Poland's survival thus far as due only to her still being a nation, one with a past so glorious that the present still reflects its lustre. But if things go on as they are, he cautions, ruin is inevitable. "It is the greatest possible disaster for a nation to place its hopes in and leave its defence to its neighbours," for, he assures the reader, in true Macchiavellian fashion, when the time is ripe, such neighbours will demand or simply take their pound of flesh. "Woe to the weak!" he exclaims. "One's best defence is one's own power. For there are surely those who

¹ Because Poland was a "buffer-zone" between them.

want to see Poland grow weaker and weaker until she is completely dependent on them." The patriot is also a prophet, "And if it comes to some division of us into equal parts for them, just see how they would not let us fall!"¹

The theme of the Conclusion to Volume One and indeed of the whole work, is: "As the soul is to the body, so is the Sejm to the Republic." Developing this idea, Konarski continues. "Everywhere some highest power must rule everything. In Poland this power is vested in the Sejm--that is, the king and the two Estates."² so that to interfere with the smooth running of the Polish Diet is equivalent to overthrowing the king and the two Estates, which can lead only to anarchy. Poland will last only as long as Sejms last. Hence, is it not worth every effort of true patriots to strive to abolish the ruinous power of Librum Veto placed in their hands by their forefathers?

It would further pay good citizens, Konarski continues, to consider that if Sejms do not succeed, their power will be transferred elsewhere. People have attacked the Royal court (usually unjustly) for occasionally taking over the Diet's prerogatives. But, says the author, when no Sejm concludes successfully over a period of years, the urgent matters that accumulate have to be solved somewhere. "That Poland has a wise and just king is her good fortune." It

¹ The author seems here to foretell the Partitions.

¹ The House of Deputies and the Senate.

is the gentry who are depriving themselves of their hard-won rights and refuse to see it. They are also blind to the fact that thousands of private matters cry out in vain for solution by Diets that never achieve anything; so it would benefit private interests immeasurably to have Diets succeed. Besides, it is almost shameful to be a deputy, for one derives no merit from attending a Sejm. As things stand, why should even the wisest and most patriotic senator or minister trouble himself to support Poland's interests? All his efforts will be in vain. How different things would be were Sejms to succeed. Every man would try to distinguish himself, bringing honour to the szlachta as a whole, and to his district in particular, and benefitting the Republic by such laudable rivalry for excellence.

And what a waste the present procedure is! Waste of health, effort, time and money, he asserts. Moreover, the exploder of a Sejm is worse than an arsonist, for the latter ruins only buildings, but the former destroys the State. Finally, Konarski strikes directly at national pride, relating that when, during a dramatic spectacle in Holland, clamorous birds were set free in the auditorium, this was announced to be just like the Warsaw Sejm.

So the author quotes Kochowski's prayer: "Let God either return to Poles the old way of thinking, or give them some other remedy for this dangerous freedom."

.....

Volume Two, which appeared in the Autumn of 1761 is concerned with "the true and only way, compatible with native freedom, to preserve Seyms and improve the form of councils, and with its great benefits."

It begins with a consideration of anarchy, its forms and sources; in the course of which the author compares affairs in eighteenth century Poland with those of ancient Rome in the days of Crassus, Pompey and Caesar. "We cry out," Konarski writes, "against unjust tribunals, perjury, all kinds of crookedness, lack of troops, and general baseness, but in reality it is as if every inhabitant were thinking that all else may well perish as long as things go well for him." As at the outset of Volume One, he lists all the unsavory details of abuses rampant at the time, and makes a special point of the fact that for over seventy years only one ordinary Sejm, that of 1726, was successful. This being the case, he says, it is necessary to relate how such chaos came to be, and he devotes four chapters to the history of the decay of the Polish Diet where, of old, the majority principle was accepted. It was only in recent times, the writer affirms, that unanimity and the *Liberum Veto* crept in.¹ His main argument follows. There have been no laws passed legalizing explosion of Seyms.² All that exploders can use

¹ Professor Konopczyński states that recent research does not support Konarski's belief. Majority was accepted only from the reign of Stanislas, while unanimity dates from the days of Zygmunt Stary (1506-1548).

² Previously he pointed out that there has, regrettably, been no legislation forbidding explosions.

to defend their actions is Custom, deeply ingrained bad habit, so that when people¹ attack explosions they violate no law of the realm. Fine laws do exist - laws ensuring a "free voice"; unfortunately, these are misinterpreted to cover the right to explode the Diet.

The gentry, Konarski continues, have made a fetish of their power of explosion and these see its possible abolition as the beginning of the downfall of their class. "If this is so, then until 1652² we did not have a single real nobleman."

Another question arises: was the Polish "szlachta" truly free until that fateful day in 1652? The author believes that the nobility's freedom dates back to 1374,³ because ever since then the nobles numbered, among a host of other rights, that of free election of kings, power to decide what laws they wanted and determine what taxes they would pay. All this they had, but not the right to explode Councils, which is nothing but a pernicious chimera instilled by envious neighbours desirous of furthering their own interests. It is a superfluous "privilege" to a Polish nobleman who can gain his ends by other means." "There is one troublesome factor," the Piarist admits, "namely the noble serving foreign interests." But he feels this difficulty is not insurmountable,

¹ Cited in Chapters seven and eight are some of the most eminent opposers of the Liberum Veto:- Szczuka, Kromer, Bielski, Orzechowski, Braun, Załuski, Zawadzki, Sarnicki, Piasecki, Lengnich, Karwicki, Fredro, Starowolski, Kochowski and others.

² Date of the first explosion of a Sejm by an individual deputy.

³ Koszyce.

provided the majority agrees that it is indeed the explosion of Seyms that is the source of Poland's misfortunes.

The author next resorts to Locke's principle of commonsense, urging the reader to realize the futility of the unanimity principle.¹ "Even God could not bring about unanimity without altering our personality as human beings."

Konarski is aware that some Seyms and dietines did succeed although based on the principle of unanimity, but these were exceptions. "Polish magnates," he begs, "please deign to consider whether it is compatible with your interests that the nation be kept in so noxious an error. Is it right to persuade the "szlachta" that anyone unwilling or unable to agree has the right to explode Seyms on the nebulous principle of universal agreement?"

He then proceeds to a conversation of several prominent men whom he once heard trying to reconcile the right of each delegate to explode Seyms, with the successful conclusion of sessions. They could find no way to do this. Equally unsuccessful was Primate Wacław Leszczyński and a special commission set up in the reign of Jan Kasimir.² Supporting his argument further, Konarski refers the reader to Volume Five of the "Volumina Legum" for the year 1673, page 190, which calls for the election of Marshals and the settling of other matters by majority vote.

¹ A Turkish ambassador once said, "How can one put a thousand heads under one cap?"

² 1649-1668.

There is a feeling of nostalgia in the passage recalling the glories of past ages when Poland did function on the principle of plurality. Then, after recalling confederacies and convocation Seyms at which the Majority count was applied, the author exclaims, "What dull minds then cannot see that plurality and freedom are compatible?" Take away licence and freedom must remain, for the true freedom of citizens depends on their governing themselves and not on that wretched 'PROTESTOR!' which is not the cornerstone of freedom, but the tyranny of one, usually corrupt, man over many. As for equality, so dear to the gentry, Konarski sees it as the right to govern, give opinions and vote equally. "Then how can one be equal to a hundred?" he asks.

The next four chapters form one of the author's frequent "topical asides," They are devoted to discussions of the chaos prevalent at sessions of the Diet, references to antiquity, when Roman citizens came to hate the Tribunes' power of Veto, and the affirmation that even in monarchies, if the Sovereign is good, there can be freedom. "But all other Republics before us fell," the author warns, because they sank into anarchy which in turn developed into absolutism.

In Chapter eighteen there is a vigorous summary of what the "Głos Wolny" really is: the right to talk freely about everything and to give one's vote to either side. "This is the true free voice which one does not have under absolute monarchs where at councils, after having spoken, one must be silent and let the king decide." There follows a charmingly

human attempt to pacify the ruffled pride of voters who might support the defeated position. "Just think how often your disagreement defeats the opinion of others," the Piarist pleads. There is even a slightly incongruous appeal to "such base souls as might fear that their personal gain might suffer if the majority principle is introduced." They should realize that they may then expect even more personal gain, for only one man need be bribed to explode a Sejm, but to get a majority, the support of many will be needed.

True to his belief in the basic goodness of man, however, he proclaims that, in spite of corruption which can never be entirely eradicated, good will always triumph if the plurality system is adopted, "for there will always be more of them (good men)."

This is followed by a comparison of conditions in eighteenth century Poland with those of other Republics¹ where plurality had been accepted. While abroad, Konarski had seen the "wealthy, populous, magnificent cities and blooming towns and villages" of such States. "If Poland were governed well, she could consider herself equal among the greatest, most beautiful, abundant and honoured realms." But things are as different as can be between his homeland and the countries whose benefits take pages to enumerate. "All this² comes only from good and effective counsels in

¹ Venice, England, Switzerland and Holland.

² This refers to all the marvels and comforts of life abroad.

government" he writes, "and how the heart of a good patriot aches! How is one not to be ashamed, in spite of oneself, and not think 'Could not we too have all that?'. "

The reflective tone of this passage is shattered by one pointing out how wrong it is to feel that forbidding explosion would be contrary to the interests of the gentry--who felt their greatest prerogative to be the "Liberum Veto." Had the gentry no such power, some people believed, the magnates would have no use for them. Conversely, the gentry, inspiring the magnates with fear of what they might do by using this "privilege," force the "pans" to pay well for services rendered. At this Konarski voices his disgust. "O one who does not know what a Polish noble is! You are a slave to others, both at home and abroad. You have been debased so that only by selling that which belongs to the nation can you sustain yourself." There is nothing wrong with serving others, but it is another matter to serve dishonourably. Here the author reverts to practical rather than lofty expressions, addressing the gentry somewhat like the "evil ones" of a previous chapter.¹ If plurality is introduced "the wealthy will have to gain the favour of not a few but all, if possible, for each vote will be important. And now each man will be able to serve honourably, Konarski exults, "for it will not be for the ruin of deliberations and of the nation, but rather to support honourably somebody's election or interests." He further assures them that "there

¹ The author does not attempt to conceal that he is really addressing the same people.

will be less injuries, scorn and affliction at the hands of the magnates, for when they need you for plurality purposes, you will be respected by them." And he exhorts the gentry not to oppose the abolition of explosion on the premise that this would close all avenues for their private revenge on magnates who might wrong them.¹ "If some 'pan' has wronged you, how has the fatherland done so?" Besides, there can be no enforcement of justice against the magnates unless Seyms succeed.

To be entirely fair, the author now examines the suggestion that it is against the magnates' interests to abolish explosions, because it is easier for them to bribe only one man. Humiecki believed that the gentry would give up the right of explosion had the "pans" not persuaded them that this prerogative was the touchstone of their freedom. Konarski himself, after expressing pious hopes that the gentry might persuade the magnates of the error of this idea, urges that the great nobles try to realize that the better things are for Poland, the better it will be for them. And there is no doubt in his mind that, were the majority principle accepted, whatever measures might be supported by the pans would necessarily go through, because their interests, credit, proposals and work could never go unrewarded.

Finally, Konarski avers that it is slander to say that the Senate is against effective councils, hoping, as many say it does, to take all power into its own hands. For,

¹ It was not uncommon for a lesser noble to bide his time and explode a Sejm when a magnate whom he bore a grudge proposed a measure.

were the Senate to desire the ruin of Seyms, it would be harming itself, since its power is based on the support of the nobility. Once this support was lost, the Senate would sink to the level of a Royal Council, for there has never been a Republic composed of both a monarchy and an aristocracy.

Volume Two concludes with a section devoted to forty letters, including one from the Primate, himself, received by the author¹ after the publication of the preceding tome. Such names as Bishop Grabowski, the aged Poniatowski, Bishop Załuski, John Clement Branicki, the Czartoryskis, Marshal Bieliński, Antoni Potocki, Plater, Mniszech and Lubomirski--they were all there. Bishop Krasinski assured him that his fears as to the reception "Effective Counsels" would meet with were quite unfounded, since for every ten who oppose its principles there are a hundred in the land ready to defend them. The one-time disturber of peace, Bernard Godzki, wrote: "You have dared with a bold heart to break the first ice. Go forward with this same greatness of purpose, and rest assured that truth will prevail over even the difficulties most entrenched by age!" And the marshal of the local assembly of Słonim, writing to the Public Censor, since he did not know how else to reach the author, told of how the book had made such an impression on his county legislature that the decision fell

¹ who gratefully acknowledges receipt of such encouragement.

to include in the instructions given their delegates to the next Seym a motion providing for the legalizing of the majority principle in all public business."¹

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 247.

MAJORITY THE DREAD

The, to this writer's taste, less inspired but nevertheless necessary third volume of "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie," published in 1762, opens with an expression of Konarski's joy at the reaction of the majority of thinking people, who were definitely on his side. There follow six chapters recounting the activities of Seyms since the reign of Zygmunt Stary and one containing a summary which states that no Sejm was exploded for honourable reasons or to aid the nation. The author points out that he could have disclosed the names of the culprits, "but prudence forbids telling the whole truth about the living; besides, they will receive their deserts in time." Causes of explosions could, however, be listed: these were primarily foreign interests striving to keep Poland in disorder, and the enmity of the great families. "Both sides,"¹ he says, "see the Sejm as a theatre for their squabbles"; and there ensues an impassioned diatribe against such shameful behaviour. "Time will not erase the memory of their deeds." But the writer does, with his usual generosity, stress the fact that it is only the bad form of councils that makes it possible for nobles to explode Diets. "They would not be exploded if they could not be." It is as simple as that, he affirms, proceeding

¹ The Potockis, or National Party, aimed at transforming Poland into a strong state through alliance with France, Sweden and Turkey, while the Czartoryskis, the Family Party, (allied with Russia) wanted to reform the government by securing firm "family" hold on it.

to a spirited discussion of certain people's belief that explosion of Seyms can benefit the nation if, for instance, the successful conclusion of a session were obviously going to confirm an odious succession, or involve Poland in a dangerous alliance. To this Konarski replies: "Those who pay for the hindering or explosion of Seyms do not and can never have such good intentions." Had there been a single explosion that was not caused by human passions? Zeal for law and order, freedom, fear of succession, threats of war or harmful alliances were the usual language of those who attempted to conceal private interests behind a veil of public-spirit.

Here the author stops to refute a naive protest, made on the grounds that there was no such account in the Diary of Diet activities, against his account of the true occurrences behind the explosion of the previously-mentioned 1732 Sejm. Truly "One who loved his fellow men," Konarski adds that, vile though the action of the Colonel in question was, one must be heartened by the fact that nearly fifty equally needy deputies refused the proffered bribe. Now comes a discussion of the Potocki's part in the explosion of the 1744 (Grodne) Sejm. "The losing of this, the best opportunity for needed reforms offered in a generation, constitutes such a blot on the scutcheon of the magnates that in order not to be unfair to them, one must take into account their chief pretext for opposing the majority system of administration--their deep-seated fear of the Court and its

power to fill vacancies from among its own favourites."¹

No less a person than Jan Tarło said that he would sign with his own blood for plurality if he were assured that the court could never apply the principle in its own favour, by conferring honours and thus obligating people to support the Royal Party. To him, therefore, the *Liberum Veto* was a safety-valve against the power of the court, whose opponents could explode any Sejm at which something dangerous was proposed.

The main theme of Volume Three is reached and given as a kind of debate of extreme and moderate Republicans on the benefits and dangers of election to vacancies. The moderate party would like to have vacancies and honours conferred by election. This would decrease the monarch's power but the benefits of such action would outweigh this loss of outward prestige. Whole *voyevodstvos* would be able to suggest candidates for positions and the king be spared suspicion of favouritism. Besides, "as things are, how can a man wholeheartedly support the Republic, which is incapable of honouring him? Furthermore, since most people, understandably, continually seek favours of the Court, which considers them ungrateful unless such distinctions are acknowledged by support of the Royal Party, is it any wonder that the Republican cause has so few adherents?"

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, pp. 253-54.

The extreme Republicans made four weak objections:-

- a) One must not take away a monarch's last prerogative.
- b) There would no longer be any reason to seek the favour or fear the anger of the king.
- c) Our forefathers never thought of it.
- d) Such a change would completely upset the Republic.

This reminds the pro-election party of ancient Sparta where, they point out, from the days of Lycurgus, kings, though great, had only two votes at all elections of persons to government posts. In addition, they remind the opposition that the king of Sweden, greatly esteemed as he is, can only approve election-filled vacancies. Now Konarski gives his own opinion. "The will of kings will always be honoured and effective if they seek good ends. All is done in their name and the majesty and splendour of the throne and the court makes them venerated by all. So let us not doubt that members of the leading European Royal Families will always feel greatly honoured if chosen to be Kings of Poland--even if we do fill vacancies by election."

As usual, the author demonstrates his approval of "emergency clauses." In this case, should election to vacancies be adopted, the king might conceivably abuse the privilege of refusing his consent. There should, therefore be, a law capable of vetoing a king's refusal of privilege to a man who has been approved three times by the voyevodstvos. There follows a detailed consideration of the manner of conducting such elections, the main point being

that only one candidate be presented to the king at a time, thus obviating the possibility of favouritism. Konarski also advocates that the man elected pay into the Royal Treasury a sum of money proportional to the position he is given. "Why should a person receiving some benefit not reserve a tiny bit for his sovereign?" This would mean that even if the monarch did indeed lose a little of his former power, this would be compensated by benefit to his Privy Purse.

Next the moderate Republicans answer the charge that election to vacancies would diminish people's esteem of the monarch. They demonstrate that nothing is further from the truth. All that will happen is that people will now have to please both the court and the Republic, a most desirable goal. Those who feel that election to vacancies will endanger respect for the sovereign only show their own true colours - namely, that the only reason they revere the king is because he can do something for them. "We love the King's gifts and not his person," Konarski says sadly, "but the king gives to each one of us if he does good and rules well." The present system causes great woes to the king, multiplies the enemies of the court by arousing the hatred of those not chosen, the ingratitude of the insatiable, and leads to general dissatisfaction, explosions, quarrels, schisms, disorders and public misery.

Then follows a debate as to whether it is perhaps the ministers who might lose if election to vacancies were approved. Would their power not decrease when people stopped currying their favour in hopes of preference. Again

the moderate party easily sweeps aside the futile objections of the extreme Republicans. "Surely we have good men who love their kings and wish them as well as for themselves. Would such not prefer the new way for the sake of peace, love of the people and the fame of their lords?" In addition, the calumny, envy and ill-will surrounding the ministers far outweighs their brief basking in a new favourite's gratitude.

The anti-election party now argues that it would be utterly repugnant to magnates to have to stand for election and perhaps endanger their dignity by submitting themselves to possible non-approval. The opposition agrees that this is, indubitably, a problem, for the nearly two hundred Polish and Lithuanian nobles, who among them hold most of the chief positions fear "loss of face" most of all. But "pans" will always remain "pans," and will always be honoured, even if they do lose in an election, say the moderates, while the author promises that "good men need not fear, all they need do is be sure to gain approval by their wisdom, virtue and service, and their worth will win for them." Moreover, losing an election is not shameful and there is no indignity in being elected to honours. In point of fact, it is much better than attaining them by intrigue. "You should not have been born in this free land," he writes, "if you prefer secret bowing and scraping to working for approval by a voyevodstvo and the gentry." The Piarist also reminds the reader of the baseness bred by greed for distinction. "We kowtow to the great, like Zebrzydowski who held the stirrup

for his enemy, the influential Radziwill,¹ and so people abroad laugh at us."

Now the anti-election party urges the moderates to consider the dangers of corruption of voters. The inevitable buying of votes would ruin even the richest magnates and remove all hope of attainment of honours by worthy but impecunious lesser nobles. Even were electors to swear solemnly not to seek any reward for their support, such oaths would only be broken and Poland would thus be encouraging sins against God. To this the moderate party replies that good government does not mean complete lack of evil, but only less of it. So they suggest the passing of the severest laws against the acceptance of bribes; one for electors and another for candidates. People will not lightly accuse each other unless they have tangible proof, so one need not fear that the innocent will suffer. All legal procedure in this connection must be simplified, and there be no possibility of appeal for such crimes. Nor should one fear making these laws too harsh, for, no matter how rigorous they may be, the natural cunning of evil minds will make it impossible to stamp out corruption entirely. Still, one would safeguard nobles competing for vacancies by making it impossible for them to ruin themselves by buying votes. This does not mean, however, that magnates were never to help their poorer friends and relatives. It would only make them do it in better ways

¹ Uncle of the Queen, through whose favour Zebrzydowski hoped to win a starostwo.

than previously, when such "help" consisted of payment for support. "Do good to poorer nobles all your life," the Piarist urges, "and you will not need to buy votes."

The best and simplest suggestion as to ways of combatting corruption comes last. Let voting be by secret ballot. "For then, those buying votes would never be sure whether the people they pay actually do vote for them; so they would not hazard their money so lightly."

At last the discussion moves to reasons for and against acceptance of the majority principle. "For over thirty years," the moderates remind the extreme party, "we have heard the same thing: 'The time has not yet come'. Please tell us when it will be time!"¹ Wherever one looks, somebody is favoured at court above all other men. Can we hope to change that? And there always are some people who are more powerful than others. It is absurd to think that acceptance of the plurality system of voting would bring about absolutism sooner than our present anarchy will. Even Rome preferred lack of liberty to chaos. And if one truly fears corruption, let us legislate for three-quarters majority until the principle is entirely assimilated. For it is not probable that three-quarters of our deputies be traitors or that the court could corrupt so large a number of men. There would not be enough honours to go round.

The extreme Republicans blame the general depravity of the age for Poland's woes, but the moderates assure them

¹ In other states.

that there was just as much good and evil in the past. Moreover, successful Seyms and dietines will serve to uncover the worthiest citizens. At this point the author finds it necessary to defend himself against possible charges of contradiction. He had deplored anarchy and the decline of morals in a previous volume, but, "We have always held the people to be good," he states, and takes this opportunity to reiterate his main premise: "It is the bad form of councils that paves the way for evil and it is this that we attack."¹

With the intention of proving that the Republic was not threatened by Parliamentary corruption, as some people feared, he compares the state of affairs in Poland with that prevailing in England. Even in the latter realm, where Parliament was reputed to be scandalously corrupt, things were not, he assures the reader, as black as they were painted. Having made this point, he continues to the suggestion that the majority principle be introduced not during the reign of a king but during an interregnum.² This Konarski feels to be unfeasible because it is during interregna that free spirits are at their most irreconcilable level, there is an easily aroused leaderless rabble, Poland is the most susceptible to foreign interference, and torn between rival factions.

It is during the reign of "as amiable a sovereign as ours that we should try it," he suggests. The king,

¹ Konarski declares himself to be pro-moderate.

² When there would be no possibility of court intervention.

respected both at home and abroad could help considerably by serving as arbiter or pacifier, and the peaceful atmosphere thus achieved would help foster unity of purpose. "I have said that we have had no reason, over the space of many years, to fear that the king wishes to limit our liberty. So what better time than his reign could there possibly be, for so glorious an attempt? Why put things off till dangerous interregna?" In conclusion, if Epaminondas¹ saved his land from Spartan tyranny by abolishing a bad law, we should certainly not hesitate to abolish something that is no more than a bad habit.

Optimistically, for the moment, the author assures the reader that neighbouring courts² would congratulate Poland on the change, which he felt they could not but desire "both for our good and their own." If they interfered it would be a breach of international law, and would clearly demonstrate that they were no friends of the Republic. To refute the suggestion that were Poland well-governed, she would become dangerous, Konarski uses the example of Sweden and other states, all well-governed and powerful but feared by no one. "Moreover, it is well-known that we are not the folk to support unneeded soldiers. Rather do we fear that a king might turn a mighty army to his own interests."

Finally, before printing twenty more letters, this time mostly such as were received by the author after the

¹ A Theban leader about whom Konarski wrote a tragedy for the "Collegium Nobilium" where it was performed in 1750.

² "Vienna, Petersburg, Berlin, and others friendly to us."

publication of Volume Two,¹ Konarski includes extracts from two letters. One was written on July 24, 1761, by a secretary of the Dutch Embassy, Hauktfill, who sees Poland's decay as "une espece de paralysie" while the other, composed by "a certain foreigner," stresses the point that if the "chimera of unanimity" existed in such states as Sweden, England and Belgium, they too would be in the same straits as Poland, and urges people to remember the words of the Venetian Doge and patriot, Francesco Morisini:²

Patriae bene - mihi bene;

Patriae male - mihi male.

¹ "More than one reveals a certain reserve, though the majority are full of recognition for the author." (Rose, in Stanislas Konarski, p. 252.)

² 1618 - 1694.

THE REMEDY

The last volume of Konarski's "Effective Counsels in Government" contains a preface addressed to the reader. In this Konarski reviews his whole subject and outlines his aims which are that the nation achieve so effective a form of government that it will serve satisfactorily for generations to come.

Then come nine chapters enumerating the various successful methods adopted by other states: Rome, England, Sweden, Genoa, Venice, Germany, Switzerland and Holland. This the author does to show that Republics can remain free while functioning on the principle of majority vote. But, ever-cautious, he proceeds to warn his countrymen that, although all the methods cited are valuable, in varying degrees, none of them should be "transplanted" blindly. "We must suit our climate, situation, area, and so on," he states, adding that it would not hurt to try to establish a "perfect" state, better than Plato's Republic, Bacon's Atlantis, Moore's Utopia, Campanelli's Sun-city, and Fénelon's Salente. But one should realize that such things are only ideas, like the principle of perpetual motion in mechanics, and law-makers must not legislate for something which is humanly impossible. "Let nobody wonder," he continues, "that we are still unsettled in this regard. Kings gave us various freedoms but no real system of government." Finally, before

proposing his own plan of action, Konarski declares that it has been evolved in accordance with the opinions and advice of wise men who knew Poland's needs. It has been revised and brought up to date, but is, as all human endeavour must be, still imperfect. "One thing I am sure of," he declares, "is that there is nothing of Plato in it; namely, nothing that is excellent but humanly impossible. So take what is best in the project and act upon it."

First, Konarski proposes that Seyms last not for only six weeks but as long as there is anything to be done, and the end of the session be decided by unanimous or majority vote of both Houses, Deputies should be elected by the dietines every two years for a two-year period of office. He would like to see the Seym convene in October¹ and be convoked by written command to each deputy from the Marshal, and to each senator from the Grand Marshal. Representation should be by four deputies from each district, and at least one senator to be elected by each dietine, as well as two assistant deputies, and provision made for substitution should the need arise. He suggests that minimum age for entering National Councils be fixed by law:

- a) 20 for member of dietine with active vote,
- b) 24 for deputy,
- c) 30 for judge,
- d) 36-40 for senator or minister.

¹ After the harvest.

Furthermore, Konarski would like to see deputies given a fixed pension, the abolition of "ex-officio" privileges, such as billets in the city for the duration of the session, and punishments for absenteeism and negligence.

Now, since the above suggestion would increase the number of members in both Houses, admission of public to sessions must cease. This would stop the scandalous tumult and disorder now prevalent in the Chambers. "Members will be able to see and hear the person who is speaking. And it must be obvious that if members and audience mingle, one cannot apply the plurality system." But there may be a balcony with a private entrance, to which people might be admitted on special invitation, if this is approved by the Marshal or Grand Marshal, with the assent of the whole House. If a session is to be secret, the audience is to be warned beforehand.

At the time of writing, Seyms had no one fixed "home," but could be convened in any one of several large centres. This too, the author would prefer altered. He even suggests a definite time, nine in the morning, for the opening of each session, and advises that there be a law forbidding early morning banquets which hardly dispose members to serious work. But there should always be a recess from noon until 3:00 P.M., which would necessitate the abolition of the old law of 1678 prohibiting candle-light sessions. The Marshal would see to it that no session

lasted later than 8:00 P.M. and lamps should be maintained, at public expense, in the yard, at the gates and in the street outside the Seym building.

The Piarist takes great pains to ensure the establishing of law and order in the Houses, so he suggests rules to fix procedure for the election of the Marshal, and especially, legislation as to who may propose subjects for debate and in what order. He feels that an inter-session, or permanent Council of four departments should be instituted; this group of men would make a summary of the most important State matters, while the marshal and three deputies, one from each province, might summarize lesser and private interests. It is from such compilations that the Marshal would propose the agenda in order of importance. The author is most emphatic in suggesting the severest legislation against traitors, so that "nobody would dare to propose anything against our native liberties, laws and religion."

The discussion passes to Konarski's favourite subject--plurality. The Republic can do as she pleases, the author says, in legislating as to what constitutes a majority vote. Opinions are extremely varied, but most people seem to agree that one vote over the half is sufficient, because important matters should not be complicated by striving for, for instance, a two-thirds majority, an aim that could lead only to trouble.¹ The author recalls that he had once

¹ "People anxious to keep Poland in disorder will do their utmost to see we never get a two-thirds majority," he says.

supported a two-thirds or even three-quarters majority, but begs the reader not to see his present position as a contradiction. "One has to learn from wiser folk and prefer their opinions to one's own."

In discussing voting-methods he proposes that all elections be by secret ballot, but other decisions may be by the reservation of two chambers, one for the "ayes" and one for the "nays," with every deputy entitled to request a recount. Konarski also examines the suggestion that, since people can be corrupted, voting should not be by plurality of deputies, but of voyevodstvo opinions. This the author does not approve, because it would mean that voyevodstvos would have to convene whenever the Sejm had something for them to vote on, unless decisions were put off until the usual time of dietine convocation. But this latter idea was abhorrent to a man who felt that delays never brought good results. Besides, Konarski adds, should people at seymiks, so remote from actual discussions of important affairs and unversed in many aspects of public needs, be the ones to decide them? No, the Piarist insists: "This Sejm is made up of deputies from all districts and voyevodstvos, that is, of ourselves, and we must depend on the agreement and advice of our representatives."

In speaking of the cavalier treatment received at the hands of the Senate by decisions made in the House of Deputies, the author becomes quite indignant. "When a Sejm

is successful," he writes, "there accumulate anywhere up to a hundred pages of constitutions. But only five days, which are mostly wasted, are appointed for the joint session of both Houses. We read personal memoranda and letters more carefully than papers dealing with the welfare of the nation." He reports that it is usual for approximately ten hours to be set aside for the reading of the constitutions. First of all, even that period is usually decreased, and the secretary is forced to read at top speed--this amid whispering, muttering and general clamour, so the whole descends to the level of empty ceremonial. Worst of all, few people even have the time to read the constitutions when they are printed, for the House of Deputies goes on to other business, namely the arrangement of the laws and constitutions approved at the joint session. "I myself have witnessed at such meetings the by-passing of dozens of essential matters, and I know that some things never mentioned at the joint session or rejected by it have been written down and thus legalized by the House of Deputies, whose power thus turns out to be greater than that of the whole Sejm."

Konarski would prefer to see England's example followed, and every bill passed by the House of Deputies taken immediately by a delegation of three members selected by the Marshal, to the king and Senate for discussion. If the Senate wished to modify the bill, the Primate would give a written note of this to the delegates sent by the Lower House. Some object to this on the grounds that, in this

way, the Senate could impose its will on the House of Deputies by refusing to approve its decisions. But, Konarski points out that this would be no innovation. The Upper House had always had such powers and never abused them. But, to prevent any such possibility, one should make a proviso that such opposition be based on a nine-tenths vote, for, if so large a number of senators disagrees with the house of Deputies, the senior body is probably justified in its opinion.

The author would like the Senate to be empowered to convene without the king, simply sending him bills for confirmation. Such documents would be announced publicly as soon as they were confirmed, and again in one complete set at the end of the Sejm.

Next to be examined were commissions or delegations which were constantly being sent out by the Sejm to wherever they were needed. Konarski sees the need for:

- a) A committee on constitution matters,
- b) Four committees for the examination of records submitted by the proposed Permanent Council,¹
- c) A committee on foreign affairs
- d) A special committee to examine especially weighty matters before they are discussed in the House,
- e) A committee to investigate secret affairs.

To all such committees, the Senate would be able to send its

¹ One committee for each of the four departments of the Council.

representatives.

There should be definite legislation regarding the election and responsibilities of secret delegations. The Marshal could propose that from six to twelve deputies be selected from the three provinces. These men would confer with the Primate and a specially-elected group of senators, the total number of the latter, including ministers not to exceed half that of the deputies. Such delegations, chosen either for each separate occasion, or to deal with every emergency of this kind over a given period of time, would be duty-bound to discuss only the one issue they were given to settle.

"Seyms cannot be good if 'seymiks' (dietines) are not, for all the power of the one comes from the other," Konarski claims. Therefore,

- a) let there be separate dietines for each district or territory of each voyevodstvo in order to facilitate discussions and elections by involving less people in each meeting. "It is best to govern in small numbers but to fight in large ones";
- b) let each seymik do all its work at one specified period each year, and not keep convening and adjourning. The best time would be for up to nineteen days beginning around the sixteenth of August. During this period Ministers and deputies should be elected first, then the "desideria"¹

¹ Lists of suggestions and wishes.

- drawn up, and finally, all other matters settled;
- c) Marshals should be chosen for life, so that time might not be wasted by electing a different supervisor for each Sejm;
 - d) there should be a record of all nobles present at each seymik, such lists to be drawn up on the eve of the first session and anyone not listed therein deprived of his vote;
 - d) the abuse of submitting desideria after the dietine has proceeded to the election of deputies should be abolished;
 - f) sessions should begin early, after Holy Mass, and members to abstain from morning carousal on pain of loss of votes if found to be intoxicated.

Konarski concludes his discussion of seymik procedure with a comment on the despair of a worthy senator who felt that, even were plurality to be established by law, some nobles would continue their efforts to explode sessions. "Let the senators and other wise men explain what is needed and set a good example," the author pleads, "At first there will be troubles but with time they will decrease." And once explosion is made illegal, how can a dietine be exploded? Once people see that, despite their protests, dietines go on to a successful conclusion, they will stop making trouble.

Mention has been made at several points of a suggested Permanent or Supreme Council. This Konarski sees as an essential organ of State for "besides the highest

representation, needed by every State, it is necessary to have in the Republic a power whose duty it would be to keep, uphold and supervise the effective execution of matters decided by Seyms. Konarski says that in England such powers belong to the king and Council, and in Sweden to the Senate. In Poland he would like to see a special council operating between Seyms and empowered to decide "such matters as daily and innumerably arise and multiply and cannot be put off until the next Sejm without endangering the State." This Council of Residents, elected annually, would number forty-five members:

- a) twelve senators named by the king and a special commission of three senators, a bishop and a minister;
- b) twenty-four elected by the House of Deputies, eight from each province;
- c) the Primate, Grand Marshal, Chancellors, Treasurers and Ministers of War to become "ex-officio" members.

Konarski knows that some nobles will grumble at the possibility of being elected to so time-consuming a position, "But it would be a shame and an infamy if among so great a number of senators and nobles in the land there would not yearly be found forty-five to do a year's service for the nation." But a Hetman should not be required to serve since he has enough to do.

The Council would be divided into departments of Justice, Law and Order, Treasury and War, each to consist of two ministers, three senators and six resident deputies. Provision should be made that at times all four departments might have to meet for general discussion. For conferences with foreign ambassadors the king should select one senator and one resident deputy from each department, such special sub-committees to deal with all representatives of foreign governments.

Konarski urges that public-minded citizens or even whole dietines, whenever they witness or hear of anything that needs attention, let the Council know. In addition, residents, on becoming aware (Heaven forbid!) of anything at court that is against the law or is being done without the king's knowledge, report this to the chief of the appropriate department, who would appoint two men to inform the monarch.

"Because of the justice of what is respectfully represented to him, the sovereign cannot refuse to investigate the matter." Moreover, if there is ever any doubt in court as to the legality of some action, the king could consult the Supreme Council. However, cases of treason, sabotage, or lese-majeste would always be dealt with by the Sejm.

In addition, the Council would ensure that vacancies were allotted justly, investigate public expenses, the administration of the Mint,¹ as well as strive for the improvement of agriculture, trade, arts and crafts, safety of navigation,

¹ But not taxation.

proper education of Polish youth, and so on. Also, foreign ambassadors and Polish embassies abroad would send all proposals, memoranda and reports to the appropriate department of the Council. Detailed records of the Council's activities are to be available to the Sejm and thus will ensure the justice of the Council's actions and the strict limiting of the body to its prescribed duties and powers.

Perhaps the most important work of the Supreme Council would be the preparation by two members from each department of agenda for each Sejm. "Wishes¹ of territories, districts, cities, towns, societies and people, for the compilation of which the Marshal can appoint nine deputies, must also be included in this summary." Finally, Konarski urges that all four parts of the Council be kept in force throughout Diet sessions, for the various departments could then be called on for opinions on matters they specialized in.

Before summing up his ideas the author pauses to refute the, in his opinion, erroneous view of one of his friends, a man, who after reading the manuscript of the Fourth Volume still felt that the Veto could be retained if deputies felt the gravity of their responsibilities keenly enough. Then Konarski insists on the need for careful legislation in regard to all election procedures. Starostwos and royal domains he would turn into hereditary estates,

¹ "Desideria."

with the money thus obtained becoming the foundation of a Polish State Bank. Public taxes, on the other hand, would accrue to the Treasury. If they were just and collected properly, there would be no lack of funds for the payment of all officials, defence, and building programmes. Using the starostwos to benefit the gentry and the distribution of vacancies by election would end all fears of undue royal power. Most important of all, under the conditions the Piarist envisages, plurality could never be dangerous since it could not be used by the court to gain its own ends. Proving that he favours the idea of a succession-monarchy, he continues "Even if we returned to our forbears' eternal bond with the Piasts, Jagiellos and Vasas our free people could not be hurt, and the horror and misery of interregna would be avoided."

.....

In his conclusion, which begins with a recapitulation of the land's many miseries, the author again turns to Cicero, his favourite source of historical philosophy: "One must fear the total fall and ruin of the whole Republic. Were you hoping for some solace from me? I can find none. Nothing can be more wretched or more horrible."¹ But he cannot stop there and continues: "Let us stop complaining but, while it is still, perhaps, possible, try to improve things immediately. Immediately, I say, since I do not know what we are waiting

¹ Epistolae ad Atticum, Book 8, 11.

for." and he returns to his principal theme. "Our ancestors contented themselves with general consent to matters and did not know the chimera of unanimity or the power of explosion of a Sejm by a single dissident. Our grandfathers exchanged such good and natural laws for the *Liberum Veto* which they themselves did not properly understand, and which our fathers turned into "*Liberum Rumpo*" (free explosion)". We began to fall when we departed from plurality, so let us return to the wise law of common consent.

The means of achieving this, Konarski feels, should be evolved by the best brains in the Republic. Love of the homeland, reason and prudence, together with God's guidance, will lead to the attainment of the desired goal. And since "bad kings love the slavery and good ones the freedom of their people,"¹ "our sovereign will doubtless bend all his efforts for the salvation of Poland. May God send him a long life!"

¹ St. Ambrose, referring to Theodosius the Great.

EPILOGUE

The plan was ready but the nation was not. Besides, Poland's neighbours were not as friendly as Konarski, at times, felt they were; there was even "threat of armed intervention in case any Polish king should evince enough energy and ability to set the country on its feet."¹ Within the Republic apathy was general enough to block what efforts were made at reform with a great measure of success. A generation later his suggestions were at last put into practice, but for the time being criticism, usually by ignorant men of misplaced loyalties, some of whom actually advocated the public burning of the "O Skutecznym Rad Sposobie," was his chief reward. Still, the great patriot did live long enough to see that after the publishing of Volume Three in 1762, no more Seyms were exploded,² although there were champions of the right of explosion being retained by the provinces.

His main proposal, the adoption of the majority vote, did gradually win adherents so that ten years later every patriotic Pole supported it albeit ideas as to what constituted a majority continued to vary.

In 1764, a year after Konarski attacked the logic of delegates swearing to uphold instructions given them by

¹ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 260.

² Konarski died in August 1773; and the first Partition had occurred in August 1772.

the dietines, the Czartoryskis forbade the practice, and it was eventually abolished.¹

The 1767-1768 Diet began action to reform assemblies by agreeing that office should be held only by owners of property and the right to vote belong only to them or their relatives, and the 1773-1775 Sejm entrusted the Treasury with the allocation of offices and the renting of royal lands. In 1775 a Permanent Council was founded, but not according to the original plan. It was less of a Cabinet than a Grand Council, and the king played a lesser role than in Konarski's project.

Finally, in 1791, the Liberum Veto was abolished by the Four-Year Diet which was also responsible for Poland's remarkable New Constitution of May 3, 1791.² So ended the situation which provoked such accounts as those of the French Abbé F.D.S.³ and Bernard O'Connor.⁴

This is what the former had to say: "A nuntius from Lithuania, gained over by the Imperialists (i.e., the German Court), with the view of breaking up the diet, rose, and after having made many objections, had the rashness and boldness to abuse the king at great length calling him a miser and unfit to rule. A bishop, friendly to the king, who

¹ By the Four-Year Diet 1788-1792.

² See Morfill, Poland, pp. 231-237.

³ Identity unknown, but date of his setting out for Poland was July 30, 1688.

⁴ A contemporary of the Abbé.

sat near the nuntius, arose and demanded from the senate punishment for the insults offered to his Majesty. The nuntius thereupon struck the bishop violently in the stomach with his elbow, crying out that he was fitter to live in an alley than to be seated in an episcopal chair, and finally half drew his sabre from its sheath. The king, apprehending a riot, rose from the throne, took his sabre in his hand, and called out to his soldiers and guards, who entered in great number. The senate at this time appeared more like an assembly of rioters than a body of dignified senators and palatines. In the midst of this tumult the nuntius, who had been the aggressor, declared the diet at an end, and insisted that whatever was determined upon would be null and void. At the same time, trusting to the darkness, he made his escape unperceived from the assembly. Seeing that he had gone out, several ran after him, but he had ordered his servants to have a boat in readiness so that he might cross as quickly as possible to the other side of the Vistula. Thus an end was put to the proceedings of the diet."¹

O'Connor's dismay at the prevalence of intervention from abroad, and the reason for this, is extreme. "There is nothing that can promote or favour foreign factions more than the unlimited prerogatives of each member of the diet; for the king, senators, and deputies have all equal voices and equal power in their affirmative or negative votes; and

¹ Morfill, Poland, pp. 186-7.

affairs are not concluded or agreed upon by plurality of voices, but universal consent of all three orders, and the free approbation of every member of the diet in particular; so that if but one person only, who has a lawful vote, thinks fit to refuse his consent to what all the rest have agreed to, he alone can interrupt their proceedings and annihilate their suffrages. Nay, what is yet more extravagant, if, for example, there were thirty articles or bills to pass, and they all unanimously agreed to nine and twenty, yet if but one deputy disapproved of the thirtieth, not only that, but also the other nine and twenty are void and of no force."¹

KoŹłataj² was later to say, "One must give the Piarist credit for putting in the forefront of his work a device that was proof of great courage at that time, and being the first to tear off the mask of anarchy, which is itself under the form of unlimited freedom and false patriotism. He said to himself--'Dare to be wise.' and led a revolt against disorder and vested prejudices."³ Staszic⁴ calls Konarski "that man of immortal memory, who in his writings was the first to expose and condemn the chief blunders of which, against all sound reason, the public liberties were guilty." While Mickiewicz⁵ had this to say: "Konarski shared

¹ Morfill, Poland, pp. 190-1.

² Hugo KoŹłataj, reformer and educator, 1750-1812.

³ This passage and the two following, are from unpublished notes of W.J. Rose on Konarski's critics.

⁴ Stanisław Staszic, scientist, educator and social reformer, 1755-1826.

⁵ Adam Mickiewicz, Polish poet and writer, 1798-1855.

all the convictions of his age. He thought that it sufficed to write a constitution in order to repair a state.¹ He knew the whole danger of the Free Veto--but he did not understand that the source of all the faults and weaknesses of a nation lies in its habits: that wishing to strengthen the fabric of society one had to reform the customs of the land. He thus halted at outward reforms and spent his whole life seeking a way to organize better the Diet, the courts and the schools." Notes made by Dr. W.J. Rose circa 1929, however, read as follows: "The reader must conclude that any failure to serve the needs of right citizenship on the part of a man who put this very thing first in education, must be set down less to his errors and more to the stopping of their ears by those who needed to listen."

The above extracts of eminent critics of the Piarist's work serve to demonstrate some of the varied opinions as to the worth of his "magnum opus," a magnificent monument to the man's belief in his compatriots. Wordy, didactic, naive, scholarly, at once too detailed and too superficial for a "blue-print," it is, rather, a literary "prairie oyster," something to jolt the reader into appreciation of reality. And if the desired results were achieved too late to save the Republic, it was through no fault of the book. History has its own schedule. Certain it is that, should Poland again know freedom some day, Konarski's work

¹ Mickiewicz cannot have realized Konarski's chief aim in founding the "Collegium Nobilium."

and that of the men he inspired will be the foundation of whatever legislation is introduced at that, one hopes, not too distant date. And if the Piarist's hopes were realized in great measure even before the Third Partition,¹ and "the period² of Poland's political collapse as a state was one of unforeseen mental and spiritual awakening,"³ what can we not dream of for a future Free Polish Republic?

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¹ 1795.

² The first period if one includes 1945-1956 in one's judgment.

³ Rose, Stanislas Konarski, p. 272.

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