

SCHOLARS AND THEIR DISCIPLES.

60 YEARS OF THE WROCLAW ACADEMIC COMMUNITY. 1945–2005. SUMMARY

I

The idea to establish the Polish academic community in Wrocław has never been more unrealistic than in June 1939. It was then that the academic community of the Wrocław University, then German, committed an act of self-mutilation. On the eve of the decision made by the Third Reich to intensify war operations, Polish and Jewish students were expelled from the Wrocław University, this has been a move motivated by the Nazi ideology. Paradoxically, however, at the same time, at one of the darkest moments in the history of academic education in Europe, one of the Polish students expelled from the University said “We are deeply convinced that time will come when we will have an opportunity to complete our studies at this university, but it will be a Polish university”. The words of this student proved true six years later, in November 1945.

The Polish academic community in Wrocław started its revival immediately after the defeat of the Third Reich. It was then that the Cultural-Scholarly Group came to Wrocław on 9 May, 1945. The group was headed by Professor Stanisław Kulczyński, the former rector of the Polish Jan Casimir University in Lvov. The group, initially composed of twenty eight persons, arrived in the capital of Lower Silesia three days after the end of the war operations in Wrocław, which, renamed to Festung Breslau, defended itself until 6 May, 1945. Immediately after their arrival, the group started to build first academic institutions. Built from scratch, on the smouldering ruins of the destroyed city, over the past sixty years they were transformed into one of the most active and most renowned academic centres in Poland.

This book aims to honour the memory and work of the outstanding figures of the academic community of Wrocław and Lower Silesia. The book is brought out on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of this exceptional community of scholars and students and it describes the work and effort of the people, who, actively involved in Wrocław, a city extensively destroyed during the Second World War, then called the capital of the Regained Territories, managed to create, over an incredibly short period, the true *Universitas*. The university was built on this war-ravaged land, at the time of the post-war “migration of people”, in exceptionally complex conditions connected with the socio-political transformations of the country.

This publication is quite specific in character. Its source lies in the exceptional character of the phenomenon it describes, namely the Polish academic community of Wrocław, which in 2005 celebrated sixty years of its existence. The book describes the exceptional achievement of the Poles who came to the capital of Lower Silesia, an achievement, which has

been considered remarkable by many historians of science. Quite often the achievement has been regarded remarkable by those who were behind this historical success. They have sufficient reasons to be legitimately proud of it. Wrocław, one of the most dynamically developing cities in present-day Poland, is different from many other towns in Europe and the world; its reconstruction would not have been possible without the creative and civic involvement of the scholars who came to the destroyed town to create an academic centre for themselves, being aware that its establishment will be possible only if the city itself is completely reconstructed.

This book is a presentation of research of the sixty year long history of scholarly and didactic work of the Polish academic community of Wrocław. This research has been conducted by the scholars from Wrocław. It describes the sixty years of organizational, scholarly and didactic work, which bore fruit in the establishment of one of the busiest and most active academic centres. Presently, the academic centre includes several institutions of higher learning and independent research units, whose importance goes beyond the regional borders and which, as institutions, exert profound influence upon the region of Lower Silesia and the entire southwestern Poland. Their work has profound impact on many branches and areas of science.

Problems related to the establishment, building and development of the institutions of higher learning and research centres in Lower Silesia have been discussed several times, usually on the occasion of various anniversaries. On such occasions the researchers focused on the institutional aspects of development, connected with a specific research centre – a university, a faculty or an institute. Strong interdisciplinary integration, going much beyond the administrative framework of individual institutions, has been the characteristic feature of the Wrocław academic community that was established in difficult conditions in which reborn Wrocław found itself after the war. At that time this was an exceptional phenomenon in the Polish academic life. This integration was a unique sociological phenomenon, closely connected with the living conditions in Wrocław, a city, which for many years has been rising from ruins. For this reason this book attempts to show the great effort, determination and internal dynamics of the entire community of Wrocław scholars in the building of their academic community. These features helped them make Wrocław one of the most important academic centres in Poland as early as in the early 1960s.

This publication is brought out shortly after the beginning of the third millennium and after Poland's accession

to the European Union. For this reason presentation of the present condition of this community should become a basis for self-reflection over the future directions of its evolution and the chances it stands in the new geopolitical and social conditions. We are becoming a part of the European educational and research space at a historic time, when a new geopolitical order is being created, the consequences of which can be comparable to the consequences of the geopolitical order established in post-war Europe. If, however, that old order isolated Polish science from external contacts and influences, the present order, offering chances of cooperation with academic centres all over the world, holds the promise of new opportunities and possibilities. Under such conditions preparation of a comprehensive diagnosis and analysis of the Polish science right after the war, built against all odds is an element of conscious, adequate and effective attempt to follow the modern global trends of scholarly research.

II

This book attempts to give a fairly complete answer to the question about the phenomenon of the Polish academic community of Wrocław, which faced an exceptionally difficult and practically unprecedented task. Polish scholars started to build scholarly and didactic institutions and research workspace in different disciplines under demanding conditions. That building took place in a strange town and the task of building was made more difficult because the city was completely destroyed by the war. For this reason the book contains also an account of the conditions under which Wrocław institutions of higher learning started their development. It also describes the dynamics of their development over the six past decades, as well as their present potential.

In Autumn 2003 a seminar „The Academic Community of Wrocław – Scholars and their Disciples” was organized at the initiative of the College of Rectors of the Academic Institutions of Wrocław and Opole to mark the occasion of the Wrocław Science Festival. The seminar was devoted to the origin of the Polish scholarly and scientific life in post-war Wrocław. It was accompanied by an exhibition of the most important documents related to that period. During preparations for the seminar extensive material was collected to document the process of establishing the most important schools of Wrocław. The work was also started on the methodology of research. It soon turned out that the work needs much more thorough examination and more profound studies.

In an attempt to continue the research, the College of Rectors of the Academic Institutions of Wrocław and Opole announced 2005 the jubilee year of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Polish academic community in Wrocław. On that occasion a community research programme “The Academic Community of Wrocław – Scholars and their Disciples” was initiated; its results are presented in this publication.

The seminar „Creators and their Disciples” was also an occasion to become aware of the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult to collect the accounts of the direct participants in the events at those pioneer times of the Polish science in Wrocław. Only a few scholars and scientists have

lived to this day; the number of their disciples is diminishing every year. Furthermore, the turbulent history of the post-war years was not always a good time to produce documents, which would comprehensively and credibly paint the picture of those days. Therefore, accounts based on personal experience are irreplaceable and the present time is the last moment when such research could be conducted.

III

In this publication special emphasis was put on the establishment of institutions of higher learning in the academic community of Wrocław. This problem has been discussed here from the point of view of spontaneous and informal research, which was conducted by scholars and scientists from different centres, and from the point of view of their institutional development. The publication emphasizes the idea of the “scholars and their disciples”, which helps us to focus on the role of individual scholars and scientists of the academic community in Wrocław, who have made a significant contribution to the organization, teaching and science, establishment and development of university education in Wrocław, who have significantly contributed to the reconstruction of the city and the region, to its development and who have taken an active part in the processes of political and economic transformation of Wrocław, Lower Silesia and Poland.

The research presented here reveals many specific aspects of the organization of the beginnings of the different schools represented by the academic community of Wrocław. Among many peculiarities of this community is the fact that it was established owing to the effort of people who often did not have a formal professorial title, which adds to its exceptional dimension. In the early years of the creation of the academic community they were able to instil in their students, who often filled in for deputy assistants, and to their diploma students, usually associated in students associations, the desire to pursue science. In the first post-war years the curriculum was followed with the help of the employees of universities, institutes and industrial plants, who came to Wrocław from other towns. The schools of Wrocław would not have gained their prestige if it were not for the creative and organizational work of all those people.

The research also includes academic institutions of Opole for the simple reason that in the post-war period the province of Wrocław also comprised the Opole Region, and because until today the schools of Wrocław have supported the efforts of the inhabitants of Opole to create independent institutions of higher learning, including the university and the polytechnic, assisting them with their own experience and staff.

The idea contained in this book refers to the sociological concept of science development advanced by Thomas S. Kuhn in response to the neo-positivist and critical-rationalist conceptions of science dominant in the second half of the 20th century¹. This book is an attempt to apply the Kuhn's understanding of the mechanisms of science development, in particular his understanding of science in the disciplinary and institutional aspects, to the post-war academic community of Wrocław. The Polish academic community

¹ Cf. e.g. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, transl. by H. Ostromecka, Warszawa 1968 and Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Essential Tension. Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change*, transl. by S. Amsterdamski, Warszawa 1985.

of Wrocław, developed in post-war conditions, on the one hand built a number of institutions to organize research and teaching at the academic level, and, on the other, became the place where a number of innovative ideas and research concepts were developed.

The individual sections of this book, describing extensive historical, sociological and knowledge developing research, are devoted to the development of a number of groups of university academic disciplines practiced by the academic community of Wrocław. The research was conducted by representatives of particular disciplines.

Expert teams, consisting of experienced researchers, attempted to prepare synthetic pictures of the development of broadly understood scholarly disciplines, paying special attention to the integration processes taking place within the academic community of Wrocław. The main aim of the research was to illustrate the establishment and the strengthening of the scholarly and academic community of Wrocław, focusing on the integration processes between scholars from different communities and representing different experiences in organization and research. The groups representing different disciplines included scholars/scientists from different schools and other academic centres, where these disciplines are being practiced.

The work of each team centred around the collection of materials, archival documents, bibliographies and preparation of reports illustrated with drawings presenting the genealogies of the schools in individual disciplines. Biographical notes on the leading scholars, documents, photographs, etc. help to better describe the development of scholarly disciplines in the Wrocław community. The detailed topics of the research programme comprise problems discussed from the point of view of three research perspectives: historical, institutional and disciplinary.

In the historical aspect, the book aims to present the beginnings of Polish science in Wrocław and in Lower Silesia. It comprises the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Cultural-Scholarly Group and the pioneers from Lvov, Cracow, Vilnius and Warsaw.

In the institutional part the main objective is to present the dynamics of the academic community of Wrocław from the point of view of the institutional forms that the organization of its life has taken and the accomplishment of their academic and didactic tasks. It comprises the schools and academic centres in Wrocław or rather the entire Lower Silesia and the region of Opole. It also comprises new academic institutions of the region as in the last decade the academic community of Wrocław expanded and now includes also state colleges and private institutions of higher learning, which are established on the scholarly and didactic soil of the entire Wrocław community and exert their influence on the adjacent regions, particularly the region of Opole and the Lubusz Land. The research also aims to describe the organization, academic and didactic achievements of the new schools. Synthetic data on each independent academic institution (organizational structure, number of academic staff, number of students) are an important aspect of the institutional picture of academic science in Wrocław.

In the disciplinary part the publication aims to present materials, which help to gain as thorough insight into the

community as possible and formulate answers to the questions about its dynamics. This aspect of the research was accomplished thanks to the concentration of research on a number of disciplinary areas, practiced by different scholarly schools at Wrocław academic institutions. The historical-sociological research discussed here comprised the following groups of disciplines: humanities and social studies, economic and legal sciences, mathematical sciences, chemical, physical sciences and astronomy, biological sciences and the earth science, technical sciences, medical sciences, agricultural sciences, artistic schools, traditions of military education, and theology.

In the main part of the publication, which includes descriptions of scholarly disciplines pursued by the academic community of Wrocław, the reader will find, among other things, illustrations of the Wrocław dynamics of these disciplines and the research groups, which practiced them. These illustrations have the form of "genealogical trees". They were included as an attempt to sketch a general picture of various relationships between generations, scholars and persons, formed in the academic community of Wrocław from its establishment until the present-day.

Bearing in mind that sixty years have passed since the establishment of the Polish academic community in Wrocław and that the period of six decades is equal to three generations of human life, the three-generation principle was adopted to organize the genealogical trees mentioned above. More precisely, in each of the disciplines and their groups for which formulation of such genealogical trees was possible, at their top of the tree there is the organizer of the scholarly school, usually in the rank of a professor, followed by his disciples, who have acquired the status of an independent scholar, and then the disciples of the researchers and teachers of the third generation of a given school, who have at least acquired the degree of doctor.

Such graphic "maps" will help, in our opinion, to realize the role of eminent scholars and organizers in the establishment and development of individual research units at Wrocław academic schools. They also help us to emphasize the specific character of the academic community of Wrocław; the genealogical trees illustrate the development of the scholarly schools within different disciplines irrespective of their institutional affiliation. In the institutional sense research units were very often established in the academic Wrocław on the basis of the former, often informal, research groups, which later acquired the formal status of an institute, faculty or even university. Later, as the staff developed and matured scholarly, other units at other faculties, universities and in other towns of Lower Silesia and Opole Silesia could be established. This is a typical example of the "radiation" of the academic community of Wrocław.

It must also be clearly emphasized that both the editors of this volume and the authors of individual chapters were aware that this ideal type of a three-generation school described above has not always been possible. This was due to many reasons.

Firstly, there is considerable difference between different disciplines, in particular in their subject matter and their different methodological and research approach. In the formal, exact and natural sciences the education process of young staff

usually goes at a pace that is different from that in humanistic sciences. Furthermore, there is also increased interest in the results of these sciences among the institutions that finance research because of the potential practical application of its results. The differences become most apparent when we take into account the considerable, often radical, and at the same time obvious differences between formal and natural disciplines on the one hand and humanistic, social and historical sciences or artistic, military and theological sciences on the other.

Secondly, this situation is also the result of the specific character of different types of academic institutions, which in itself is the derivative of the differences indicated above. Thirdly, it is mainly the result of the internal dynamics of scholarly disciplines, which never stop to generate new research directions, in time transforming into new disciplines.

There is yet another reason for which the readers should not expect that in the genealogical trees presented in this book they will find all the eminent and original thinkers, creators of the greatness of Wrocław science. This is due to the historical and political context in which science in post-war Wrocław developed. We must remember that most of the past six decades of the academic community of Wrocław is the time between 1945 and 1989, i.e. the time of the Polish People's Republic, when freedom of research, in some cases, was heavily restricted for ideological and political reasons, particularly in social and humanistic disciplines. The repressions, which came from the outside and the inside of the academic community, exerted profound impact on some eminent representatives of the Wrocław science who could not properly promote their disciples to the doctoral degree or supervise their postdoctoral dissertations, as would be expected from the ideal three-generation school. That work was often restricted and sometimes even blocked.

For the above reasons the genealogical trees, although helpful in presenting the development of individual disciplines, scholarly collaboration and personal relations between specific persons at Wrocław universities, cannot aspire to the role of an exhaustive illustration of the academic community of Wrocław. For the same reasons each chapter, devoted to individual groups of disciplines, includes also a historical outline of the genesis and development of different schools

within a given discipline, which is illustrated by the genealogical trees mentioned above, their descriptions as well as biographical sketches of some scholars, who created them. The editors and authors of this volume hope that the different ways in which the disciplines and research work of their representatives have been described will help to better present the achievements of which the present generation of the Wrocław academic world wants to be proud and of which next generations of Wrocław scholars should remember.

The significance of the sixtieth anniversary of the academic community of Wrocław has also been an opportunity to prepare a bibliographic list of historical works, memoirs and mementoes of that time. However, during the work on the bibliography of publications related to the history of science in Wrocław it soon turned out that the ambition to make a complete list was too high, as a comprehensive and exhaustive list of all the writings on the problem would take up a volume of the size equal to this book. For this reason, the bibliography, although extensive, is restricted only to books and monographs.

IV

The work on this book started in 2003. This was a period of great mobilization of all the schools and research units that are members of the College of Rectors of the Academic Institutions of Wrocław and Opole. The editorial board would like to express their gratitude to the Rectors of all the academies in Wrocław and Opole. Our appreciation goes first of all to Professor Tadeusz Luty, Rector of Wrocław University of Technology and Chairman of the College of Rectors. Special words of thanks go to all the authors, who agreed to prepare the individual parts of this publication.

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*Editorial Board
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