

## CHRONICLE

### 20th Anniversary of the Polish Antarctic Station

*Henryk Arctowski*

Solemn celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the *Arctowski* Antarctic Station have taken place on February 26th, 1997 in the Ballroom of the Warsaw Royal Palace. That event was anticipated as part of the forthcoming centenary celebrations of the first in history wintering in Antarctica by two prominent Polish explorers and scientists, Professors Henryk Arctowski and Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski, members of the *Belgica* Expedition (1897–1899)\*.

Opening the anniversary celebration, Professor Leszek Kuźnicki, President of the Polish Academy of Sciences emphasized the importance of the research done at the *Arctowski* Station both for the Polish and universal science. His opening address was followed by lectures delivered by prominent polar explorers and scientists.

Professor Romuald Klekowski, who in 1968 initiated Polish marine investigation in Antarctica, has presented its results after three decades of continuation.

Professor Adam Urbanek, member of the Praesidium of Polish Academy of Sciences and the first Chairman of the Polish Committee on Polar Research, has outlined the role and importance of the *Arctowski* Station in international cooperation aimed at the exploration and investigation of Antarctica.

Professor Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski, the founder and constructor of the *Arctowski* Station, its head and leader of several Polish Antarctic expeditions, discussed the 20 years activities of the station, its results and achievements against the background of the multi-national comprehensive scientific investigations of Antarctica.

Professor Krzysztof Jażdżewski, member of many Polish Antarctic expeditions and Chief-Editor of the journal *Polish Polar Research*, discussed comprehensively the educational role of the *Arctowski* Station especially in the training of young staff for future scientific polar ventures.

The lectures were followed by statements delivered by speakers who conveyed congratulations on the anniversary. They were: Professor Krzysztof Birkenmajer, Chairman of the Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Professor Aleksander Łuczak, Chairman of the governmental Committee on Scientific Research, Professor Marcin Pniński, Rector of the Gdańsk University, Professor Jerzy Znosko (Polish Geological Institute) and merchant navy Captain Zenon Krzymiński representing the maritime enterprise *Dalmor*. The two last speakers, representing the Agricultural University in Szczecin, were Professors Anna and Edward Kołakowski. The former is the first Polish woman who spent the austral winter in Antarctica on the *Arctowski* Station.

Under the next agenda item, messages from different persons and institutions were read. The first was the message received from the Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz. It was followed by messages send by the scientific committees of the Polish Academy of Sciences, by the Rectors of the universities in Łódź, Poznań and Szczecin and by the staffs of the Polish research stations in the Arctic and Antarctic.

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\* See: Symposium on the life and work of Professor Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski (1872–1954), *Polish Polar Research*, 17 (1996): 115–116.

In conclusion, Professor Leszek Kuźnicki, President of the Arctowski Foundation handed over prizes to the winners of the competition entitled: *My conception of a polar station*. 17 designs were submitted to the contest organized by the Foundation jointly with the chair of the Marine Architecture at the Gdańsk Technical University. Posters presenting the submitted designs were displayed at an exhibition located in the Treasury of the Royal Palace, together with posters illustrating the trends in Antarctic studies and investigations conducted by Polish universities and research institutes, as well as photos showing the *Arctowski* Station and its neighbourhood. Publications and other information material on the *Arctowski* Station and Polish polar activities were distributed and sold at the exhibition. A press conference ended the official part of the celebrations in the Royal Palace.

The celebrations have brought together numerous prominent members of the Polish political and scientific circles, diplomatic and other representatives of nations engaged in polar activities and last but not least, a large group of Polish and foreign polar explorers and research workers, both senior and the youngest. At a small cocktail party given by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences and closing the celebrations, they all had an opportunity to exchange memories from the polar regions and to discuss plans for future actions there.

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