

CHRONICLE

The Jubilee of Professor Stanisław Siedlecki

The 80th birthday of Polish outstanding polar researcher, Prof. Dr. Stanisław Siedlecki was organized by the Committee on Polar Research, Polish Academy of Sciences. The celebration was held in the Staszic Palace in Warsaw on October 29, 1992. Among the participants of the session there were: the President of Polish Academy of Sciences, Professor A. Gieysztor, Vice-president of P.A.S., Professor L. Kuźnicki, the member of the presidium of P.A.S., Professor A. Urbanek and the representatives of all Polish polar scientific centers as well as many friends from Poland and from abroad.

It was a historical symposium and, at the same time, a reunion of the "polar family" and friends of the celebrator of the jubilee. The session was divided in two parts. During the first one, the works by Professor Siedlecki and other Polish polar researchers were discussed. The second reflected the contribution of Professor Siedlecki to the development of the sciences concerning problems of polar zones. He contributed significantly to recognition of Spitsbergen, mainly as a chief of numerous expeditions. The life and achievements of Prof. Stanisław Siedlecki were presented in detail in the jubilee article by A. Jahn and K. Birkenmajer (Pol. Polar Res., 12, 3).

Leading the session Prof. K. Birkenmajer greeted the celebrator of the jubilee, the P.A.S. officials and all the guests. Next, Prof. Gieysztor shared his memories from his meetings with Professor Siedlecki and mentioned his first readings of Siedlecki's works describing the investigations of Spitsbergen carried out before the II world war. Influenced by these works Prof. Gieysztor was always friendly inclined to polar studies, also during his work in P.A.S. authorities.

Next two speeches, given by Prof. K. Birkenmajer and Dr. S. Rudowski, concerned the works of Professor Siedlecki carried out on the islands and on the continental part of Norway. The first showed the Professor's achievements on the background of the results of the geological investigations of polar explorers from the second half of the XX century. Dr. S. Rudowski, illustrating his speech with slides of Professor's maps, presented significant accomplishments of this Polish polar explorer in Pre-Cambrian and Paleozoic recognition in northern Europe. This part of the session was closed by Prof. A. Jahn who recalled their common investigations of Spitsbergen.

Prof. K. Birkenmajer, the President of the Committee on Polar Research of Polish Academy of Sciences handed in to Professor Siedlecki a special volume of Polish Polar Research (vol. 12, No. 3) dedicated to him and containing — along with his curriculum vitae — also some biological, archaeological and geological works of his friends and colleagues. This book was also handed in to the President of P.A.S.

In the second part of the session spoke the representatives of institutions in which Professor Siedlecki has worked or with which he cooperated when preparing his expeditions to the Arctic. For example, Prof. A. Ślęczka (Jagiellonian University) characterized the works by Professor Siedlecki written during his work as an assistant at this University and in the State Geological Institute, drawing attention to the special significance of his works concerning the Carboniferous period.

Prof. K. Jakubowski (Museum of the Earth, P.A.S.) returned to the period when Professor Siedlecki has worked in this museum; he was a bright popularizer of geology, presenting, for instance, an excellent popular monograph of ammonites.

Prof. A. Kostrzewski (Institute of Quaternary Studies, University of Poznań) indicated that this institution became a significant scientific center due to the Professor's spiritual support.

Mr. Hansen spoke on the importance of the public activities of Professor Siedlecki in the Poland-Norway Society. Prof. Schramm (University of Poznań) presented a colourful chapter of the Professor's life — their common alpinistic and geographical explorations, among others the famous canoeing around the Spitsbergen. This speech was referred to by Mr. S. Rządkosz (the Union of Stamp-Collectors, Szczecin), who spoke on the influence of Professor Siedlecki's polar studies on the development of popularization of polar problems on stamps. Dr. D. Bogucki (Polarex Company) and Dr. M. Zalewski (Department of Marine and Polar Studies, Institute of Geophysics, P.A.S.) drew attention to merits and technical aspects of the Professor's leadership of Polish expeditions to Spitsbergen after 1957.

Prof. R.Z. Klekowski (Institute of Ecology, P.A.S.) has presented to Prof. Siedlecki the volume containing Polish works concerning the ecology of the polar zones.

Prof. S. Rakusa-Suszczewski (Department of Antarctic Biology, P.A.S.) indicated that Arctic experience of Professor Siedlecki was the basis for organizing Polish biological studies in Antarctica; he has presented to Prof. Siedlecki a monograph of the Admiralty Bay (South Shetlands, Antarctica) written by Polish investigators.

Prof. A. Winnicki (Agriculture Academy, Szczecin) reminded that some of realization of Professor's ideas, i.e. those leading to learning more about the Arctic seas fauna, were realized in this very institution.

On behalf of younger generation of polar explorers, who did not meet Prof. Siedlecki in Arctic, spoke Prof. M. Pulina (Silesian University). He indicated how much Professor's polar concepts were important for next organizers of expeditions to Spitsbergen.

Prof. J. Szupryczyński (Institute of Geography, P.A.S.) characterized the contribution of Professor Siedlecki to the formation of significant polar studies center in Toruń.

Finally, Dr. J. Lefeld (Institute of Geological Sciences, P.A.S.) reminded that the celebrator of the jubilee has worked in this institute until 1966, seriously contributing to the recognition of most important geological problems in Poland

It is necessary to note also that the representatives of the Embassy of Norway took part in this celebration. The first secretary of this embassy, Mr. Ole Harpestad, presented the significance of Professor's achievements in the recognition of different polar areas in Norway.

At the end of the celebration Professor Siedlecki took the floor. He was modest, as usual, observing that he is surprised by preceding speeches. He recognizes himself as "one of the polar family" who tried to do his job well. With his great humanistic culture he underlined that, for many years Prof. A. Jahn and Prof. K. Birkenmajer were main animators of Polish polar science.

Zbigniew WÓJCIK

Warszawa



Fig. 1. Professor Stanisław Siedlecki



Fig. 2. — Profesor S. Siedlecki applauded by the president of Polish Academy of Sciences, prof. A. Gieysztor and by prof. A. Jahn

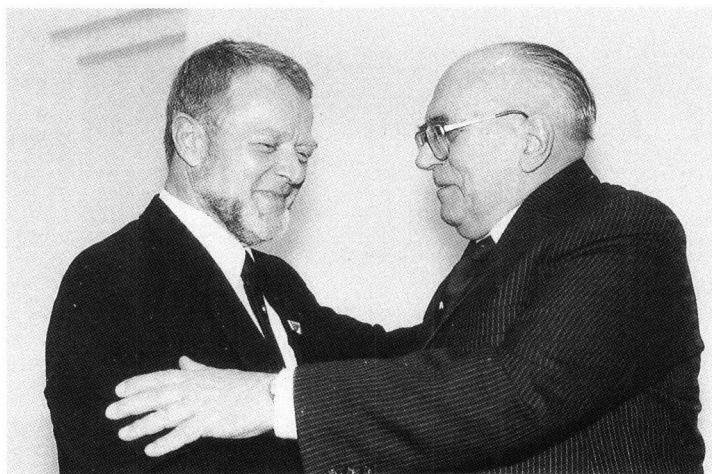


Fig. 3. Congratulations from the president of the Committee on Polar Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, prof. K. Birkenmajer



Fig. 4. — Congratulations from prof. R. Schramm



Fig. 5. Prof. S. Siedlecki followed by prof. K. Pękala, president of the Polar Club, Polish Geographical Society



Fig. 6. — Congratulations from prof. S. Rakusa-Suszczewski, head of the Department of Antarctic Biology P.A.S.



Fig. 7. Siedlecki with young successors in polar exploration: dr. W. Moskal (left) and dr. S. Rudowski (right)