
An account of the 70th birthday jubilee of Professor Andrzej Maciej Brzeziński Łódź, June 11, 2018

ON June 11, 2018 Alfred Biedermann's Palace in Łódź hosted the 70th birthday jubilee of Professor Andrzej Maciej Brzeziński PhD accompanied by handing in the Jubilarian a collective work entitled *Politycy, dyplomaci i żołnierze. Studia i szkice z dziejów stosunków międzynarodowych w XX i XXI wieku* [Politicians, diplomats and soldiers. Studies and sketches on the history of international relations in the 20th and 21st century]. The commemorative book, published by the Lodz University Publishing House, was edited by his students and co-workers: Associate Professor Dariusz Jeziorny PhD, Associate Professor Sławomir M. Nowinowski PhD and Associate Professor Radosław Paweł Żurawski vel Grajewski PhD¹. The ceremony held by the Department of Recent World History of Lodz University gathered representatives of Lodz University authorities, His Magnificence Rector of Lodz University Professor Antoni Różalski PhD was represented by Professor Wiesław Puś PhD; the authorities of the Faculty of Philosophy and History: the Dean's Committee composed of Associate Professor Marek Gensler PhD, Associate Professor Aneta Pawłowska PhD and Andrzej Kompa PhD, the authorities of the Institute of History, Associate Professor Dariusz Jeziorny PhD and Associate Professor Anna Kowalska-Pietrzak PhD, the authorities of Lodz University Publishing House, staff members of these institutions, Professor A.M. Brzeziński's friends and students as well as his family.

¹ *Politycy, dyplomaci i żołnierze. Studia i szkice z dziejów stosunków międzynarodowych w XX i XXI wieku ofiarowane Profesorowi Andrzejowi Maciejowi Brzezińskiemu w 70. rocznicę urodzin*, eds D. Jeziorny, S.M. Nowinowski, R.P. Żurawski vel Grajewski, Łódź 2017.

The meeting was opened by the head of the Institute of History, Professor D. Jeziorny, who welcomed the Jubilarian and his wife, the guests and all the people gathered in the hall and asked Professor W. Puś to take the floor. He noticed that he and Professor A.M. Brzeziński had been friends for 48 years and they had met when the Jubilarian was a second-year student while the future rector worked as a trainee assistant lecturer. On behalf of the Rector, Professor Puś stressed that he wished to thank Professor Brzeziński for all the years of his work and all the achievements, including, for instance, the prize of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for his latest book on Oskar Halecki. He also noticed that the Jubilarian is an outstanding personality not only in the Institute of History but also at the whole university as he quickly climbed the scientific career ladder, commencing with a PhD degree at the age of 29 and obtaining professorship 20 years later. He was head of the division since 1993 and then of the department where he managed to create an extremely strong research team. Professor W. Puś noted that scientists who retire continue to be part of the university community and the academic family. This is why he encouraged the Jubilarian to carry on participating in scientific research and activities undertaken at the Institute and the Faculty. He also recalled several events of the past. He noticed that A.M. Brzeziński got his first important prize as early as a third-year student in 1967 when the jury in Cracow whose head was Professor Celina Bobińska considered the Jubilarian's speech on the theatre in Stanisław August Poniatowski times to be outstanding. The Rector's representative also recalled his trips to Warsaw together with Professor A.M. Brzeziński and Professor Jerzy Grobis at the turn of the seventies and eighties of the 20th century when they collected materials for their scientific works. Professor Puś also stressed that the Jubilarian had never aspired to any posts and that his books were written in beautiful literary language, which is rare among historians.

After that speech Professor D. Jeziorny asked the present head of the Department of Recent World History of Lodz University, Professor R.P. Żurawski vel Grajewski to present the scientific portrait of Professor A.M. Brzeziński. He was born on November 14, 1947 in Włocławek. In his hometown he went to Maria Konopnicka Secondary School No. 3, where he passed his school-leaving examination for secondary education in 1965. Interest in the past sparked off in his childhood resulted in taking up historical studies

at the Faculty of Philosophy and History of Lodz University. In that period the biggest impact on the Jubilarian was exerted by staff members of the Institute of History, including Assistant Professor Władysław Bortnowski PhD, Professor Józef Dutkiewicz PhD as well as Assistant Professor Zofia Libiszowska PhD. His Master's Thesis entitled *Zespoły teatralne Wojska Polskiego w latach 1943–1949* [Theatre groups of the Polish Army between 1943–1949], which obtained a first degree prize in Aleksander Zawadzki competition, opened the door to scientific career for A.M. Brzeziński. He became Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Recent World History of Lodz University in 1970, and he served his scientific internship at the Lomonosov Moscow State University between 1974 and 1975. At that time he prepared his dissertation under the supervision of Assistant Professor Waldemar Michowicz PhD entitled *Sprawa porozumienia angielsko-rosyjskiego w latach 1903–1907* [The issue of the English and Russian agreement between 1903 and 1907], which was published in an abbreviated version². It was on the basis of this work that he obtained a PhD in history on November 11, 1976. Since his promotion to the post of Assistant Professor in 1977, the core of his interests included security issues and disarmament in the French Third Republic foreign policy. His research and queries in Polish and French archives bore fruit in the form of numerous articles and three books: *Dyplomacja francuska wobec Konferencji Rozbrojeniowej w Genewie (2 II 1932 – 31 V 1937)*³ [French Diplomacy and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (February 2, 1932 – May 31, 1937)], *Zagadnienie bezpieczeństwa zbiorowego w Europie w polityce zagranicznej Francji (1919–1939)* [The issue of collective safety in Europe in French foreign policy (1919–1939)]⁴ and *Warszawa–Paryż–Genewa. Sojusz polsko-francuski a problem rozbrojenia w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym (1919–1937)*⁵ [Warsaw–Paris–Geneva. The Polish-French allay and the problem of disarmament in the interwar period (1919–1937)]. The first of these

² A.M. Brzeziński, *Sprawa porozumienia angielsko-rosyjskiego w latach 1903–1907*, Łódź 1979.

³ Idem, *Dyplomacja francuska wobec Konferencji Rozbrojeniowej w Genewie (2 II 1932 – 31 V 1937)*, Łódź 1987.

⁴ Idem, *Zagadnienie bezpieczeństwa zbiorowego w Europie w polityce zagranicznej Francji 1919–1939*, Łódź 1992.

⁵ Idem, *Warszawa–Paryż–Genewa. Sojusz polsko-francuski a problem rozbrojenia w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym (1919–1937)*, Łódź 1996.



1. 70th birthday jubilee of Professor Andrzej Maciej Brzeziński (from the left: the Jubilarian, Professor Dariusz Jeziorny, the head of the Institute of History of Lodz University who chaired the meeting). Photo. B. Kałużny



2. Speech by Professor Sławomir M. Nowinowski speaking on behalf the Jubilarian's students. Photo. B. Kałużny



3. Handing in flowers to the Jubilarian on behalf of the head and employees of the Institute of History of Lodz University by Professor Anna Kowalska-Pietrzak.
Photo. B. Kałużny



4. Dedication of Professor A.M. Brzeziński in the commemorative book for Professor Przemysław Piotr Żurawski vel Grajewski. Photo. S.L. Szczesio

books were basis for giving him the postdoctoral degree in humanities in the field of history on May 21, 1987. On June 1, 1988 A.M. Brzeziński became Assistant Professor, and nearly exactly a year and a half later – Lodz University Associate Professor, and he was conferred the title of Professor of Humanities by the President of the Republic of Poland on December 16, 1996. He was head of the Department of Recent World History of Lodz University between 1993 and 1997, and then the Department of Recent World History of Lodz University (from October 1, 1997 to September 30, 2016). It is worth recalling that he also held the post of deputy editor (1992–1996) and chief editor of the *Folia Historica* series of ‘Acta Universitatis Lodziensis’ (1997–1999). Besides he was member of the Lodz Scientific Association (1989–2008), the Expert Commission of the Ministry of National Education (1992–1994), the Peace Research Centre of the Division of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lodz (1999–2006), the Commission for the History of International Relations of the Committee of Historical Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences (2000–2002) and the Committee of Historical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (2002–2006). He has been member of the Programme Committee of the Lodz journal entitled ‘Przegląd Nauk Historycznych’ [the Review of Historical Sciences] since 2001.

Notwithstanding his involvement in organisational works the Professor continued his research, doing different scientific internships, professor missions and queries: in Paris in 1989 and 1999, in Oslo in 1997 or in Geneva in 1998. In the late nineties of the 20th century he published a book being the result of his studies into Polish diplomacy during World War II⁶. Soon after Professor A.M. Brzeziński began his research on the contribution of Polish intellectuals into the development of international cooperation in the post-war period, analysing it in numerous articles and two source monographs⁷. It is also worth mentioning his immensely popular syntheses of the history of Monaco and Greece in the 20th century⁸.

⁶ Idem, *Kwestia powojennej organizacji bezpieczeństwa w polityce zagranicznej rządu RP na uchodźstwie 1939–1945*, Łódź 1999.

⁷ Idem, *Polska Komisja Międzynarodowej Współpracy Intelktualnej (1924–1939)*, Łódź 2001; idem, *Oskar Halecki a Liga Narodów. Poglądy i działalność*, Łódź 2016.

⁸ Idem, *Historia Monako*, [in:] *Historia małych krajów Europy. Andora, Liechtenstein, Luksemburg, Malta, Monako, San Marino*, ed. J. Łaptos, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2002; idem, *Historia Monako*, [in:] *Historia małych krajów Europy. Andora, Liechtenstein, Luksemburg, Malta, Monako, San Marino*, ed.

Over 150 Master's and Bachelor's Theses were written under the supervision of the Professor and he also promoted thirteen PhDs. He acted as a reviewer of many doctoral and post-doctoral programmes. Professor A.M. Brzeziński was awarded for his scientific achievements, for instance he obtained a Medal of the Commission of National Education (1994), the Gold Cross of Merit (2000), the Award of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology (1977), the Award of the Minister of National Education (1988). His latest monograph, *Oskar Halecki a Liga Narodów. Poglądy i działalność* [Oscar Halecki and the League of Nations. Views and work], got a distinction in the Competition for Best Academic Book in 2017 and in the Historical Contest of the Minister of Foreign Affairs 2017 in the category of 'Best publication in Polish on the history of Polish diplomacy'. Furthermore, the Jubilarian was the laureate of both individual and team prizes of the Rector of Lodz University seven times (1992, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2017).

The next person who spoke during the ceremony was Professor M. Gensler, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of Lodz University. He noticed that the Jubilarian may speak of himself that he is fulfilled academically, not only because of his own achievements and career but also due to the great joy of seeing successes of his own students and the belief that he leaves the department in good hands of his successors. Professor Gensler also stressed that Professor Brzeziński had been making history of both Lodz University as well as the Faculty and is a role model to follow.

Then Professor A. Kowalska-Pietrzak gave the Professor a bunch of flowers on behalf of the head and employees of the Institute of History of Lodz University and congratulated the Jubilarian, wishing him many happy returns and that all his dreams and plans come true.

After that, Professor S.M. Nowinowski began his speech on behalf of the Professor's students. He began his talk with an anecdote, saying that he acts as the second promoted PhD (the first one was Professor R.P. Żurawski vel Grajewski), the first Assistant Lecturer as soon after employing him, Professor A.M. Brzeziński left for the United States, he heard a statement about himself that he is 'Assistant Lecturer of a Professor who is not there'. In his speech Professor Nowinowski undertook to describe the Jubilarian as 'head' and this

term referred to the name used in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when Józef Beck became Deputy Minister. According to this long-standing colleague of Professor A.M. Brzeziński, he devised a model of head which is rarely to be found in the Institute of History of Lodz University or in the academic world in general. He did not believe that feudalism is the best form of organising university life. He impressed others with his expertise, knowledge of the world, foreign languages, work discipline and wording both in speech and in writing. He did not expect that his students would inherit his scientific interests, having at the same time a lot of trust in them. He did not have to lead his students by the hand but he was always ready to lend them a hand if they needed it. As 'head' he would remind others that life is not only about scientific work but it also has an array of other appeals. Even though he dealt primarily with world history, he kept reminding his co-workers that they also have obligations with regard to *Klio Polska*, setting an example himself.

The next person to make a speech was a representative of the Faculty of International and Political Studies of Lodz University, Professor Przemysław Piotr Żurawski vel Grajewski PhD. He said that he had met the Jubilarian for the first time still as a secondary school student while he was examined during a History Contest by a commission whose member was A.M. Brzeziński. Another memory of Professor Żurawski vel Grajewski PhD was that he participated as a student in exercises run by the Professor in 1985. He evaluated them as exceptionally 'intellectually refreshing', giving him an 'intellectual spark'. The third element which brought these two people together was the MA seminar of Professor Waldemar Michowicz PhD in which A.M. Brzeziński took part as Assistant Professor. Professor P.P. Żurawski vel Grajewski recollected also that time as an unusual adventure. At the end of his speech he thanked the Jubilarian for the extraordinary didactic experience from the times of his classes as well as subsequent scientific and research experiences when was inspired by numerous works by the Professor.

The next person who made a speech was Associate Professor Katarzyna Jedynakiewicz-Mróż PhD. At the beginning she noticed that she was the first Assistant Professor employed by the Jubilarian, even though she was not promoted by him. Her master was Professor Zbigniew Kuchowicz PhD and after his death Professor J. Grobis became the supervisor of her doctoral dissertation. She feels, nevertheless, a student of Professor A.M. Brzeziński as her habilitation

thesis would not have been completed without his support. He allowed her to return to her initial research interests, giving her a free hand in the choice of the subject. Due to the Jubilarian's good will and open-mindedness Professor Jedynakiewicz-Mróż could deal with the history of Germany and its culture. She thanked him for this support and confessed that she regards the Professor as one of the most important people in her life.

After that, the present Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Sociology of Lodz University, Professor Rafał Matera PhD, took the floor. He noticed that although he had never become the Professor's PhD student, he would like to confirm that the Professor's MA seminar was one of the best in the Institute of History, becoming a real intellectual feast for his students. He remembers the Jubilarian from those times as a really open-minded individual who would talk with seminar members about travels. Professor Matera also recalled that after writing his Master's Thesis under the auspices of Professor A.M. Brzeziński, he wished to become his PhD student. Yet the Jubilarian proposed that he should start his PhD studies in economics and that his tutor could be Professor Janusz Skodlarski. The present Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Sociology wholeheartedly thanked the Jubilarian for this hint and the words which he said to him back then: 'I am sure you can make it'.

Then Bartosz Kaczorowski PhD spoke on behalf of the younger student generation of the Professor's alumni. He reminded that the Jubilarian contributed to his intellectual development as a supervisor of his Master's Thesis, and while reviewing his PhD dissertation he proved to be an expert on the history of the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, he stressed involvement of the previous head of the Department in employing him on the position of Assistant Professor despite his health problems, which perfectly illustrates Professor A.M. Brzeziński's human features.

In the subsequent part of the meeting the commemorative book was solemnly handed over to the Jubilarian by its three co-editors. This book, as Professor D. Jeziorny noticed, is a way of honouring Professor's work and thanking him for all he did. The work includes articles of more than 40 scientists describing different aspects of international relations starting from the beginning of the 20th century and finishing with problems of the contemporary world as well as a bibliography of scientific publications by Professor A.M. Brzeziński.

It was the time when the main hero of the meeting took the floor. He began by giving many thanks to all the guests for coming as well as the organisers and his wife for preparing the ceremony. He also expressed gratitude to the editors and co-authors of the collective work. He stressed that he was particularly happy to see that it contains texts of not only experienced historians but also PhDs promoted by him. From the perspective of several dozen years of his professional work at Lodz University the Jubilarian admitted that he was immensely lucky to have met so many eminent professors on his way who he could learn from and who initially gave direction to his scientific research. The list included such names as Professor W. Bortnowski (supervisor of his Master's Thesis), Helena Brodowska, W. Michowicz (supervisor of the research group at the time when A.M. Brzeziński was its head), Józef Dutkiewicz. The Jubilarian recalled a proposal made to him by Professor W. Michowicz of the post of Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Modern and Recent World History of Lodz University. The head was Professor Józef Dutkiewicz, who at the same time held the position of the head of the Institute of History. It was this researcher that became an unrivalled model for the young scientist as far as brevity and conciseness both in speech and in writing are concerned. He was a scientist with vast knowledge and excellent organisational skills. At that time the Jubilarian remained under the scientific guidance of Professor W. Michowicz, who had become the supervisor of his PhD dissertation, and he also included him in his team dealing with the problem of security and disarmament. The height of that activity was both the Peace Research Centre of Lodz University, whose head was Professor Michowicz, and Professor Brzeziński became its scientific secretary, and the cooperation with the Lodz branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences, whose head at that time was Professor Jan Michalski. As the Jubilarian admitted, he had been lucky as an independent academic staff member that he could cooperate with talented students some of whom currently work as researchers in his Department. He rejoiced at all their successes, doctoral students, habilitations, new works coming out in print. This gives him certainty that he does not need to worry now about the future of the Department as it stays in good hands. The Jubilarian stressed the particular importance of support which he received from his nearest and dearest during his work at the university and he thanked them for it with all his heart. At the end of his speech

Professor A.M. Brzeziński confessed that it was one of his happiest days in his life.

At that time Professor D. Jeziorny, who was the host of the meeting, thanked him for very personal and touching speech and went on to commence another point of the ceremony – handing in the jubilee book by the editors to the authors of texts. Then, the organisers encouraged the guests to sign on two posters which will be a souvenir for both the Jubilarian and the Department. Finally, a toast was made to the Hero of the whole ceremony, and Professor D. Jeziorny wished him on behalf of all the participants good health, relentless sense of humour, some sarcasm and endless joy. Food and drinks were served, including the jubilee birthday cake, which was followed by congratulations and wishes for the Jubilarian. It was also an occasion to obtain an inscription in the commemorative book and take a commemorative photograph. We wholeheartedly congratulate A.M. Brzeziński on this jubilee and wish him good health, high spirits and many new interesting publications.

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