

LIFE OF SCIENCE

A MONTHLY DEVOTED TO THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE

Editor: MIECZYSLAW CHOYNOWSKI

VOL. 1

FEBRUARY 1946

NO. 2

CONFERENCE ON THE NEEDS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF POLISH SCIENCE

ON JANUARY 26th, 1946, a conference was held in Cracow on the needs and organization of Polish science, convoked by the Jagellonian University and the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters, in which many men of learning from Cracow and other towns and representatives of the Government and of the nation took part.

The principal aim of this conference was the discussion of the most important tasks of Polish science and the most appropriate methods of its organization. Four reports, the summaries of which are given below, were read before lunch, while the afternoon was devoted to a long and animated discussion.

GENERAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE TASKS AND NEEDS OF POLISH SCIENCE

by GUSTAW PRZYCHOCKI

DURING the entire period of the German occupation the Nazis strove mercilessly towards the complete destruction of Polish science and culture, pursuing their aim by the murder and imprisonment in concentration camps of hundreds of our scientists, and by the destruction and plunder of our scientific collections and libraries. The losses are terrible and by no means easy to estimate. No country in Europe has suffered greater losses than Poland — and it seems that the world is not yet fully aware of this.

The Polish scientific world of today feels acutely the lack of contact with foreign science and the lack of orientation in its achievements during the pe-

riod of war. Up to the present moment we have no new books or scientific periodicals. Following the improvement in postal communications and with a friendly attitude of foreign scientific institutions, this contact should be established as soon as possible.

Two problems of vital importance should be stressed, namely the necessity of establishing the closest possible relations with the population of our own country and of the most widespread popularization of science. Our Universities have to face the problem of a nearly complete lack of text-books and they suffer acutely from the want of scientific equipment in their laboratories and institutes. A Central Commission for the publication of scientific text-books should be created and should develop a rational publishing activity.

If all these tasks are to be fulfilled, it is necessary for our scientific institutions and societies to obtain adequate financial means and for science to receive such help from the Government as it does in England or in the U. R. S. S., being on the other hand given full security for its free development.

We should also never forget that the most important of all is MAN, and therefore all research in pure science, applied science and the humanities should lead to the enrichment of spiritual values, to the welfare of the nation and to the pacific collaboration of all peoples of the world.

SEMINARY OF CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY OF THE JAGELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, CRACOW.

NOTES ON THE TASKS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES IN POLAND

by WŁADYSŁAW SZAFER

THE WAR has brought such destruction in the domain of the Natural Sciences in Poland, and the personal losses are so great, that the general state of these sciences today can be described as catastrophic. The historical calamities which have befallen Poland during nearly 200 years have repeatedly caused interruptions in our scientific traditions. Emigration has taken our many prominent men — Polish natural scientists can be found today all over the world.

The first problem of Polish science is to bring back to the country all scientists now dispersed in foreign countries; the other is the proper equipment of our laboratories with scientific apparatus and books. Speaking of certain topical problems, we should state that the plan of founding some new research institutes outside the universities does not seem under the present conditions of lack of men and means either motivated or reasonable.

The separation of science and instruction should not be allowed, as these two functions of the universities cannot be divided from one another, the universities cannot be limited to the role of professional schools, because that would deprive them of their scientific vitality; and science, without

the contact with its young adepts, would be cut off from its most valuable vital saps.

The freedom of science and instruction and the equal treatment of pure and applied science are absolutely necessary, as it can never be foreseen what practical and cultural consequences may result from the most abstract scientific achievement.

Polish science has to repair as soon as possible its setback in scientific development in comparison with foreign countries. The revival of our old scientific institutions, the founding of the Union of Scientific Institutions and Societies, the spreading of the activities of the State Scientific Council and the creation of a special and lasting State Scientific Fund will help this aim.

Finally, the greatest possible development of research on nature, man and culture in Poland is the most important duty of Polish learning, as nobody can substitute us in this domain, and *non illi possident terram, qui eam incolunt, sed hi, qui frugibus eius explorandis dant operam*.

BOTANICAL INSTITUTE, J. U., CRACOW.

THE TASKS AND NEEDS OF THE HUMANITIES IN POLAND

by WŁADYSŁAW KONOPCZYŃSKI

THE LOSSES in the Humanities are very much greater than those in the Natural Sciences as they cannot be replaced by achievements in foreign countries.

Polish philosophy, sociology, law, history, and philology are faced with many tasks to be fulfilled and much neglect to be repaired. Among the most important of these tasks we could name studies in dialect and topographical names in connexion with the translocation of the Polish State territory towards the West, research on folk literature and the new social classes, on problems of small and great land ownership, on individual and collective economy, on labour legislation, the history of the relations between Poland and other Slavonic nations, the recent history of Poland; the publication of various monumental works such as the *Corpus Juris Polonici*, the *Polish Dictionary of Biography*, the *Polish Encyclopaedia*, the *Polish Geographic Dictionary* and others, studies on national civilization etc.

These works should be undertaken with a definite plan. Unimportant questions should be set aside and problems of greater importance should be treated in the first place.

Polish learning should have a free and continuous contact with abroad if it is to fulfil its tasks and keep pace with foreign scientific achievements.

SEMINARY OF HISTORY, J. U., CRACOW.

ON THE NECESSITY OF FOREIGN HELP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF POLISH SCIENCE

by ADAM VETULANI

POLISH science has suffered terrible losses, the enemy having taken revenge with special cruelty upon our country on account of Poland's refusal to compromise with the invader.

Scientific activity was severely forbidden during six years. We worked secretly, but owing to the general conditions of life under the German occupation, this was only a substitute for real scientific activity.

Some Polish scientists spent the war abroad and have published many scientific works in Polish and foreign periodicals, mostly in the U. S. A., in England and in Switzerland. Of the results of the activity of our scientists in the U. R. S. S. we have as yet no information.

The Poland of today has to revive its science, but she will never be able to achieve any important results without foreign help. Our scientific institutions should be enabled to establish in the shortest possible time close *direct* relations with foreign scientific institutions and universities. It would be advisable if each Polish university were to be taken under the special care of some foreign university, which would supply it with the necessary scientific equipment and books. An international institution could also facilitate foreign travel for our scientists by reviving and increasing the number of scholarships. We should also be very happy to see foreign guests in Poland, who would inform us of the progress of science during the war period and revive old scientific contacts. We have already had several such visits, but we should like them to be more frequent and numerous. Foreign countries could also do us a great service by enabling us to print Polish scientific works, many of which were written during the occupation, in their presses, and by publishing the works of our scientists in their periodicals.

A regular supply of scientific periodicals and books is one of our most urgent needs.

Foreign countries could also invite those of our scientists who need special medical care and better conditions for their health to their sanatoria or curative institutions. This Switzerland has already started to do, giving us a noble proof of her friendly feelings and love of mankind.

SEMINARY OF HISTORY OF LAW, J. U., CRACOW.

DISCUSSION

DURING the discussion, in which 25 members of the conference took part, the necessity of planning was stressed, but it must be admitted that the attitude of the majority towards this was rather diffident. In any case the necessity was pointed out of leaving the planning to the scientists themselves.

The necessity of creating a synthetic science of man, based on the natural sciences as well as on the humanities was brought out, and the hope was expressed that a universal knowledge of man would enable us to improve the world and would wipe out the moral and intellectual results of the war. The value of contacts and the collaboration of scientists working in different specialities was also stressed.

Of the concrete plans proposed during the discussions, the following are worth naming; the foundation of Polish scientific stations in the most important scientific centres abroad, above all in London, Moscow and New York in addition to those existing before the war in Rome and Paris; the creation of a Central Bureau of Scientific Information; the Organization of an Institute for Collaboration of Science and the State, whose aim would be to elaborate scientific methods in all domains of life, and not only in technics, agriculture and medicine; the creation of a Council for the Popularization of Scientific Culture, which would realize a wide plan of popularization of Science, its methods and its intellectual basis; and finally the organization of a Professional Union of Scientific Workers, which would represent the professional interests of scientists and would campaign for the purposes of Science and for the application of Science uniquely for the welfare of mankind.

REORGANIZATION OF POLISH SCIENTIFIC LIFE

by WŁODZIMIERZ MICHAJŁOW

THE WRITER begins his programme of reorganization of Polish science with an analysis of the situation of science throughout the world.

He points to its rapid development, especially in natural sciences, to the growing dependence of science and technic, to the gradual disappearance of distinctions between different branches of science together with a simultaneous sharp specialization in its various branches, to the overgrowth of science to the expense of arts and to the necessity of reestablishing the balance between them, and finally to the international character of science. Polish science requires a rapid reconstruction and repairing of damages caused by the war, and it needs a reform of the educational system in order to make university education accessible to students of all social classes.

Speaking in turn of the reorganization of Polish science, the writer proposes alternatives in the organization of the Ministry of Education in favour of its scientific resorts and a corresponding change in its name to Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry should act as executive organ to the Scientific Council, which was created half a year ago, and the aims of which the writer discusses subsequently.

The Scientific Council should include, besides scientists, representatives of the State and of various social organizations. Its main objects should be to

plan and develop a network of institutions for scientific research, to settle the general outlines of scientific policy, and to work out a plan of scientific research for a definite period. It should investigate the right methods of training future scientific workers, represent Polish science abroad, keep close contact with science in foreign countries, and finally it should supervise the publishing organization of scientific periodicals.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WARSAW.

CAUSA UNIVERSITATIS JAGELLONICAE 1939—1941

by BOGUSŁAW LEŚNODORSKI

ON NOVEMBER 6th, 1939, the Nazi barbarians arrested by stratagem 144 professors, lecturers and assistants of the Jagellonian University in Cracow, the oldest university in Poland, and several professors of other centres of higher education in Cracow. The victims of German terror were subsequently transported to concentration camps in the Reich. The world has probably never before seen a crime of this sort.

On the fatal day, the occupation authorities summoned the teaching staff of the University to attend a lecture which was to be delivered by Obersturmbahnführer Müller upon „The attitude of the German State and National Socialism towards the problems of science and the universities“. The „lecture“ lasted only two minutes. Müller declared that by engaging in activities in the Institutes of the University and by endeavours to open the University, in spite of the collapse of the Polish State in September 1939, without asking for permission from the German authorities, and by similar proceedings, malicious and inimical towards the German State, the professors of the Jagellonian University had again given proof that the University had always been a centre of anti-German propaganda. For these delinquencies the professors were to be transported to camps for prisoners of war, where they would be instructed as to their true position. The camp for prisoners of war proved to be — after three weeks' confinement in prison in Breslau — the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen near Berlin.

There the whole group of members of the Jagellonian University passed three months under the most terrible conditions; life in the concentration camp — without even the most primitive medical aid — caused the deaths of 13 eminent professors (among the most brilliant scholars were Kazimierz Kostanecki, anatomist, Michał Siedlecki, zoologist and maritime explorer, Stanisław Estreicher, specialist in Western European Law, and Jerzy Smoleński, geographer); immediately after their return from the concentration camp in 1940 four more professors died, among whom were Antoni Wilk, astronomer, the discoverer of a comet named after him.

In February 1940, 101 members of the university staff were released. Their younger colleagues were transported to the concentration camp in

Dachau, whence they were set free, one group at a time, at intervals of several months.

The death of the last of the group — the geographer Wiktor Ormicki, beaten to death by SS men on September 12th, 1941, in the camp in Mauthausen — was the tragic ending of the „affair of Cracow”.

The Germans had planned the imprisonment of the professors from Cracow among whom was the late President of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Professor Stanisław Kutrzeba, as the beginning of an action leading to the destruction of all centres of Polish thought and indeed of the whole nation.

In an article published in this number of *Life of Science* the author — one of the younger members of the group of Cracow prisoners — speaks of two memoirs of these times by professors of the Jagellonian University — Jan Gwiazdomorski and Stanisław Skowron. Gwiazdomorski puts the following words at the end of his book: „In spite of all their Teutonic fury, in spite of all violence, bestiality and crime, in spite of all temptations and treacheries, we have remained POLAND. And Her we shall remain for ever!”

Remembering the heroic attitude of the group and the noble personalities of its seniors, many of whom succumbed as victims of the concentration camps, the author states that nevertheless the days spent in the concentration camps were no loss for the younger members of the group. From their great sufferings certain inner changes developed and a new fundamental attitude towards the world and Man was taken up by these young Polish men of learning; the understanding of the social function of science in the service of Goodness and of Life.

SEMINARY OF HISTORY OF LAW, J. U., CRACOW.

THE REST of this number contains a chronicle of scientific life in Poland, a report of the conference of the British Association's Division for the Social and International Relations of Science, notes on the December and January numbers of *Nature*, of which the author writes „*Nature is something more than one of the many scientific journals; it is an institution of which the role in international scientific life is unique of its kind*”, and finally reviews of books, among others a belated but topical review of Lancelot Hogben's „*Mathematics for the Million*”, which ought to be published in a Polish translation. New English books have not reached Poland up to the time of going to press.

The annual foreign subscription rate is 4.00 Dollars
Subscriptions and all other communications should be addressed to
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GEBETHNER I WOLFF

KSIĘGARNIA I SKŁAD NUT

Rok założenia 1857

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WARSZAWA-PRAGA, Targowa 48

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