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## **Reaching out to the World: Pomeranian Medical University's Connections to International Networks of Knowledge Production and Circulation, 1956–1968**

### **Abstract**

This study explores the effects the political “Thaw” of 1956 had on the ability of the Pomeranian Medical University of Szczecin, Poland (PUM) to join and contribute to the international production and circulation of medical knowledge in the years 1956–1968. It gives an overview of the challenges PUM had to face in its relationships with the state apparatus that controlled access to foreign networks. It also discusses the cases of three PUM professors, namely: Bolesław Górnicki (1908–1998; head of Paediatrics), Witold Starkiewicz (1906–1978; head of Ophthalmology), and Kazimierz Stojalowski (1903–1995; head of Pathological Anatomy). For the first of them, Szczecin was a nine-year episode in a prosperous academic career closely tied with Warsaw; the latter two were among PUM's founding staff and stayed in Szczecin till retirement. The study reveals how personality, political and confessional worldview, strength of personal attachment to PUM, and diplomatic skills exhibited by each of the three professors influenced the range, the quality, and the durability of connections they established between PUM and the world.

*Keywords:* Pomeranian Medical University, circulation of knowledge, politics of knowledge, Cold War, the Thaw.

## Introduction

For part of Europe under Soviet control, the year 1956, marked by Nikita Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalinism at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), was a time of upheaval and unrest.<sup>1</sup> In Poland, it brought the death of Bolesław Bierut, the hardline Stalinist state leader (March 12, in Moscow, during the CPSU Congress); the bloodily suppressed workers' revolt in Poznań (June 28–30); and the spectacular rise of Władysław Gomułka from political imprisonment to the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP), with full-scale Soviet military invasion avoided by a hair's breadth (October 19–22). Gomułka's programme of "Polish road to socialism" promised, among others, abandonment of Soviet-imposed collectivisation of agriculture; liberalisation of the state's policy towards the Roman Catholic Church; green light to low-scale private enterprise; and freedom (albeit very limited) of the press. Millions of Poles believed this could be the beginning of actual freedom for the country. However, after approximately two years of liberalisation, a period of the so-called "little stabilisation" began in 1958, marked by continuous economic shortages, and Gomułka's regime progressively more and more oppressive.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Stalinism in Poland did come to an end.<sup>3</sup>

Establishment, in 1948, of the Pomeranian Medical University (henceforth: PUM)<sup>4</sup> coincided with the moment the Stalinist period was beginning. Consequently, the initial years of PUM's operation went through a vicious circle of external and internal challenges. All the post-war hardships were doubly severe in Szczecin due to its complicated geopolitical

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Swain and Nigel Swain, "Communism Renewed?" in idem, *Eastern Europe since 1945*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave MacMillan 2018), 85–121.

<sup>2</sup> Roy Francis Leslie, "The little stabilization," in *The History of Poland since 1863* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983), 365–377.

<sup>3</sup> For comprehensive analysis of these events and their aftermath, see: Paweł Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite: Poland 1956*, transl. Maya Latynski (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center and Stanford: Stanford University Press 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The school's official name changed several times since its foundation in 1948. In the period discussed, it was Pomorska Akademia Medyczna im. Generała Karola Świerczewskiego (PAM). The decision to use PUM's present name (in force since 2010) throughout this paper has been made for sake of visibility.

and demographic situation. The city lacked infrastructure suitable (or easily adaptable) for the purposes of academic medical training and research. Warsaw showed little willingness to send resources the school so desperately needed. Few well-qualified teachers and scholars agreed to move and work here. The didactic production quota imposed by the Ministry of Health (henceforth, MH) was impossible to meet. Virtually every aspect of PUM's life, from students' after-school activities to assignment of executive positions (e.g., Rector; Dean), was under the state's exclusive, strict control. Subject to constant bullying and pressure from the government delegates, members of the PUM's senior academic and administrative staff were unable to openly and effectively communicate their needs and limitations to the decision-makers in the MH, and at the actual center of power, i.e. the Central Committee of the PUWP. In consequence, PUM's connection to, and visibility within, the national networks of scientific communication was severely compromised, while the trans- and international networks remained completely beyond the school's reach.<sup>5</sup>

### **Thaw and “Little Stabilisation” at PUM**

The Thaw was welcomed by Szczecin's medical academic community with great expectations. The first sign of change came in April 1956, when the Faculty Council gathered to discuss Khrushchev's “Secret Speech” and for the first time in PUM's history, the professors openly criticised “errors and deviations” of the system, including its “excessive centralism, careerism, and fawning”.<sup>6</sup> In September 1956, the 1951 Soviet-style law on higher education was repealed, and academic institutions regained the right to choose their own senior officials i.e., Rectors, Pro-Rectors, Deans, and Vice-Deans.<sup>7</sup> The 1950 Act on the socialist discipline of work

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<sup>5</sup> The circumstances of PUM's foundation and operation in the years 1948–1956 are discussed in detail in: Joanna Nieznanowska, “Missed connections: Pomeranian Medical University's efforts to join circulation-of-knowledge networks in the pre-Thaw Cold War times (1948–1956)”, *Acta medico-historica Rigensia* 14 (2021), 11–36, [doi:10.25143/amhr.2021.XIV.02](https://doi.org/10.25143/amhr.2021.XIV.02).

<sup>6</sup> Discussion, re: the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, 11 April 1956, Faculty Council meeting (henceforth: FCM) 1956, sign. A115. PUM Archives.

<sup>7</sup> “Act of 10 September 1956 on changes to the Act on higher education and workers of science”, *Dziennik Ustaw* 41 (1956), item 185, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19560410185>.

was also dropped,<sup>8</sup> bringing an end to the excessive, punitive policing of students' attendance and academic progress (in the years to come, some professors would express their regret over this change).<sup>9</sup> For the first time since the school's foundation, the professors felt safe enough to openly voice their criticism of how the MH handled PUM. Two matters, in particular, caused repeated outbursts of frustration and outrage: the fact that the school was constantly overburdened by admission quota too high for its resources;<sup>10</sup> and the way Szczecin was discriminated against when funds for infrastructure, equipment, teaching posts, and research scholarships were allocated.

However, the fact that the professors were no longer afraid to speak openly did not mean they had much say in how things were eventually decided. The way the MH made economic savings in 1958 made it very clear. Due to yet another bout of financial crisis in Poland, each medical school was ordered to cut twenty of its assistant posts.<sup>11</sup> This meant that

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<sup>8</sup> The act applied to all types of employment and prescribed draconian punishment for missed production quota and 'absenteeism.' At university-level institutions, both the staff and students were defined as workers. "Act of 19 April 1950 on securing the socialist discipline of work", *Dziennik Ustaw* 20 (1950), item 168, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19500200168>; "Act of 10 September 1956 concerning the repealing of the regulations on the socialist discipline of work", *Dziennik Ustaw* 41 (1956), item 187, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19560410187>.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Prof. Józef Taniewski (Laryngology), at the Faculty Council meeting on 18 June 1958 ("Maybe it would be good to restore the former system of strict control?") to which Prof. Eugeniusz Miętkiewski (Physiology) replied: "Indeed, transition from keeping the students on short rope to giving them complete freedom has caused worse exam results, but is it right to lead the youth by their hand all the time? We may be later accused of not preparing them to work on their own." FCM 1958, sign. A117. PUM Archives. If not stated otherwise, all translations are by me.

<sup>10</sup> This complaint was made repeatedly, by a number of professors, throughout the period discussed. For example, on 6 March 1957 Wanda Murczyńska (Microbiology), Edward Drescher (Pediatric Surgery), and Jan Slotwiński (Histology) spoke against the Ministry's policy that the student admission quota must be met regardless of the results the candidates obtain during the entrance examinations: "If medical schools are to entertain broader autonomy, they should be allowed to admit just the number of students they are able to supervise adequately, and train effectively. A certain threshold should be established for the results of entrance examination, below which candidates would not be allowed admission". FCM 1957, sign. A116. PUM Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Rector Górnicki's communication, re: the MH's plans to reduce the number of assistant posts, 16 March 1958; Rector Górnicki's communication, re: new assistant teaching staff quota announced by the MH, followed by discussion, 10 December 1958. FCM 1958, sign. A117. PUM Archives.

6% of PUM's assistants were to be dismissed, a hefty blow for both the school, and the region's general population, as at that time PUM's assistants made up 28% of all physicians, and 80% of all specialists active in the entire Szczecin voivodeship.<sup>12</sup> Nowhere else were the predictable consequences of the MH's decision as dramatic; yet, the decision was made, and nothing could change it. Regarding actual decisional autonomy and access to resources, it might seem that PUM's situation looked just as severely as in the Stalinist period; but this would not be entirely correct. Some things did change, albeit at a frustratingly sluggish pace.

Little by little, PUM's clinical, didactic, and scientific infrastructure grew. In 1956, the hospital complex at Unii Lubelskiej street (henceforth: PSK1) finally received a 200-seat lecture hall; previously, all clinical lectures at PSK1 had been held at the premises of the Paediatric Clinic, causing logistic problems (and, at times, health risks for little patients).<sup>13</sup> In December 1958, two clinics (I Internal Disorders; and Dermatology) moved from the overcrowded PSK1 to the clinical complex at Pomorzany (the pre-1945 Stettin's municipal hospital, gradually rebuilt from total destruction it suffered during and directly after WW2; henceforth: PSK2).<sup>14</sup> In 1959, Histology Department finally moved to proper premises (from two office rooms in the Rectorate building, where it was "temporarily" placed in 1949).<sup>15</sup> In 1960 and 1961, respectively, III Internal Disorders, and III Surgery clinics were established, the former in the District Hospital at Arkońska street, and the latter in PSK2, created by the division of II Surgery.<sup>16</sup> Not a single hospital bed was added to Szczecin's resources at this occasion, and III Surgery had to go without its own operational theater up till 1965,<sup>17</sup> but the didactic burdens in internal disorders and surgery were now divided between three units each. In November 1962, Urology and II OB-GYN clinics were founded and located in PSK2, the latter

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<sup>12</sup> Bolesław Górnicki, "Słowo wstępne", *Rocznik Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej* [henceforth: RPAM] 4 (1958), IV.

<sup>13</sup> Janusz Mąkowski, "Rozmieszczenie zakładów", RPAM 4 (1958), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Drescher, "Nowe kliniki i zakłady", RPAM, 5 (1959), 12.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Drescher, "Nowe kliniki i zakłady", RPAM, 6 (1960), 12.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Drescher, "Nowe kliniki i zakłady", RPAM, 7 (1961), 12; Julian Gryczuk, "Nowe kliniki i zakłady", RPAM 8 (1962), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Julian Gryczuk, "Realizacja planu rozbudowy kliniki i zakładów", RPAM 12 (1966), 15–16.

in an early-1900s pavilion rebuilt from war damage; both departments received brand-new clinical equipment.<sup>18</sup> In 1963, PUM obtained its first electron microscope.<sup>19</sup> In July 1964, Ophthalmology moved from PSK1 (where it was “briefly” placed in 1948, in overcrowded premises deprived of a surgery theater) to PSK2, where it could expand to 120 beds (a three-fold increase). At its former location, a 45-bed radiotherapy department was created, the first facility of this kind in north-western Poland.<sup>20</sup>

None of these additions was delivered on schedule promised by the MH (the usual delay was around two-three years). In 1966, Neurosurgical Clinic was created in PSK1 by the division of beds at Neurology, while in 1967, Orthopaedic Clinic was founded and “temporarily” placed in the Municipal Children’s Hospital (it only moved to its own premises in the late 1980s).<sup>21</sup> Thus, in the years 1965–1968 no new facilities were added to PUM’s infrastructure. The decline in new investments was by no means due to the lack of needs on the part of PUM. Year after year, a long list of urgent requests was declined by the central government. For example, in 1963 this list included, among others: the expansion of the Paediatric Clinic at PSK1; a lecture hall for all the clinics moved to PSK2; quarters suitable for Forensic Medicine (“temporarily” placed in a building arranged for one of the dental clinics in 1952) and Pathological Anatomy (waiting for proper didactic rooms ever since the department’s foundation in 1948); proper premises for Pharmacology (which operated in rooms “briefly” leased from Physiology and Biochemistry departments); and animal houses appropriate for all the research carried out (or planned) in PSK1 and PSK2 – all of these needs remained unsatisfied when PUM celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 1968.

However far from sufficient, the growth of the infrastructural base did help PUM’s teaching staff in the execution of both didactic and research tasks and resulted in the increasing number of didactic-scientific posts

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<sup>18</sup> Julian Gryczuk, “Realizacja planu rozbudowy klinik i zakładów”, RPAM 9 (1963), 17.

<sup>19</sup> Julian Gryczuk, “Realizacja planu rozbudowy klinik i zakładów w latach 1959–1963”, RPAM, 10 (1964), 41.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Gryczuk, “Realizacja planu rozbudowy klinik i zakładów”, RPAM, 11 (1965), 17–18.

<sup>21</sup> Julian Gryczuk, “Realizacja planu rozbudowy klinik i zakładów”, RPAM, 14 (1967), 15–16; idem, “Realizacja planu rozbudowy klinik i zakładów”, RPAM, 15 (1968), 15–16.

at PUM<sup>22</sup>. However, there was an ongoing tug-of-war between PUM and the MH regarding the long-term employment of auxiliary teaching personnel (i.e., all teachers below the level of a habilitated doctor). PUM's clinical professors were reluctant to let go of the most competent and highly qualified assistants, while the MH insisted that all those who failed to obtain doctorates and/or habilitations on time should be immediately replaced with "fresh blood". What the MH did not want to take into consideration was the fact that the employment quota for the vast majority of PUM's clinical units was lower than in their counterparts elsewhere in Poland, which resulted in a higher workload in terms of didactic and attending duties, and less time for research (and thus, delays in obtaining academic degrees). Not infrequently, new candidates could not be found for the post vacated by a specialist, because salaries prescribed by the MH for junior clinical personnel could not compete with the wages available outside of the PUM. Whenever this happened, the MH immediately cut the empty post as "excessive".<sup>23</sup>

What made things even worse, during the seven years when the Soviet-style act on higher education was in force, only six persons from PUM applied for the candidate degree. When doctorates and habilitations were re-introduced in 1958, very few people in Szczecin were prepared and ready to apply for these titles.<sup>24</sup> This situation changed quickly, though, and in the years 1959–1963, fifty doctorates and twelve habilitations were successfully defended at PUM. In the years 1964–1968, 144 persons obtained the PhD degree, and another twelve were habilitated (Table 1).

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<sup>22</sup> In the period discussed, medical schools in Poland did not have posts dedicated to research exclusively; conducting research, especially the one required for obtaining a PhD degree (and, ideally, habilitation) was a part of job description for all members of auxiliary teaching staff.

<sup>23</sup> Discussion, re: the MH rule to terminate employment agreements with assistants who have not obtained doctoral degrees within time prescribed, 18 September and 29 November 1961. On 21 February 1962 professors Tadeusz Zwoliński (Gynecology) and Władysław R. Heftman (II Surgery) informed the Faculty that the majority of senior assistants in their clinics were planning to resign because the MH introduced new, unfavorable rules on salaries for teaching staff, while Prof. Eugeniusz Miętkiewski (Physiology) added that theoretical departments struggled to find physicians willing to take any posts, because "on such low wages, they are unable to support their families". FCM 1961, sign. A120; FCM 1962, sign. A121. PUM Archives.

<sup>24</sup> The first post-Thaw doctorates were defended at PUM on 20 May 1959 (Jerzy Gelber, pediatrics; and Maria Sypniewska, radiology). FCM 1959, sign. A118. PUM Archives.

Table 1. Doctorates and habilitations at PUM, 1959–1968

Science degree	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Doctorates	4	7	17	15	17	40	30	28	20	26
Habilitations	–	4	2	2	4	4	4	–	2	2

Nonetheless, in the period discussed, few of the PUM's units had more than one employee with habilitation, and as late as 1962, seven departments (including Psychiatry and Internal Disorders) had none. In a pattern frustratingly resembling that from the pre-Thaw years,<sup>25</sup> PUM's authorities often faced significant difficulties finding professors willing and able to move to Szczecin in order to either organise new departments and clinics, or take chairs vacated by their predecessors (either due to their retirement or because they were offered more attractive positions elsewhere). For example, when Feliks Bolechowski resigned from chairing I Internal Clinic in June 1961,<sup>26</sup> five consecutive candidates<sup>27</sup> declined to take his place before, in June 1962, Karol Gregorczyk (1909–1976), a cardiologist habilitated in Wrocław accepted the position.<sup>28</sup> The search for a habilitated candidate willing to run PUM's Psychiatric Clinic continued up until 1963, when Leonard Wdowiak, freshly habilitated in Gdańsk, agreed to move to Szczecin.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Nieznanowska, J. *Missed Connections*, 23–24.

<sup>26</sup> The MH initially did not accept this resignation, because it was clear that finding replacement for Bolechowski would be very difficult. Dean Starkiewicz's communication, re.: Prof. Bolechowski's resignation, 7 June 1961; Dean's communication, re. MH accepting Prof. Bolechowski's resignation, 18 October 1961. FCM 1961, sign. A120. PUM Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Three of the candidates were Cracow-based associate professors: Zdzisław Wiktor, a nephrologist (and a prominent historian of medicine); Władysław Król, a cardiologist; and Stanisław Kirchmayer, a gastroenterologist. Wiktor initially accepted the invitation, but changed his mind having seen the apartments Szczecin's municipality offered to his family. Król explained enigmatically that PUM's offer was "problematic due to administrative difficulties". Kirchmayer refused to accept the offer "due to health problems". Dean's communication, re: vacant chair position at I Internal Disorders Clinic, 24 January 1962. FCM 1962, sign. A121. PUM Archives.

<sup>28</sup> He joined PUM's faculty on 12 September 1962. FCM 1962, sign. A121. PUM Archives.

<sup>29</sup> Wdowiak was the only eligible psychiatrist who accepted PUM's invitation (on 21 November 1962, Dean Krechowicki informed the Faculty Council that others "either did not respond, or declined invitation"). The Council voted in favor of Wdowiak's appointment to the Chair of Psychiatry on 16 January 1963. FCM 1962, sign. A121; FCM 1963, sign. A122. PUM Archives.



Ever since 1956, nobody with the required academic credentials could be found to chair the Infectious Disorders Clinic; Marek Eisner (the Chair of III Internal Clinic) was acting as its *interim* head. In 1965, one of Eisner's senior assistants, Dr. Bronisław Trzaska took this role from him. Officials at the MH repeatedly advised PUM's authorities that the only viable way to finally have the Clinic run by a physician with a habilitation in infectious disorders was to have one promoted in Szczecin. Indeed, Trzaska defended his habilitation on 1 September 1968, and thus, for the first time in its 20-year history, all of PUM's clinics and theoretical departments were directed by scholars with *venia docendi* credentials.

## Foreign Travels

The beginning of Stalinism in Poland was marked by the closing of state borders. On 7 April 1949, a Soviet-style act on passports was published, replacing the pre-war regulations, and effectively shutting down the cross-border movement (with the notable exception of the Soviet Army's movements between East Germany and the USSR).<sup>30</sup> In the early 1950s, the rate of the Polish population's international mobility was "at its lowest in several hundred years"<sup>31</sup>. In 1951, the total number of Poles allowed to go abroad was 9,360 (1,980 of them travelled to a non-socialist state);<sup>32</sup> at that time, Poland had 25.5 million inhabitants.<sup>33</sup> In 1956, 256,702 Poles travelled abroad, including 13,993 going to a Western country; the numbers for 1957 were 236,274 and 59,004, respectively. The upward trend in total mobility held up till 1966, while the number of travels to non-socialist states kept rising till the introduction of martial law in Poland in December 1981.<sup>34</sup>

According to data published in the school's Annals, the first travel from PUM to a foreign country took place in 1955, when Prof. Bolesław Górnicki (paediatrics) went to Prague to study the system of care established for children with diabetes mellitus. In reality, he travelled to Czechoslovakia not

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<sup>30</sup> Dariusz Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski 1949-1989* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej 2010), 23–46.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> *Rocznik Statystyczny PRL 1955* (Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny 1955), 23.

<sup>34</sup> Krzysztof Podemski, "Polish Tourist Abroad. From Stalinism to Schengen and WizzAir," *Folia Turistica* 25 (2011), 216. [http://folia-turistica.pl/attachments/article/402/FT\\_25\(1\)\\_2011.pdf](http://folia-turistica.pl/attachments/article/402/FT_25(1)_2011.pdf).

as a representative of PUM, but as a delegate of the MH.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, archival sources show evidence of three otherwise unrecorded travels made by the head of PUM's Ophthalmology Clinic, Prof. Witold Starkiewicz in 1950 (USSR, with the MH delegation; and GDR, as a lecturer), and in 1952 (Czechoslovakia).<sup>36</sup> This finding does not change the fact that up till 1956, going abroad was a generally unobtainable option for the members of PUM's faculty. In 1956, eight such travels were recorded in the *Annals*.<sup>37</sup> Two of them were included to make the statistics look more impressive: Górnicki's tour through France's leading medical centers in February and March was made on behalf of the MH (upon the invitation from the French government sent to Warsaw), and Dr. Tadeusz Rozowski's travel to Lyon for an international conference on the pathology of infectious disorders was made a month after his resignation from the chair of PUM's Infectious Disorders Clinic.

PUM's tendency to present foreign travel statistics in a light better than reality continued throughout the period discussed, and ascertaining the actual numbers requires careful comparative testing of the data published in PUM's *Annals* against the information included in the archival documents. Undeniably, though, the number of foreign travels was increasing, as well as the number of long-term stays at clinical and research centers abroad.

### **Foreign Stays for Research and Training**

For Polish medical scholars long-term stays abroad became available mostly thanks to financial support from the West. Most notably, in 1957 the US-based Rockefeller Foundation (henceforth: RF) launched the Polish Science Programme, offering equipment grants for a number of Polish universities, medical academies, and research institutions, as well as fellowships and scholarships for researchers in agriculture, and medical and natural sciences.<sup>38</sup> In the initial year of the Programme, RF offered 300,000 USD “for

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<sup>35</sup> “Udział w Zjazdach Naukowych Zagranicznych”, RPAM 3 (1957), 15

<sup>36</sup> Prof. Witold Starkiewicz's personal questionnaire, 3 December 1957. Employee file: Starkiewicz, Witold, sign. 1972/114. PUM Archives.

<sup>37</sup> “Udział w Zjazdach Naukowych Zagranicznych”, RPAM 3 (1957), 15–16.

<sup>38</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report [henceforth: RFAR] for 1957 (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation 1958), 11–15.

the purchase of scientific materials and minor items of equipment”, and a further 175,000 USD “to furnish fellowships for Polish scholars to study in other countries.”<sup>39</sup> The Programme was continued in 1958 (200,000 USD for materials and equipment, and 400,000 USD to fund fifty-one fellowships and three scholarships)<sup>40</sup> and in 1959 (100,000 USD for the equipment, and 200,000 USD for forty-three fellowships and six scholarships).<sup>41</sup> RF’s material support for Polish institutions was terminated in 1962.<sup>42</sup> As for the individual study award programme, 172 fellowships were granted in the years 1957–1964, including sixty-nine to physicians, and ten to nurses. Medical institutions eligible for RF grants (including the fellowship programme) were selected by the Polish MH. Although PUM’s professors were very keen to receive this support and inquired about it as early as in March 1957 (just days after the RF’s delegates visited the Ministry)<sup>43</sup>, Szczecin was excluded from participation in the RF Programme with one notable exception, which will be discussed later.

For Szczecin, the World Health Organization (WHO) was the most important single foreign source of funds for long-term stays abroad.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the research-oriented RF fellowships, the WHO-funded stays were mostly aimed at providing physicians with access to clinical training unavailable in Poland. In the years 1956–1968, seven WHO scholarships were granted to PUM’s employees. Three of them were awarded to paediatricians: two for stays in France (three months each in 1956 and 1961); and one

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<sup>39</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report [henceforth: RFAR] for 1957 (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation 1958), 260–261.

<sup>40</sup> RFAR for 1958 (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation 1959), 391–392.

<sup>41</sup> RFAR for 1959 (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation 1960), 267, 269.

<sup>42</sup> One of the five institutional grants awarded in 1962 was for a two-year support for Prof. Jan Konorski’s neurophysiology research at the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw. See: RFAR for 1962 (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation 1963), 98–99.

<sup>43</sup> Vice-Rector Miętkiewski’s response to inquiries from Prof. Konarski (Medical Physics) and Prof. Stojałowski (Pathological Anatomy), re: foreign travels, and the Rockefeller Foundation scholarships, 6 March 1957. FCM 1957, sign. A111. PUM Archives.

<sup>44</sup> Poland left the WHO in 1950 (together with other countries under Soviet control, upon orders from Moscow). The return to the WHO structures, in 1956, was possible after the USSR stated its intention to rejoin the organisation in July 1955. See: Elisabeth Fee, Marcu Cueto and Theodore M. Brown, “At the roots of the World Health Organization’s Challenges: Politics and Regionalization” *American Journal of Public Health* 196, No. 11 (2016): 1912–1917. <https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5055806>.

for a six-month stay in Switzerland and West Germany. Another three were for anaesthesiology training, each for a year's course in Copenhagen (1962, 1964, and 1965–1966). Lastly, a WHO scholarship covered the costs of Prof. Miętkiewski's three-month visitation to physiology departments and laboratories in Vienna, Marburg, Bern, Basel, and Zurich in 1960.<sup>45</sup>

Between 1956 and 1968, PUM's employees were on 156 research and training stays in foreign institutions; of that number, forty were short-term travels, usually to attend a conference (without presentation), and 116 were stays for ten days and longer (Figure 1).<sup>46</sup> They were split evenly between the socialist and Western states (60 and 61, respectively). The countries most frequently visited included: France (20); Czechoslovakia (19); GDR (16); the USSR (16) and the UK (10).

Undoubtedly, all these travels helped improve the quality of scientific work and medical services at PUM. Some of them, however, stand out in terms of positive impact on the individual scholars' careers, as well as the position their home departments attained in the networks of knowledge production and circulation on national and international levels.

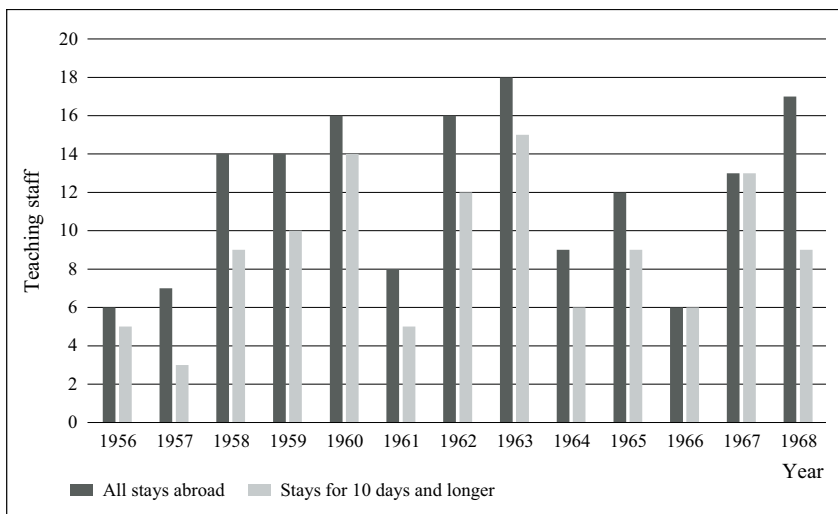


Figure 1. PUM's teaching staff on research and training stays abroad, 1956–1986

<sup>45</sup> Data extracted from respective PUM Annals.

<sup>46</sup> Research based on the comparative perusal of PUM Annals, and documents from PUM Archives (FCM collection; personal employee files; Rector's Council collection).

Three of PUM's units deserve a closer look in that context: the Paediatric Clinic under the direction of Prof. Bolesław Górnicki; the Ophthalmologic Clinic run by Prof. Witold Starkiewicz; and the Department of Pathological Anatomy chaired by Prof. Kazimierz Stojalowski. To build their departments' connections with national and foreign scientific communities, the three professors used three different strategies shaped by their distinctively disparate personalities, political and philosophical views, and relationships with the state apparatus (the Party; the MH). The outcomes of their efforts were significantly different, too.

### **The Meteor: Bolesław Górnicki Connects PUM's Paediatrics with Europe (and Goes Away)**

Bolesław Górnicki (1909–1998) completed medical studies in Warsaw in 1932. He specialised in diseases of childhood, working as an unpaid assistant at the university Paediatric Clinic chaired by Prof. Mieczysław Michałowicz. Simultaneously, he conducted studies in the history of medicine; in July 1939, he defended his PhD thesis in this field.<sup>47</sup> He spent almost the entire war in Warsaw, continuing to work at the Paediatric Clinic (now operating in the former Jewish Hospital as a municipal ward) where he assisted the Clinic's acting chair, Dr. Rajmund Barański, in the care of the patients, as well as clandestine clinical training for medical students.<sup>48</sup>

From 1945, Górnicki combined clinical work with the duties of an interim chair of the Department of History of Medicine, where he also taught logics, and medical ethics. In May 1947, he received a habilitation degree for a thesis on the pre-1600 paediatric literature.<sup>49</sup> In December 1948, however, state authorities removed the history of medicine from teaching programmes, and replaced it with Marxist-Leninist philosophy, a subject Górnicki did not lecture. By then, he had begun working at a newly founded Mother and Child Institute (Instytut Matki i Dziecka, henceforth: IMiD), where his former chief, Prof. Barański was the director. There, Górnicki pursued two of his paediatric research passions: pathophysiology, prevention

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<sup>47</sup> Małgorzata Wiśniewska, "Prof. dr hab. med. Bolesław Górnicki (1909–1998): lekarz, historyk medycyny, humanista – jego wkład w rozwój nowoczesnej pediatrii Polskiej", PhD diss. (Pomorska Akademia Medyczna, 2004), 18–23.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–27.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–32.

and management of infantile malnutrition, and paediatric diabetes mellitus. In 1950, he was made the head of IMiD's Department of Physiology.<sup>50</sup>

Although Górnicki had the “wrong” family background (he came from nobility on the paternal side) and never joined PUWP, the Party's executives viewed him as “promising”.<sup>51</sup> Endowed with excellent organisational and clinical skills, a brilliant mind, and a charming personality; a great diplomat, and a polyglot, he was allowed into senior positions at IMiD, and permitted to travel abroad as early as 1948 when he took speciality training at Fanconi's clinic in Zurich, and 1950, when he participated in a conference of French-speaking paediatricians (also in Zurich).<sup>52</sup> When he was moved to Szczecin in October 1951 in order to take the chair of Paediatrics vacated by Prof. Artur Chwalibogowski, this was by no means due to the Party's loss of confidence in Górnicki.<sup>53</sup> His appointment as Vice-Rector for Didactics in 1953 was a good indicator of the Party's unwavering trust: Górnicki was the only non-PUWP-member to receive any executive position at PUM in the Stalinist period.

PUM's faculty had high hopes for Górnicki's appointment in Szczecin. He was a very well-connected person with friends in high places, especially at the MH. He was also preceded by his fame as an excellent team builder, educator, and scholar.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Górnicki did not disappoint. He inspired his Clinic's staff to actively engage in research and publishing: whereas only five publications came from PUM's Paediatric Clinic in the years 1948–1951<sup>55</sup>, twenty-four were published in the years 1951–1955, and seventy in the years 1955–1960 (approximately half of them either authored or co-authored by

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<sup>50</sup> Małgorzata Wiśniewska, “Prof. dr hab. med. Bolesław Górnicki (1909–1998): lekarz, historyk medycyny, humanista – jego wkład w rozwój nowoczesnej pediatrii Polskiej”, PhD diss., (Pomorska Akademia Medyczna, 2004), 34.

<sup>51</sup> Magdalena Paciorek, “O historykach medycyny i zakładach naukowych pierwszej połowy lat 50. XX w. w świetle sprawozdania Ministerstwa Zdrowia”, *Medycyna Nowożytna* 27, No. 2 (2021), 111-135, [doi:10.4467/12311960MN.21.016.15244](https://doi.org/10.4467/12311960MN.21.016.15244).

<sup>52</sup> Wiśniewska, Prof. dr hab. med. Bolesław Górnicki, 33; 35.

<sup>53</sup> Górnicki received habilitation degree in paediatrics at Medical Academy of Poznań on 29 October 1951, a month after his transfer to PUM. *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>54</sup> This might have been the reason why he and his family were offered exceptionally good living conditions in Szczecin: a spacious villa with a garden and a pool, just a stone's throw from the city's largest park. Wiśniewska, Prof. dr hab. med. Bolesław Górnicki, 43.

<sup>55</sup> RPAM 4 (1958), 30.

Górnicki.)<sup>56</sup> In 1954, he hosted a national conference of the Polish Paediatric Society in Szczecin, another big boost to the local scientific movement.<sup>57</sup> Two years later, partly in the interest of his own research, he proposed that his Clinic would sponsor the Central Laboratory at PSK1, so far disastrously underdeveloped,<sup>58</sup> and found resources to equip two new lab departments (biochemistry, and microbiology.)<sup>59</sup> Finally, PUM's paediatricians gained access to foreign travels.

A closer look, however, reveals the majority of these travels were undertaken by Górnicki himself, who either went abroad as the MH delegate for the organisation of systemic care for paediatric diabetic patients or as a member (from 1954) of the MH Committee for the History of Medicine. In these two roles, between 1955 and 1960, he visited Czechoslovakia (twice), France (four times), the USSR (twice), and Spain.<sup>60</sup> From approximately thirty physicians under his supervision, only four went abroad for training or research purposes: Julia Starkiewicz (1955, for a four-month course in social paediatrics);<sup>61</sup> Krystyna Bożek (1959–1960, on a six-month WHO scholarship to West Germany and Switzerland); Danuta Miller (1959, for a three-month training in Leningrad and Moscow); and Wanda Chilman (1960, six months in Leningrad).<sup>62</sup>

In 1956, for the first time since 1945, high schools and universities in Poland were allowed to elect their governing bodies. At PUM, Górnicki won the elections and became the Rector for the years 1956–1959. From 1956, he also began receiving nominations to prestigious boards and committees in Warsaw, either at the MH, or in the IMiD. On the one hand, that

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<sup>56</sup> Based on my own perusal of PUM's bibliographic records. See: Danuta Grad and Eugeniusz Miętkiewski, *Bibliografia dorobku naukowego Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej w Szczecinie za lata 1948–1958* (Warszawa: PZWL 1983); Danuta Grad, Danuta Jaworska and Eugeniusz Miętkiewski, *Bibliografia dorobku naukowego Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej za lata 1959–1968* (Warszawa: PZWL 1987).

<sup>57</sup> "Kronika," RPAM 3 (1957), 14.

<sup>58</sup> Nieznanowska, *Missed connections*, 29–30.

<sup>59</sup> "Dziesięciolecie PAM," RPAM 4 (1958), 30.

<sup>60</sup> In consecutive renditions of the *Annals*, all these travels were listed as PUM's achievements. RPAM 3 (1957), 15–16; RPAM 4 (1958), 31; RPAM 5 (1959), 18; RPAM 6 (1960), 18.

<sup>61</sup> RPAM 4 (1958), 31. It is possible that this stay was arranged by Starkiewicz's husband, the head of the Ophthalmology Clinic (see further in this paper).

<sup>62</sup> RPAM 5 (1960), 19; RPAM 6 (1961), 20.

was exactly why he was given the top position at PUM, so far poorly connected to the power centre. On the other hand, Górnicki was increasingly a guest at PUM: “a *flying Dutchman*; throughout his term as the Rector, for each month in Szczecin he spent two in business travels.”<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of PUM’s faculty were happy with the way he managed the school, and in 1959 he was chosen for a Vice-Rector for Science. Perhaps this was done so in an effort to tie Górnicki to PUM for longer. If that was the plan, it did not work.

In mid-1960, he announced that he was moving back to Warsaw. Officially, he did so “with heavy heart,” because his two daughters were studying there, and he and his wife (also a paediatrician) could not afford to maintain two households. Off the record, however, it was known that Górnicki was offered an executive position at IMiD. In September 1960, the MH ordered his transfer to Warsaw. To make things even worse for PUM, Górnicki did not go alone: Krystyna Bożek and her husband, Józef Bożek, transferred to Warsaw, too. They were both mere months from defending their habilitations in paediatrics and paediatric surgery, respectively.

The transfer to Warsaw had profoundly positive outcomes not only for the three physicians involved but for the development of Polish paediatrics in general. Górnicki ran IMiD and became the chair of II Paediatric Clinic at Warsaw’s Medical Academy, as well as the Academy’s Rector for two terms. Krystyna Bożkowska replaced Górnicki as the Director at IMiD (1972), and led this institution to its greatest flourish, authoring and editing a number of monographs and textbooks (some of them co-authored with Górnicki).<sup>64</sup> Her husband founded a paediatric oncology clinic at IMiD (1962), the first of this kind in Poland, and the second in Europe.<sup>65</sup> From the perspective of PUM, however, their departure was a very heavy blow. The chair vacated by Górnicki would remain empty for almost two years.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Prof. Halina Pilawska’s memories of Górnicki, as quoted in Wiśniewska, Prof. dr hab. med. Bolesław Górnicki, 57–58.

<sup>64</sup> Ewa Helwich, “Pani Profesor zw. dr hab. n. med. Krystyna Bożkowska: wspomnienie”, *Developmental Period Medicine* 22, No. 3 (2018) 217–218.

<sup>65</sup> Patrycja Marciniak-Stępak, “Historia leczenia nowotworów wieku dziecięcego”, *Nowiny Lekarskie* 77, No. 5 (2008), 373–376, 375. [https://jms.ump.edu.pl/uploads/2008/5/373\\_5\\_77\\_2008.pdf](https://jms.ump.edu.pl/uploads/2008/5/373_5_77_2008.pdf) (retrieved 15 July 2022).

<sup>66</sup> Mostly due to the fact that the person the MH wished to send to Szczecin did not want to come, and the only paediatrician with habilitation degree that expressed willingness to move to Szczecin did not have the MH’s approval. Ultimately, the MH yielded,



## The Zealot: Witold Starkiewicz and the Szczecin School of Ophthalmology

Like Górnicki, Witold Starkiewicz (1906–1978) obtained graduate education (MD, 1932), as well as postgraduate training, in Warsaw. As a freshly made ophthalmologist, he joined Polish Air Forces in 1935 and engaged in research on the psychophysiology of vision. Among others, he investigated the effects the exposure to noise and stress had on the acuity of combat pilots' sight, and explored the electrophysiological phenomena related to afterimages (the latter research, published in 1938, earned him a PhD degree in 1946).<sup>67</sup>

Traumatic wartime experiences in a prisoner of war camp in Germany turned him into a zealous, passionate communist.<sup>68</sup> As an enthusiastic member of the PUWP from the first day of its existence,<sup>69</sup> he was fully trusted by the power holders; if anything, the Party executives were worried he was *too* eager a proselytizer of the new order.<sup>70</sup> In the early 1950s, when the promotion of “supremacy of Soviet scientific thought” and “Pavlovism” were announced as the obligatory directions for Polish research in biology and medicine,<sup>71</sup> Starkiewicz serendipitously found himself a field of experimental and clinical endeavour that allowed him to follow the Ministry's orders in his trademark, full-speed-ahead manner while developing original theories and therapies.

Before this happened, however, he became an enthusiast of the Filatov tissue therapy (most possibly, this was the purpose of the aforementioned

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and Prof. Aniela Marks-Zakrzewska from Gdańsk was given the post in January 1962. Dean Krechowicki's communication, re: Prof. Marks-Zakrzewska's transfer to Szczecin (10 January 1962). FCM 1962, sign. A121. PUM Archives.

<sup>67</sup> Andrzej Lipiński, Prof. dr hab. Witold Starkiewicz jako okulista; współorganizator Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej, PhD diss., (Pomorska Akademia Medyczna, 1997), 12–20.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–28.

<sup>69</sup> Starkiewicz was the only person at PUM whose membership in the communist party preceded the formation of the PUWP (he joined Polish Workers' Party in 1947). Employee file: Starkiewicz, Witold, sign. 1972/114. PUM Archives.

<sup>70</sup> For example, he gave a fiery sermon against religion at a students' mass gathering in May 1949, “which was unwise and antagonized many listeners.” [Anonymous, before 3 February 1950.] “Assessment of the political situation and the work of Party organizations at higher schools in Szczecin”, 19. Komitet Wojewódzki PZPR w Szczecinie, sign. 3223. State Archives Szczecin.

<sup>71</sup> Nieznanowska, J. Missed connections, 28–30.

travel to the USSR in 1950).<sup>72</sup> Following Filatov's method with religious zeal and uncritical faithfulness (the method *had* to be superior to the Western ones *because* it was developed by a Soviet academician,)<sup>73</sup> Starkiewicz immediately introduced the treatment to his clinic, and soon after taught it to Eastern German physicians.<sup>74</sup>

He lost much of his interest in Filatov when an all-engaging dive into the study of Pavlov's theory inspired him to develop new, highly original insights into the psychophysiology of binocular visual perception, and consequently, into the pathophysiology of strabismus. The so-called kinesi-  
thetic theory of vision gave rise to an original method of strabismus management, the so-called localisation method, in which surgical treatment was either significantly improved, or even replaced altogether, by an intensive re-conditioning training with the use of a range of ingenious instruments and apparatuses of Starkiewicz's invention.<sup>75</sup> His enthusiasm for the new method was infectious, and soon a group of young physicians (Kazimierz Strzyżewski; Roman Chwirot; Teresa Baranowska-George) joined Starkiewicz in the efforts to further develop the localisation method.<sup>76</sup> They also took an active part in other Starkiewicz's endeavors, especially the development of vision-replacing instruments for the blind.<sup>77</sup>

A charismatic communicator with fluent command of French and German, and a devout communist deeply loyal to the Party, Starkiewicz had no problems obtaining permissions for foreign travels as soon as the state borders began to open wider. In May 1956, he went to Paris to take part in the National Conference of the French Ophthalmological Society. His presentation on the localisation method raised so much interest that Starkiewicz was immediately invited into the Society and asked to prepare a book on his theory and method in French. News of these events was welcomed in

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<sup>72</sup> Witold Starkiewicz, "Leczenie tkankami sposobem Filatowa", *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 5, No. 14 (1950), 524–530.

<sup>73</sup> Andrzej Lipiński, Prof. dr hab. Witold Starkiewicz, 89–90.

<sup>74</sup> Witold Starkiewicz, "Die Geweretherapie nach Filatow," *Deutsche Gesundheitswesen* 6, No. 11 (1951), 297–301. The purpose of the 1950 travel to GDR is given explicitly in a personal questionnaire from 3 December 1957. Employee file: Starkiewicz, Witold, sign. 1972/114. PUM Archives.

<sup>75</sup> Andrzej Lipiński, Prof. dr hab. Witold Starkiewicz, 60–67.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 67–83.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 93–105.

Szczecin with great enthusiasm, and Starkiewicz's monograph was published under the auspices of a newly founded Szczecin Scientific Society (STN), as the second foreign-language book in the STN's portfolio.<sup>78</sup> It was also published in German,<sup>79</sup> and, in an abridged version, in English.<sup>80</sup>

After that, he went abroad almost every year (Leningrad, 1957; Brussels, 1958; Dresden, 1959; three months in France as a visiting professor, 1961; Greifswald, 1962; Innsbruck, 1963; Vienna, 1964); most of these travels were upon the invitation from foreign colleagues.<sup>81</sup> Sometimes, he travelled with his assistants. For example, Strzyżewski went with him to Brussels, where they gave six speeches on the localisation method, presented an altero-obturator of Starkiewicz's invention and showed a full-color film explaining the premises of the kinaesthetic theory of binocular vision.<sup>82</sup> On several occasions Starkiewicz was able to use the connections he had made abroad to help his assistants obtain long-term foreign training. Thus, in 1962, Bogusława Grocholska went to Greifswald for a twelve-month course in orthoptics, while Strzyżewski travelled to New York, also for a year, to study ophthalmic electrophysiology.<sup>83</sup> In 1968, Teresa Baranowska-George spent eight months on a research stay in France.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Witold Starkiewicz, *Rôle du système musculaire dans la pathogénèse et la thérapie du strabisme* (Szczecin: Soc. Savante de Szczecin, Section des Sciences Médicales 1958).

<sup>79</sup> Witold Starkiewicz, *Die Rolle des Muskelsystems in der Pathogenese und Therapie des Schielens* (Leipzig: G. Thieme 1963).

<sup>80</sup> Witold Starkiewicz, "The role of the muscular system in pathogenesis and treatment of squint", *Polish Medical Sciences and History Bulletin* 2, No. 1–2 (1958/1959), 17–18.

<sup>81</sup> "[H]e is respected not only in Poland, but also abroad, where he gained much popularity. Thanks to that, he constantly receives invitations to take part in international congresses and conferences." Rector Erwin Mozolewski's confidential opinion on Prof. Starkiewicz, 13 January 1972. Employee file: Starkiewicz, Witold, sign. 1972/114. PUM Archives.

<sup>82</sup> "Udział w międzynarodowych zjazdach naukowych", *RPAM* 5 (1959), 17.

<sup>83</sup> "Wyjazdy naukowe za granicę", *RPAM* 9 (1963), 27. Interestingly, as both Grocholska's and Strzyżewski's courses ended on schedule in mid-1963, PUM's authorities reported their stays abroad in the following volume of the *Annals* as endeavors *separate* from the 1962 ones – an example of 'success propaganda' practiced commonly in PUM's public communications.

<sup>84</sup> "Wyjazdy naukowe za granicę", *RPAM* 15 (1969), 58.



Witold Starkiewicz demonstrates his alteroobturator

From 1964, Starkiewicz's foreign travels became less frequent. This was mainly because in that year PUM's Ophthalmology Clinic finally moved to a new, spacious location at PSK2. Before 1964, the only viable means through which Starkiewicz could promote his ideas were publications (which he produced mostly in Polish<sup>85</sup>) and traveling. Now, he was able to organise regular courses in Szczecin, which he did every year, starting from 1965.<sup>86</sup> Soon, the first foreign visitors came to Starkiewicz's clinic (in 1967 from Erfurt; in 1968 from Lund) either to take part in the electrophysiology programme, or to get acquainted with the vision-replacing instruments developed under Starkiewicz's direction.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> In the years 1956–1968, Starkiewicz produced fifty-six publications (only nine in co-authorship). This constituted one-third of all publications affiliated in his clinic. Starkiewicz fervently encouraged his assistants to publish their work, and never claimed credits for work he did not personally contribute to.

<sup>86</sup> It is worth noting that in 1958 Starkiewicz hosted the national conference of the Polish Ophthalmologic Society, as one of the major events in the celebrations of PUM's decennial anniversary.

<sup>87</sup> "Zjazdy, kursy i konferencje zorganizowane przez środowisko szczecińskie", RPAM 14 (1968), 23; "Kursy i staże w Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej," RPAM 15 (1969), 33–34.

Prof. Starkiewicz retired in 1972. His original approach to management of strabismus was further developed by his assistants, especially Teresa Baranowska-George.<sup>88</sup> Five of Starkiewicz's assistants obtained habilitations; four of them (Strzyżewski; Baranowska-George; Wanda Andrzejewska; Olgierd Palacz) stayed in PUM for the entire course of their careers. To a degree, the localisation method is still in use in Szczecin. However, albeit broadly discussed in Polish ophthalmology, it never gained extensive reach. The two major reasons for this were: the immense time-and-effort intensity of Starkiewicz's method (for both practitioners and patients); and the fact that another therapeutic approach to strabismus was simultaneously developed in Warsaw.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Dissident Diplomat: Kazimierz Stojałowski and the Szczecin School of Pathomorphology<sup>90</sup>**

What could not be fully achieved by Prof. Starkiewicz, came to fruition at the Department of Pathological Anatomy, thanks to the exceptional quality of the academic work, as well as team building (and diplomatic) skills of Prof. Kazimierz Stojałowski (1903–1995).

Stojałowski received medical education at the University of Poznań (MD, 1928). From 1930, he worked as an assistant in the Department of Pathological Anatomy chaired by Prof. Ludwik Skubiszewski.<sup>91</sup> He specialised in pathomorphology (1935) and internal diseases (1937). As an active participant in Poznań's vibrant scientific life, he was the secretary of the Poznań Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences (henceforth: PTPN) and an editorial team member of "Nowiny Lekarskie."

Before the war broke out, he managed to go on an academic tour to major centers of pathomorphology research in France and Germany (at his

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<sup>88</sup> Teresa Baranowska-George, *Leczenie zezów ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem metody szczecińskiej* (Warszawa: PZWL 1983); eadem, *Traitement du strabisme: références particulières à la méthode de Szczecin* (Szczecin: Edition Sylwiana, DL 1995).

<sup>89</sup> Andrzej Lipiński, Prof. dr hab. Witold Starkiewicz, 82–83.

<sup>90</sup> Unlike for Górnicki and Starkiewicz, no monographic work on the life and work of Stojałowski has been published so far. Most data shown in this part of the paper come from the documents preserved in PUM Archives, and an interview with Prof. Stojałowski's son, Stanisław, recorded by me on 28 June 2022.

<sup>91</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all data presented in the following paragraph come from: Kazimierz Stojałowski, *Życiorys*, Szczecin 10 July 1952. Employee file: Stojałowski, Kazimierz, sign. 53/1995. PUM Archives.

own expense). Expelled from Poznań after Poland's capitulation in 1939, he survived the war in a small town in southern Poland, working as a general physician; he also opened and directed a branch of Polish Welfare Committee (Polski Komitet Opiekuńczy). In March 1945, Stojałowski returned to Poznań and helped to re-open the Department of Pathological Anatomy, where he was made an assistant professor.

In July 1945 he received a habilitation degree, based on a monograph on the role of mesenchymal tissue of the cardiovascular system in hyperergic and rheumatoid inflammations, finished just before the war, and miraculously saved from destruction. This work earned him the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters Prize in 1947. However, neither the Academy (Polska Akademia Umiejętności; founded in 1872 and based in Cracow) nor Stojałowski himself was to the communist power holders' liking. Stojałowski was under scrutiny both for his pre-war history (the very fact he was a member of a student corporation made him "a right-wing nationalist"), and his openly practiced, devout Catholicism.

In September 1947, he was moved from Pathological Anatomy to the Department of Forensic Medicine. In May 1948, he accepted the invitation to join the founding staff of PUM. This was a pre-emptive maneuver: he had been told in confidence that his relegation from the faculty in Poznań was being prepared. Should he accept a post in Szczecin, where nobody else wanted to go, the communist authorities would have no choice but bear him.<sup>92</sup> Thus, to Szczecin he went, and with him, a group of promising senior students (Krystyna Bożkova; Józef Bożek; Andrzej Nieczajew). They became the assistants at PUM's Pathological Anatomy, as well as Forensic Medicine (up till 1951, Stojałowski ran both departments).

The professor continued to live in Poznań, though – both literally and figuratively. For the first three years, he commuted between the two cities and went on teaching pathomorphology to dentistry students in Poznań.<sup>93</sup> He also stayed in touch with Poznań's academic community, cultivating his

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Prof. Stanisław Stojałowski, 28 June 2022.

<sup>93</sup> "[...] With airplane communication fairly regular on good weather days, I managed shuttling between Poznań and Szczecin and fulfill all my duties in both cities [...]" Kazimierz Stojałowski, "Z perspektywy ćwierćwiecza – wspomnienia i refleksje z okazji 25-lecia Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej," in XXV lat Pomorskiej Akademii Medycznej. Wspomnienia (Szczecin: Rada Uczelniana Socjalistycznego Związku Studentów Polskich PAM 1973), 6–15, 8.

ties with the PTPN, and the professors who shared his worldview and scientific interests.

In the eyes of the communist state apparatus, Stojałowski and his assistants were untrustworthy to the highest degree.<sup>94</sup> In order to be tolerated, they had to make themselves indispensable in terms of didactic and medical services, as well as high-class research produced under extremely austere conditions. By 1951, both the Bożek couple and Nieczajew had successfully defended PhD theses in pathomorphology (all *summa cum laude*; and right before the Soviet-style act on higher education went into force) and moved on to take posts of assistant professors at Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery, and Internal Disorders, respectively. Then, serendipity stroke. Stojałowski, left with but one assistant (Konstanty Dominiczak, who came to Szczecin from Lublin), was joined by another two young medics from Poznań.

In 1951, Aleksandra Krygier had one year left to complete MD studies, and planned to become an internist. However, when she approached the head of the Internal Clinic, Prof. Jan Roguski, he told her in confidence she might not be able to finish her education in Poznań (because her father had a farm, and adamantly opposed collectivisation). Roguski advised her to transfer to Szczecin, and work with Stojałowski. Stanisław Woyke, who had just received an MD diploma, was in similar situation due to his openly demonstrated attachment to the Catholic Church. He also consulted Roguski and was advised to go to Szczecin.<sup>95</sup>

It is safe to say that Stojałowski perceived Dominiczak, Woyke, and – especially – Krygier as his kindred spirits. He viewed their attitude and enthusiasm towards organisational, didactic, diagnostic, and scientific work as equal to his own.<sup>96</sup> The fact that their political and spiritual worldviews were convergent was also relevant.<sup>97</sup> Even more importantly, all

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<sup>94</sup> An anonymous, confidential assessment of his character, sent to the PUWP's Central Committee shortly after Stojałowski's arrival in Szczecin, described him as "an active 'endek' [i.e., national democrat; in communist newspeak: a far-right extremist] from Poznań, and [...] a negative character altogether, bringing [with him] close-knit groups of assistants of his own sort". Komitet Centralny PZPR, Dział Nauki, sign. 237/XVI-97, 18. Archiwum Akt Nowych.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Prof. Stanisław Stojałowski.

<sup>96</sup> Kazimierz Stojałowski, *Z perspektywy ćwierćwiecza*, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Prof. Stanisław Stojałowski. It is worth noting that all of the published statements by Kazimierz Stojałowski regarding his assistants were published before the fall of state socialism in Poland, and thus were subject to state censorship; this may be the reason why the worldview convergence was never explicitly mentioned there.

three assistants had their own scientific interests, knew how to ask relevant questions, and showed exceptional talents in problem-solving and critical thinking. While Stojałowski's research mostly focused on the pathomorphology and pathophysiology of the cardiovascular connective tissue stroma in rheumatological diseases, Dominiczak explored the pathophysiology of the inflammatory process in autoimmune, infectious, and parasitic disorders;<sup>98</sup> Krygier was fascinated by the new research possibilities opening in the field of nucleic acid studies;<sup>99</sup> and Woyke investigated cytology of the tumours of the nervous system.<sup>100</sup> Stojałowski wholeheartedly supported his assistants' research interests and encouraged them to have a go at the Soviet-styled degrees of candidates of science, so reluctantly pursued at other PUM departments.

However, he was aware that the “negative element” status he had in the decision-making circles could thwart, or even permanently damage his disciples' careers. In 1952, he was perceived as “an active clericalist” who, while pretending loyalty to the system, “often made wrong moves, and above all, showed absolute lack of social momentum.”<sup>101</sup> To minimise this danger, Stojałowski developed a two-fold strategy. On the one hand, he advised Krygier and Woyke to join PUM's division of Polish-Soviet Friendship Society.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, whenever he could, he initiated high-impact campaigns that did not collide with his worldview, and at the same time

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<sup>98</sup> Kazimierz Stojałowski, “Prof. dr hab. med. Konstanty Dominiczak (9 grudnia 1922 – 12 lutego 1987),” *Patologia Polska* 38, No. 3–4 (1987): 217–221.

<sup>99</sup> Zofia Bielańska-Osuchowska, Barbara Bilińska, Maria Chosia et al., “Professor Aleksandra Krygier-Stojałowska (1923–2016),” *Folia Histochemica et Cytobiologica* 54, No. 3 (2016), 119–120.

<sup>100</sup> Wenancjusz Domagała, “Non omnis moriar. In memoriam of the late Professor Stanisław Woyke (1928–2009),” *Polish Journal of Pathology* 61, No. 4 (2010), 181–182.

<sup>101</sup> This opinion was expressed by PUM's Rector in a classified attachment to the Faculty Council's official request, addressed to the MH, for the upgrading of Stojałowski's title; it effectively blocked his promotion. Józef Taniewski, “Charakterystyka” (Szczecin, 29 November 1952); PUM Faculty Council to the Minister of Health, re: motion to grant full professorship to Kazimierz Stojałowski (Szczecin, 18 June 1952). Employee file: Stojałowski, Kazimierz, sign. 53/1995. PUM Archives.

<sup>102</sup> In 1956, Krygier was the Vice-President, and Woyke was the Treasurer of the Society's PUM branch, which was emphasized in Dean Zajączek's speech at the public defense of their candidate theses. It is difficult to say how long they were active members of the Society. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Faculty Council, re: the public defense of candidate theses by Aleksandra Krygier, and Stanisław Woyke (13 June 1956). FCM 1956, sign. A115. UM Archives.



could not possibly be presented as “wrong” by the communists. For example, in 1953 he assembled a collection of prime-quality didactic materials for undergraduate training in pathology (organ specimens; microscope slides; illustrative boards, etc.) to be sent to North Korea.<sup>103</sup> The strategy worked, and the three assistants could go through the consecutive steps of the candidature process without any significant obstacles.

In June 1956, Krygier and Woyke successfully defended their theses (and became the first two persons from PUM to receive candidate degrees).<sup>104</sup> Thanks to Stojałowski’s connections in Poznań, their dissertations were published in a prestigious monographic series affiliated at the PTPN.<sup>105</sup> Dominiczak defended his thesis in January 1958.<sup>106</sup> As soon as this was legally possible, i.e., in May 1960, all three degrees were transformed into the doctoral titles, with *summa cum laude* distinctions.<sup>107</sup> By then, the three disciples of Stojałowski had already begun establishing themselves in the international scientific community, thanks to the prestigious fellowships they all received.

First, in June 1958, Krygier went for three months to Frankfurt am Mein, to Prof. Walter Sandritter’s laboratory. She worked there on the research applications of histo- and cytophotometry, and made a very good impression. In 1959, as the first person in post-war Poland, she was awarded the Humboldt Foundation Fellowship, and could return to Sandritter’s

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<sup>103</sup> “Kronika” RPAM 2 (1956), 21. This action was highlighted in another classified note on Stojałowski’s character, sent to the MH in 1955. Rector Jarema to the Minister of Health, re: motion to grant a First-of-May financial award to Prof. Kazimierz Stojałowski (Szczecin, 20 April 1955). Employee file: Stojałowski, Kazimierz, sign. 53/1995. PUM Archives.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Faculty Council, re: the public defense of candidate theses by Aleksandra Krygier, and Stanisław Woyke (13 June 1956). FCM 1956, sign. A115. UM Archives. Both degrees were confirmed by the MH in 1957.

<sup>105</sup> Stanisław Woyke, Uwagi w sprawie histologicznego rozpoznawania nerwiaków. Prace Komisji Medycyny Doświadczalnej, PTPN Vol. 12 No. 6 (Poznań: PWN 1956); Aleksandra Krygier, Kwasy nukleinowe w niektórych nowotworach układu nerwowego obwodowego (zwojaki zarodkowe, nerwiaki osłonkowe złośliwe). Prace Komisji Medycyny Doświadczalnej, PTPN Vol. 13 No. 1 (Poznań: PWN 1956).

<sup>106</sup> Konstanty Dominiczak, “Przyczynę do zmian morfologicznych ośrodkowego układu nerwowego w oparzeniach,” RPAM 3 (1956), 195–228. Minutes, re: public defense of Konstanty Dominiczak’s thesis for the degree of candidate (22 June 1958). FCM 1958, sign. A117. PUM Archives.

<sup>107</sup> Voting, re: conversion of the candidate degrees of Aleksandra Krygier, Stanisław Woyke, and Konstanty Dominiczak into PhD degrees (11 May 1960). FCM 1960, sign. A119. PUM Archives.

laboratory for a whole year. Meanwhile, Prof. Sandritter visited Szczecin's Pathologic Anatomy Department. Thus, a long-term friendship began, resulting in a series of collaborative publications.<sup>108</sup>

In 1959, Woyke received a year-long foreign fellowship, too; the Rockefeller Foundation one, no less.<sup>109</sup> He went to the Memorial Hospital for Cancer and Allied Diseases in New York, where he worked in the Cytology Laboratory directed by Leopold G. Koss.<sup>110</sup> There, Woyke's deep interest in the cytological diagnosis of cancers crystallised. He would pursue and develop this field of study throughout his entire life. In 1965, he came to Koss' laboratory a second time (for a month-long stay at the expense of the Memorial Hospital).<sup>111</sup>

Before Krygier and Woyke returned from their fellowships in mid-1960, Konstanty Dominiczak went to Prof. Heinz Meyersbach's Institute for Histology and Embryology in Lausanne, on a scholarship funded by Sandoz.<sup>112</sup> Soon, three habilitation dissertations were completed. Krygier and Woyke defended theirs in May 1961;<sup>113</sup> Dominiczak followed their suit in January 1962.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Walter Sandritter and Aleksandra Krygier, "Cytophoto metrische Bestimmungen von proteingebundenen Thiolen in der Mitose und Interphase von HeLa-Zellen," *Zeitschrift für Krebsforschung* 62 No. 6 (1959), 596–610; Aleksandra Krygier and Walter Sandritter, "The influence of hydrogen ion concentrations and some other ions on metachromasia in staining mucopolysaccharides with toluidine blue", *Acta Medica Polona* 2 (1961), 123–145. After Sandritter's transfer to the Aschoff Institute of Pathology in Freiburg in 1967, Krygier would travel there, on another fellowship from the Humboldt Foundation, in 1973.

<sup>109</sup> So far, I have not come across documents showing how Woyke was chosen for the fellowship. In 1959, when one of PUM's professors asked about the access to the RF resources (maybe in connection with Woyke's fellowship), Rector Górnicki explained that "in principle, Szczecin, Lublin, Łódź and Białystok are not covered [by the RF support program]", and that "[lists of] persons [selected] for scholarships were made at the Ministry, without consulting us. Whether anybody of us will go is unknown". Prof. Prochacki (Dermatology): inquiry, re: PUM's access to RF support (21 January 1959). FCM, sign. A118. PUM Archives.

<sup>110</sup> Unfortunately for my research, Koss' autobiography ends on year 1956, and thus contains no information on Woyke's stay in New York. Nonetheless, it is a very interesting reading. Leopold G. Koss, *From Poland to Park Avenue* (Lexington: [self-published] 2012).

<sup>111</sup> "Wyjazdy naukowe za granicę," *RPAM* 12 (1966), 29.

<sup>112</sup> "Wyjazdy naukowe za granicę," *RPAM* 7 (1961), 20.

<sup>113</sup> Minutes, re: habilitation colloquium of Dr. Aleksandra Krygier, and Dr. Stanisław Woyke (10 May 1961). FCM 1961, sign. 120. PUM Archives.

<sup>114</sup> Minutes, re: habilitation colloquium of Dr. Konstanty Dominiczak (24 January 1962), FCM 1962, sign. A121. PUM Archives.



Prof. Walter Sandritter with Prof. Kazimierz Stojalowski and team –  
Szczecin's Pathologic Anatomy Department

While Dominiczak left PUM shortly after receiving the habilitation degree,<sup>115</sup> Krygier and Woyke stayed with Prof. Stojalowski (Stojalowski and Krygier got married in 1965). Krygier-Stojalowska organised a cytophotometry laboratory, the first of this kind in Poland (some of the equipment was of her own device). Scholars from Cracow, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław, and Poznań (representing a wide range of medical and non-medical research fields, including plant genetics and geology) flocked to Szczecin, either to learn the ropes of cytophotometry or to perform observations for their own projects. From 1964, the lab also served as a site of histo- and cytophotometry courses for scholars from Czechoslovakia,

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<sup>115</sup> He went to organize a state-of-the-art Pathomorphology Department at the Voivodship Hospital in Szczecin. Continuously engaged in a vast number of research endeavors, he returned to PUM in 1972, as an associate professor at the Department of Pathophysiology. In 1978, he became the head of that department, but had to retire in 1983, due to severe, life-threatening illness. Kazimierz Stojalowski, "Profesor dr hab. med. Konstanty Dominiczak (9 grudnia 1922 – 12 lutego 1987)," *Patologia Polska* 38 No. 3–4 (1987), 217–221.

Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and GDR.<sup>116</sup> In 1961, Krygier co-founded the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society. She also co-authored and co-edited the first two Polish textbooks on histochemical techniques (with Prof. Henryk Godlewski).<sup>117</sup>

Woyke's contributions to PUM's growing significance as a node in scientific networks were even more impressive. Like Krygier, he also conducted specialist courses for participants from Poland and abroad (including Czechoslovakia and GDR).<sup>118</sup> A charismatic, engaging teacher, he drew a number of PUM's most brilliant students to the field of pathomorphology. Many of them followed Woyke's lead and made important contributions to cytological cancer diagnosis (either by perfecting the technique, or by working on its applicability in clinical settings). They became distinguished professors themselves, either in Szczecin (like Jan Lubiński, thanks to whom, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, PUM became a European powerhouse for hereditary cancer research)<sup>119</sup>, or elsewhere (Włodzimierz Olszewski in Warsaw; Bogdan Czerniak in Houston; Wojciech Gorczyca in New York).<sup>120</sup> Woyke wrote a number of seminal textbooks on oncological cytodiagnosis, either as a sole author,<sup>121</sup> or with his disciples.<sup>122</sup> Most notably, his long-standing collaboration with Koss culminated in the co-authorship of an internationally recognised textbook on aspiration biopsy (together with Olszewski).<sup>123</sup> It was thanks to Woyke's insight, energy, and charisma that Poland implemented fine needle biopsy as

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<sup>116</sup> RPAM 11 (1965), 27-28; RPAM 14 (1968), 22–23.

<sup>117</sup> Aleksandra Krygier and Henryk Godlewski, eds, *Skrypt metod histochemicznych*, 2 vols (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Histochemików i Cytochemików 1963, 1964); Aleksandra Krygier-Stojałowska and Henryk Godlewski, *Topochemiczne metody badan komórek i tkanek* (Warszawa: PWN 1975).

<sup>118</sup> RPAM 11 (1965), 27–28; RPAM 14 (1968), 22–23.

<sup>119</sup> Prof. Lubinski is the second-highest ranking scholar from Poland on the 2022 Research.com Top Medicine Scientists list. <https://research.com/scientists-rankings/medicine/pl> (retrieved 15 July 2022).

<sup>120</sup> Domagała, *Non omnis moriar*, 182.

<sup>121</sup> Stanisław Woyke, *Cytodiagnostyka raka płuc* (Warszawa: PZWL 1967).

<sup>122</sup> Stanisław Woyke and Włodzimierz Olszewski, *Cytodiagnostyka aspiracyjna nowotworów*, 2 vols (Warszawa: PZWL 1979; 1982).

<sup>123</sup> Leopold G. Koss, Stanisław Woyke, and Włodzimierz Olszewski, *Aspiration Biopsy: Cytologic Interpretation and Histologic Bases* (New York: Igaki Shoin 1984). Second edition was published in 1992.

a standard modality for cancer diagnosis, as one of the first countries in Europe.<sup>124</sup>

In the context of outreach to foreign audiences and international collaboration in the years 1956–1968, two other PUM units deserve a closer look: the Department of Histology, led by Prof. Jan Słotwiński; and the Department of Physiology, chaired by Prof. Eugeniusz Miętkiewski. The limited length of the paper now presented means that this investigation will have to wait for another occasion. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that in the timeframe discussed here, no department at PUM could match scientific achievements of Prof. Stojalowski's team; the achievements the more impressive since they were accomplished against the political odds.

## **Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātes saiknes veidošanās ar starptautiskajiem zināšanu radīšanas un aprites tīkliem Hruščova politiskā atkušņa laikā (1956–1968)**

### **Kopsavilkums**

Šī raksta mērķis ir izpētīt 1956. gada politiskā “atkušņa” ietekmi uz Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātes (Ščecinā, Polijā) spēju pievienoties starptautiskajiem medicīnas zināšanu radīšanas un aprites tīkliem un procesiem un sniegt tajos ieguldījumu laikposmā no 1956. līdz 1968. gadam. Tas tiek darīts divējādi: pirmkārt, aplūkojot izaicinājumus, ar kuriem Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātei nācās saskarties attiecībās ar valsts aparātu, kas kontrolēja piekļuvi ārvalstu resursiem, un, otrkārt, izmantojot gadījuma izpēti.

Šajā kontekstā tiek sīkāk aplūkots trīs Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātes profesoru ieguldījums un izmantotās stratēģijas. Šie profesori ir Boļeslavs Gorņickis (1908–1998; Pediatrijas klīnikas vadītājs), Vitolds Starkevičs (1906–1978; Oftalmoloģijas klīnikas vadītājs) un Kazimirs Stojalovskis (1903–1995; Patoloģiskās anatomijas katedras vadītājs). Boļeslavam Gorņickim darbs Ščecinā bija deviņus gadus ilga epizode plaukstošā akadēmiskajā karjerā, kas bija cieši saistīta ar Varšavu. Savukārt

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<sup>124</sup> Domagała, *Non omnis moriar*, 182.

Vitolds Starkevičs un Kazimirs Stojalovskis bija vieni no Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātes dibinātājiem, un abi palika Ščecinā līdz aiziešanai pensijā. Rakstā atainots, kā personība, politiskais un pasaules uzskats, personīgās pieķeršanās stiprums Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitātei un diplomātiskās prasmes, kuras piemita visiem trim profesoriem, ietekmēja to saikņu plašumu, kvalitāti un noturīgumu, ko viņi nodibināja starp Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitāti un pasauli.

*Atslēgvārdi:* Pomerānijas Medicīnas universitāte, zināšanu aprite, zināšanu radīšanas politika, Aukstais karš, politiskais atkusnis.

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