

THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES OF PROFESSOR JERZY TRZOSKA

December 2011 will see the seventieth birthday anniversary of Professor Jerzy Trzoska, an outstanding historian, specialist in the economic studies on Gdańsk, Pomerania and the Baltic region, and Associate Editor in the Editorial Board of “Studia Maritima”. A teacher’s son, Professor Trzoska was born on December 29, 1941 in Łowicz. In 1959 he completed his secondary education at the Czersk High School (Chojnice District) to subsequently study history at the Gdańsk Pedagogical College. His MA thesis entitled *Gdańsk as a Timber Port of the 1st Republic of Poland in the Late 17th and 18th Century*, written under the tutelage of Professor Edmund Cieślak was submitted and assessed in June 1964, which earned Jerzy Trzoska the title of the Master of Arts in History. The thesis was subsequently granted both the award of the Rector of the Gdańsk Pedagogical College and the honorable mention at the All-Polish Contest organized by the Poznań Branch of the Association for the Western Territory Development.

New and broader possibilities of conducting further studies on the modern history of Gdańsk and the Baltic zone appeared before Jerzy Trzoska on July 1, 1964, that is, at the moment when he became a staff member of the Gdańsk Research Group at the Pomeranian History Institute of the PAN (Polish Academy of Sciences) History Department. Since 1955 the Head of this workshop was its originator and organizer as well as an outstanding specialist in the history of Gdańsk, Pomerania, and the Baltic zone in the period from the 15th till the 18th century, Professor Edmund Cieślak. He exerted a considerable influence on Jerzy Trzoska’s scholarly lot and research tasks he undertook concerning the history of

Gdańsk issues, the Polish-Swedish economic relations and the maritime policy of the Polish kings of the Saxon dynasty. The doctoral seminar tutored by Professor E. Cieślak which Jerzy Trzoska attended bore fruit in the form of a doctoral dissertation on the late 17th and 18th century Gdańsk milling industry and baker's trade. He defended this dissertation in June 1970 and the Scholarly Board of the Faculty of Humanities at the Pedagogical College granted Trzoska the title of Doctor of the Humanities. In January 1971, Jerzy Trzoska was appointed Assistant Professor in the PAN Institute of History.

On subsequently becoming a coauthor of the multivolume *History of Gdańsk* edited by Edmund Cieślak, Jerzy Trzoska was assigned the task to prepare the issues of trade, navigation and craft in the period from 1655 to 1793. Due to the existing research situation, the preparation of the assigned issues required conducting pioneering, broad, thorough, and time-consuming archival and library research, first and foremost in the crucial, for the analysis of the issues in question, collections of the Gdańsk State Archives as well as in the collections of manuscripts and old prints stored in the PAN Gdańsk Library. Moreover, the diversified contacts Gdańsk had with other European economy centres required, considering the said period, supplying the source basis in foreign archives and libraries. In the course of his numerous scholarly trips Jerzy Trzoska searched query in the following archives and libraries: in France (Paris – Archives Nationales, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Bibliothèque Nationale; Bordeaux – Archives Départementales de la Gironde), in Germany (Dresden – Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv; Berlin – Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz), and Swedish (Stockholm – Riksarkivet, Stadsarkivet, Kungliga Bibliotheket; Göteborg – Stadsarkivet). The source materials obtained during his research allowed Jerzy Trzoska to complete and verify some of the earlier statements concerning the town on the River Motława (Mottlau) and at the same time the biggest port town of the 1st Republic of Poland with the then centres of European economy.

The same far-fetching local and foreign archival-library research allowed Jerzy Trzoska to prepare and publish in 1989 his postdoctoral dissertation entitled *The Navigation, Trade, and Craft in Gdańsk in the Late 17th and 18th Century*. Despite considerable source shortage (e.g. tax collection ledgers) and dispersal, Trzoska's dissertation managed to demonstrate the relations in question as well as their dimension and scope. In the dissertation Jerzy Trzoska could also boast of using numerous sources for the sake of presenting in a new light the functioning

of the Gdańsk production, which resulted in the surfacing of until then unknown facts from the social, material, and religious life of the analysed period. Not only that; Trzoska also managed to conclude his dissertation on new notes as regards the questions of the organization and activity of the maritime forces in the 1st Republic of Poland during the reign of the Saxon kings. The defense of his dissertation took place in December 1989 and the Scholarly Board at the Institute of History in the Gdańsk University, in recognition of its innovative theses granted Jerzy Trzoska the title of holder of a postdoctoral degree in Modern History. This title was validated by the Central Committee for Scholarly Titles and Degrees in May 1990. On November 1 of the same year Jerzy Trzoska was appointed Associate Professor in the PAN History Institute. This title was validated in May 1995. When Professor Edmund Cieślak retired on January 1, 1993, Jerzy Trzoska took over his duties of the Head of the Research Group at the Institute of Gdańsk and Maritime History in the PAN Department of History, an appointment which he held until the end of 2006.

Beginning with October 1, 2000, Professor Trzoska became full professor in the Szczecin University. Until his retirement on February 28, 2008, Trzoska was the Head of the Modern History Research Group at the Institute of History and International Relations. His didactic work covered lectures on modern history, seminars, and pro-seminars in the course of which he promoted over 30 MA holders.

In the early October 2008 Jerzy Trzoska became an employee of the Gdańsk College of the Humanities where he performed didactic work (lectures and seminars) at the Department of European Studies until September 30, 2009. Next, from 1 October of the same year Trzoska lectures Modern History of Poland as a full professor to students of the Słupsk (Stolp) Pomeranian Academy.

Professor Trzoska has still been working on the navigation-trade relations and political connections existing between Sweden and the 1st Republic of Poland and Pomeranian ports in the late 17th and 18th century. The rich source materials found in particular in the Stockholm tax books Trzoska uses in his publications to thoroughly document the so far little known issues of the Baltic trade exchange. Apart from the Gdańsk issues, Professor Trzoska's research plans also embrace an intention to prepare the statistics of trade and navigation traffic exchange among the most important port centres of Poland and Sweden, that is, Gdańsk and Stockholm in the late 17th and the early 18th century. As a scholar, Professor Jerzy Trzoska has also been interested in the interventions undertaken by the

House of Wettin to lessen the damage to the Gdańsk navigation and trade caused by the numerous war activities occurring on seas of the north-western Europe in the early 18th century.

Jerzy Trzoska has actively participated in the organizational, scholarly and social works. Since 1978 he has been an active member of the Gdańsk Scholarly Association where he fulfilled the following functions: Secretary (of the Historical Editions Committee – since 1973), and Secretary of the 1st Department of the Social Sciences and Humanities – in the years 1981–1985). In the period from 1984 to 1995 Professor Trzoska was also active as Secretary of the Polish-Swedish Historians Committee co-organizing and participating (as a speaker) in cyclic symposia of historians of these two countries. He could also demonstrate his organizational talents on the occasion of being, in the years 1993–2001, the Chair of the Committee for the History of Europe's Northern Seas at the PAN Committee for Historical Sciences. Within the frames of this committee Trzoska organized numerous scholarly conferences with the participation of scholars representing various scientific disciplines and coming from various countries of the world to discuss the political and socio-economic issues both of Poland and other Baltic countries. In the period from 1993 to 2005 Professor Trzoska performed the function of the Vice-President of the Scholarly Council of the PAN Gdańsk Library. It needs mentioning, too, that Professor's activity as a member of the editorial boards of such journals as "Rocznik Gdański" (The Gdańsk Yearly), "Nautologia" (Nautology), and "Studia Maritima".

Professor Trzoska's scholarly-organizational activity has been noticed and appreciated. We have already mentioned that in 1973, as a young scholar, Trzoska received the award of the Gdańsk Scholarly Association for his doctoral dissertation on the late 17th and 18th century Gdańsk milling industry and baker's trade. In 2000 Trzoska's effort as a researcher, scholar, and co-author of the 5-volume *History of Gdańsk* was also appreciated, for then he was granted The Award of the President of the City of Gdańsk. Furthermore, Professor's social and organizational activity has been noticed and appreciated by the self-governmental and state authorities as well. For the entirety of his scholarly achievements as regards the issues of Gdańsk Jerzy Trzoska received the Badge of Honour "For the service for Gdańsk". Also, in 1993 state authorities decorated him with the Silver Cross of Merit for the attainments in the realization of tasks within the frames of the Research Group of Gdańsk History and Polish Maritime History at the PAN Institute of History.

The presented above outline of the scholarly and organizational activity does not exhaust the entirety of achievements of Professor Jerzy Trzoska and will certainly be completed in the course of his further scholarly, didactic, and social work.

BOLESŁAW HAJDUK

Translated by Beata Zawadka