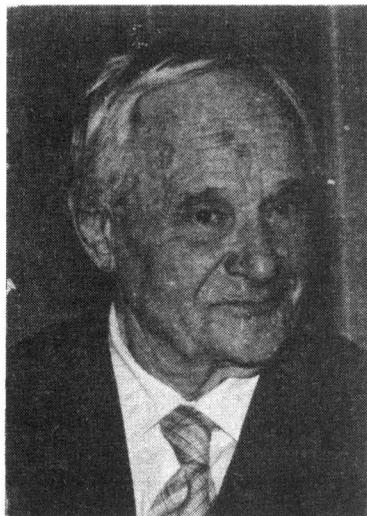


IN MEMORIAM

Jerzy Lech JASNORZEWSKI
(1906—1989)

In May 1989 the community of Polish polar researchers was deeply saddened by the passing away of Assoc. Prof. eng. Jerzy Lech Jasnorzewski, geodesist, metrologist and apiarist, a wonderful man, an outstanding scientist, patriot, teacher and friend of many generations.



He was born on 15 September 1906 in Iwazsków in Ukraina, in the family of agriculture engineer. Initially educated in Russian school at Biała Cerkiew (from 1916) he took part also, in conspiracy, in Polish self-education circle. In 1921 the family Jasnorzewski moved to Radom where he graduated from a gymnasium in 1926. That year J. L. Jasnorzewski began studies at the Mathematical and Nature Sciences Faculty of the University of Warsaw but in 1927 he changed the school for Faculty of Geodesy of the Technical University of Warsaw. In 1932 he obtained his M. Sc. degree after presenting the diplome work on the determination of latitude position according to the Sterneck's method of stars observations.

In 1933 he became an assistant of a famous astronomer, prof. T. Banachiewicz, in the Astronomic Observatory of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, but in 1934, after marrying Maria Halina Kamińska, he returned to Warsaw and began working at the Faculty of Geodesy of Warsaw Technical University. His knowledge in the field of time metrology was deepened during his scientific stages in Paris, Brussels and Potsdam. Before 1939 he published 5 scientific papers.

During the war time, under nazi occupation, working partly as a physical worker and living near the Kampinos forests J. L. Jasnorzewski collaborated actively with partisan groups operating there.

In 1945, in ruined Warsaw, he immediately started to rescue and put in order the remnants of Warsaw Technical University and then he took part in the reconstruction of the building of Central Bureau of Metrology and in organization of Polish metrological service. For years, working in this Bureau, he was very active in construction of numerous metrological gears and in methodology of geodesic metrology, presenting lectures in metrology at the Faculty of Geodesy and Cartography of Warsaw Technical University. In this period he published 12 scientific articles and two academic textbooks.

In recognition of his scientific and didactic achievements in 1956 he was nominated an Associated Professor.

His life-dream was to take part in a polar expedition to the Antarctic but in 1957 he received a proposal to participate in polar wintering in the Arctic — on Spitsbergen, as a member of the Expedition of Polish Academy of Sciences organized in the framework of IGY program and

headed by the renowned polar researcher, Stanisław Siedlecki. The main task of J. L. Jasnorzewski during this 1957 polar wintering was to determine the position of the basic age point using an astronomic method of Kavraisky. However, as an able constructor, he belonged also to the most active builders of Polish Polar Station at the northern shores of Hornsund fiord.

His scientific work resulted in assignation of the best determined age point on Spitsbergen; this point became a basis for further cartographic and geodynamic studies.

After returning from the expedition his scientific position was highly recognized also by international scientific community; he was namely elected a vice-director of the International Bureau of Legal Metrology in Paris. This post he retained for 10 years due to repeated election for second term. In this period he published 12 papers in three languages.

Returning to Poland Jerzy Lech Jasnorzewski began to work in the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography; as an experienced scientist he was a member of its Scientific Council. Retired in 1976 he never stopped his active contacts with the Institute as a consultant, author and coauthor of many papers in the field of geodesic metrology.

In autumn 1977 his old dream to go to Antarctic came true. Being a pensioner, in his early seventieth, he was unusually strong, healthy and in full intellectual potency, probably due to his well known Spartan life style and his dietetic regime widely propagated by himself. Each spring among others, for years, he stopped to eat at all for 3—4 weeks. And so he was accepted as a member of the IInd Expedition of Polish Academy of Sciences to the „Arctowski” Station.

Twenty years after his Spitsbergen wintering he constructed in the vicinity of Polish Antarctic Station a concrete column for astronomical observations and using once more the method of Kavraisky he determined the coordinates of an age point. His experience, sharp minded humour and good will to help everybody were highly appreciated by the members of the expedition and ship's crew.

When returning from this Antarctic expedition he returned to his active contacts with mother scientific institutions and also very active civic work. Among others he organized an inventory of graves in the parochial cemetery using geodesic and photogrametric methods.

Mrs Jasnorzewska died in 1984; this loss upsetted him strongly. However his social work full of devotion even increased.

In 1986, commemorating his 80th birthday, the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography in common with the Society of Polish Geodesits organized a jubilee session combined with Polar Symposium. Next day after this session Jerzy Lech Jasnorzewski took part in the autumn Spitsbergen cruise of the supply ship to Polish Hornsund station. During two weeks of stay there he studied vertical movements of the shores of Hornsund fiord. The results of this study and his hypothesis were published in the Information Bulletin of the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography.

His sudden death on 14 May 1989 interrupted his scientific and social activity leaving in sorrow his family and numerous friends.

Peace to his memory!

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Editor's note

Jerzy Lech Jasnorzewski was my beloved Uncle (my mother's brother) and my godfather at the same time. Therefore it is a duty of my heart to comment his passing away by the personal reminiscence.

In our family he was known as Uncle Leszek — an unusually cheerful, cordial and witty man. All his visits were true festive days, especially for children. How much I owe to him! Under his supervision I've done my first very early steps in hiking — both on foot, on kayak and on sailing boat and so his share in my education was inestimable. He was the first who has taught me that, in contrast to the often used commonplace, one should not cry or whistle in the forest. „You enter now the temple of nature and what's the habit to whistle in the church?” — he said.

My entering in the research of Antarctic biology in 1973 impressed him strongly since he himself has always dreamed on the Antarctic expedition. In 1976, after my second Antarctic voyage he offered me a valuable gift, namely the big Soviet „Atlas Antarktyki” in two volumes with a following dedication taken from an old lullaby: „My dreams failed, oh, my son, so let you fulfil them, oh my son”. And already in next year he was fortunate enough to participate in the Antarctic Expedition to the „Arctowski” Station as an oldest but perhaps the most enthusiastic member of the team.

How much we are missing him now!

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