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The Institute of Legal Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, is headquartered at the impressive Staszic Palace on Warsaw's Nowy Świat Street

Letters of the Law

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In its 50 years of activity, the Institute of Legal Studies has constituted a forum for collaboration between preminent specialists in the legal sciences and legal practitioners – representatives of the justice system and state institutions

Theoretical disciplines of law play a significant part in processes of transforming the state and legal system, enabling objectives set by central and local government

institutions to be achieved while at the same time setting certain uncrossable barriers to ensure that the rule of law does not descend into lawlessness.

The Institute of Legal Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, was set up in the mid-1950s during an intense period of post-thaw reforms. Since its inception, it has pursued research programs which draw together representatives of various scientific and teaching institutions, as well as judicial system practitioners.

Beginning back in the 1970s, the Institute's staff studied legal aspects of the organization and function of the Polish state and economy, analyzing the possibilities for reform. These investigations were initially carried out by what was then known as the Research Group for Legal Issues of the National Economy, led by Prof. Ludwik Bar. The work of the Research Group for Labor Law, in turn,

focused on laying the theoretical groundwork for modern labor law in Poland against the backdrop of international standards, while the Research Group for Civil Law devoted much of its work to the rights of the individual.

Aiding the transformation

The Institute of Legal Studies now employs 101 staff members, including 24 professors and assistant professors (with DSc or *habilitation* degrees) and 31 doctors, organized into various departments and research groups.

In the early 1980s the above teams were pooled together to form the Research Group for Private Law, studying the economic system and turning its attention to phenomena then new within Polish law, including company law, intellectual and industrial property law, unfair competition, and advertising law. In tandem with the transformation process of Poland's legal system, a research program was launched at the Institute concerning the harmonization of Polish economic law with EU law.

Within the broadly-construed field of private law, labor law has held a significant place at the Institute (currently the domain of the Department of Labor Law). The Institute fostered collaboration among top specialists in labor law, who analyzed theoretical issues and the current needs of Poland's labor law system. The Institute also developed the country's first center for agricultural law dealing with legal regulations pertaining to common EC agricultural policy and the harmonization of Polish law. The Department of Criminology, led by Prof. Stanisław Batawia, the eminent founder of the Polish school of criminology, also has extensive research achievements. Another field of similar practical orientation is the activity of the Department of Penal Law, chiefly encompassing research on substantive penal law as well as producing commentaries on the Penal Code.

An important role in the Institute's activity has always been played by research on public law, pursued by research teams organizationally situated under the Department of Constitutional Law and European Research, the Department of Competition Law, and the Department of International Public Law and European Law.

The studies undertaken by the Department of Constitutional Law and European Research above all pertain to constitutional issues. For instance, Institute staff members were involved in work on drafting a new, democratic Constitution for the Republic of Poland after 1989. In parallel with classical constitutional law, the interests of the Institute have also come to encompass administrative law as well, its most outstanding achievement here being the publication of the 4-volume *System of Administrative Law*.

International law

The domain of international public law has also been represented at the Institute since its inception. This field

took on particular significance following 1989, when the standards of international law were incorporated into Poland's internal law, becoming an autonomous basis for administrative and court adjudication (including by the Constitutional Tribunal and Supreme Court). Recent years have brought an important role for the European focus of the Department of International Public Law and European Law, particularly with regard to the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*, issues of international cooperation on judiciary and internal affairs, and also various aspects of EU substantive law.

Significant contributions to the Institute's achievements over the years have been made by its branch centers in Poznań and Wrocław. Poznań has since 1976 been home to the Center for Human Rights, which contributed fundamentally to popularizing the notion of human rights in Poland. Wrocław, in turn, is the site of the Department for Legal Problems of Protecting and Harnessing the Environmental, the staff of which have been involved in numerous legislative efforts.

Since 2001 the Institute has offered an extension-school program of doctorate study with paid tuition. Its educational activity also includes a set of postgraduate studies: a program in local government law, a school in restorative justice, and programs for judges from common courts and public prosecutors.

A several prestigious research journals are affiliated with the Institute: *Polska bibliografia prawnicza* (Polish Law Bibliography), *Studia prawnicze* (Law Studies), *Archiwum kryminologii* (Criminology Archives), *Orzecznictwo sądów polskich* (Jurisdiction of Polish Courts), *Przegląd Prawa Międzynarodowego i Europejskiego* (Review of International and European Law), *Polish Yearbook of International Law*, and *System Prawa Prywatnego* (System of Private Law). ■



Jan Puczyłowski

The Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006, an occasion marked with an Anniversary Publication entitled *Prawo XXI wieku* (21st-Century Law) edited by Prof. Władysław Czapliński