

## EDITORIAL

Volume LXXXIII is a traditional part of the customs and history of our journal. This happens both through articles that enrich and update knowledge about Gdańsk and the Pomeranian region, and through records documenting the current activities of the community of science lovers and promoters gathered in the Gdańsk Scientific Society. In 2023, an important element of this activity was analyzing the beginnings of the social scientific movement of humanists in Gdańsk, accompanying a conference devoted to this movement. Conference “Przybyszewski et al. The beginnings of the social scientific movement of humanists in Gdańsk” (Gdańsk, June 4–5, 2023) was organized in connection with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the social self-organization of Gdańsk humanists, which is reflected in the establishment of three humanities and social faculties: Law and Commerce, Artistic and Historical-Literary (the latter at the request of Stanisław Przybyszewski) in the Society of Friends of Science and Art in Gdańsk, which is continued by the Gdańsk Scientific Society (hereinafter: GTN) with the First Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. The Ist Faculty of the GTN finds its roots in this achievement from 1923, and therefore in 2023 this Faculty celebrated its centenary. Interpreting it similarly, the faculties of the humanities and social sciences of the University of Gdańsk (Economics, Philology, History, Social Sciences, Law and Administration, Management) actively participated in the organization of the event, celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary together.

However, the intention of the organizers was not so much to draw attention to the anniversary itself, but to use the opportunity that arose with it to commemorate and activate in contemporary contexts the phenomenon of the social scientific movement of humanists in Gdańsk in the 1920s. On the one hand, it resulted in institutional solutions, such as the establishment of to the life of the mentioned Faculty and many other units of science, culture and education in the Free City of Gdańsk. On the other hand, this movement created the ground for an intellectual and artistic climate, which has since then been characteristically associated in Gdańsk with a social issue – concern for the common good in the conditions of cultural diversity, which is an asset standard of the quality of life in the city. Commemorating the movement – as organizers – we wanted to restore the memory of the achievements of specific people.

In each of the areas of activity in question, Stanisław Przybyszewski stands out, the initiator of the modernist turn in literature (“meteor of modernism”), one of the most expressive creators of the Young Poland period, who marked his place in the Polish and German literary legacy. Przybyszewski became a legend during his lifetime, called

a “brilliant Pole” in the Berlin community by Strindberg, and was also called the “King of Bohemia.” One of the important goals of the conference was to revive his memory in Gdańsk, because few people today know that it was here that in the years 1920–1924 he transformed from a “decadent into a patriotic official,”<sup>4</sup> when, working in the office of the Directorate of the Polish State Railways,<sup>5</sup> he was also a co-founder of the Society Friends of Science and Art and an extremely productive advocate of the idea of creating institutions combining scientific, educational and cultural functions. Thanks to the support and funds that Przybyszewski successfully sought and the fees he shared, among others: the famous Polish Junior High School in Gdańsk, the Polish House, and the Academic Students’ House (“Bratniak”) could be equipped. He was a leading figure and one of the first activists of the movement on whom the attention of the conference participants was focused. Therefore, Przybyszewski was at the center of her interest, which did not diminish the importance of other humanists who – in the difficult realities of life in the Free City of Gdańsk, mostly caused by Prussian nationalism – confidently formed a front of thought and artistic, socio-educational activities for the benefit of society as a community of different and equal people, better than the domination of the unjustly privileged. These “others” include humanist social activists, victims of the bestial form of such domination. Teachers, financiers, lawyers, publicists and outstanding cultural and educational activists, such as Władysław Pniewski, Franciszek Leon Kręcki and Bernard Filarski, shot by the Nazis in early 1940. They were mentioned during the conference, among others. in reference to the book by Dr. Danuta Drywa, “Our Mother Poland,” recently published by its co-organizer, the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo.

The conference was accompanied by events available in open public space, including: conversation with prof. Gabriela Matuszek-Stec, editor of the 11-volume critical edition of “Stanisław Przybyszewski’s Literary Works” published by Jagiellonian University Publishing House in 2023–2024, and the opening of an exhibition of paintings by Grzegorz Stec, whose paintings are on the covers of this edition, as well as a show of Gdańsk paintings by Herbert Waltmann (1919–1999), made available thanks to the courtesy of the owner, prof. Michał Harciarek, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences,

<sup>4</sup> Gabriela Matuszek: *How the decadent Przybyszewski transformed into a patriotic official in Gdańsk* [in:] *Widnoscircles of literature – polyphony of criticism. Works donated to Professor Teresa Walas*, ed. T. Kunz, A. Łebkowska, R. Nycz, M. Popiel, Kraków 2015, pp. 281–294, pp. 281–294.

<sup>5</sup> Room no. 251 on the first floor of the Polish National Railways building at Dyrekcyjna street no. 2/4 in Gdańsk still serves as an office building. In 1985, thanks to the efforts of officials working there, a plaque was created commemorating Przybyszewski’s connection with this place. It was never officially unveiled. Cf. Adam Grzybowski, *Famous figures as a marketing product and an element of city/region promotion on the example of Stanisław Przybyszewski* [in:] *Przybyszewski. Revisions and filiations*, ed. G. Matuszek, Kraków 2015; <https://wagrowiec1381.wordpress.com/2015/09/12/znane-postacie-jako-produkt-marketingowy-i-element-promocji-miastaregionu-na-przykladzie-stanislaw-przybyszewskiego/> [Retrieved: 20-01-2024]. See also: <https://ibedeker.pl/relacje/wokol-polonii-sopockiej-cz-ii/> [Retrieved: 20-01-2024].

University of Gdansk; a concert of the UG Vocal Studio and a poetry session of the Gdańsk Poets Club (“Gdańsk Artists’ Tribute to Przybyszewski”).

The volume presented to readers includes a report from this conference, but its content and meaning are probably best presented by the presentations of the participants. In most cases, they eventually took the form of articles, collected in the “Scientific dissertations and sketches” section.

The first text in this part is an article by Gabriela Matuszek-Stec, talking in her a cross-sectional sketch about Stanisław Przybyszewski as European, patriotic and pioneering artist. The author, a well-known researcher of literature at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, presented a shorter version of this text during the conference.<sup>6</sup> The next article in this part is a study by Tadeusz Linkner, devoted to the most important of the Gdańsk achievements of Stanisław Przybyszewski – “according to him,” as the author announces in the title, a professor who has been researching literature for years, mainly the phenomenon of the journalistic work of the “modernism meteor.” In the article, Linkner masterfully presented the somewhat stuffy aura of Gdańsk in the early 1920s for a writer (“nothing smells of literature here anymore”), which, however, turned out to be so inspiring that the famous creator began writing “My Contemporaries here,” specifically “Among strangers.” According to Tadeusz Linkner’s interpretation: “as if he wanted to signal that this is how he felt in this city.” What he did there in just four years changed the landscape and – as the title of the conference alluded to – the social scientific movement of humanities in Gdańsk gained development momentum. This is noticed by another author speaking in this part, Agnieszka Bzymek. By presenting Przybyszewski’s resilience in the city of Gdańsk, she made a successful attempt at autoethnography, interestingly incorporated into the writer’s Gdańsk biography.

The group of articles written in connection with the conference ends with a text by Danuta Drywa: “In social service – the fate of Poles from the Free City of Gdańsk on the example of Dr. Władysław Pniewski, Ph.D. Franciszek Kręcki and Dr. Bernard Filarski.” Using a bitter retrospective (as I mentioned, all the heroes of this text are victims of Nazis, murdered in KL Stutthof), the author presents the results of her in-depth studies of their biographies, carried out under the aegis of the Stutthof Museum, where she has been working for years. Generally speaking, they claim that the social scientific movement of humanists in the Free City of Gdańsk was based on the strength of these specific, wonderful people. Their – often outstanding – abilities to animate culture and social self-organization made this movement significant and, unfortunately, also so visible to the occupier that it was tantamount to a death sentence.

Due to the nature of the scientific content presented in the above-mentioned articles, it can be stated that volume LXXXIII of the Gdańsk Yearbook of the GTN focuses on the humanities. In addition to philological, literary and cultural studies, this volume

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<sup>6</sup> This edition includes all of Przybyszewski’s literary works written in Polish: prose poems, novels, short stories, dramas and the author’s introductions accompanying these works, as well as ineditas and minor translations.

also contains historical articles, such as: a scientific study and at the same time an anniversary evocation of the January Uprising, eruditely presented by Krzysztof Lewalski (“Nation of Poland, Lithuania and Russia, to arms! [...] the last battle of European Civilization against the savage barbarism of Asia” – reflections on the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the January Uprising). Another author interested in the historical perspective, but rightly locating the text in the philosophy of law, is the well-known lawyer and poet from Gdańsk, Tomasz Snarski, who subjected the space of historical narratives to a multidimensional and sensitive – one could even say artistically sensitive – analysis. He included its results under the title: *Between justice and mercy in the “Gdańsk optics.” A sketch of the philosophy of law around selected statements of the participants of the Gdańsk Areopagus in 2002.*

Historical and biographical statements are also relatively common in this volume (such as biographies, memories, reflections and reports, presenting the achievements of outstanding figures and collected in further parts) and located in the field of studies oriented anthropologically – and at the same time anthropocentrically – on people, but also – less anthropocentrically – into places and things. Here, the heroes are, for example, elements of urban architecture, as in an interesting statement by Bartosz Gondek, Magdalena Barganowska-Olbryś and Marek Kozłow, a group of authors active, among others, as reconstructionists, and talking about post-Nazi architectural objects (“Unwanted Architecture in Gdańsk County and Pruszcz Gdański 1920–1956”).

In turn, the heroes of an in-depth study and an intriguing article by Ewelina Damps are musical instruments historically associated with the legendary MS “Batory” (Floating pianos and upright pianos).

Further, volume LXXXIII appears as an analytical record and representation of reflections that penetrate deeply into the multicolored, local worlds of the characters who are at the center of the authors’ research interest. Pomerania, in the text presented in the volume prepared on the basis of Adam Grzybowski’s conference speech, appears as a land of surprisingly non-crossing paths and possible, although constantly elusive and undocumented meetings of two extraordinary writers, Stanisław Przybyszewski and Stefan Żeromski [(*No*) *passed away with the wind...*]. Subsequent texts, similarly, although differently for many reasons, present elements of Gdańsk locality “in their own way.” Like the article by Mateusz Ihnatowicz, who presents the original biography of “Solidarity” born in Gdańsk as an individual phenomenon, through the prism of the memories of priest Eugeniusz Jankiewicz and father Bronisław Sroka SI.

Going further, Zbigniew Cywiński’s beautiful memory of the beginnings of the Polish Army in the East is a kind of painting, a local microworld of soldiers, shown from the perspective of eighty years and from a place far away from them, such as Gdańsk. Earlier, Katarzyna Lukas – as one could say – paints a portrait, in this case it is of the German translator and Polonophile, Heinrich Nitschmann (1826–1905). The author does this masterfully through a large, warm wave of the world of translations and fragments of poetry and prose – the Gdańsk literary debuts of this lover of Poland and Polishness. In turn, Józef Żerko, the author of Gerard Lubiński’s biography,

Józef Żerko, portrayed his hero on the centenary of his birth. With and with great sensitivity to the local climate of life stretching between Starogard Gdański and Gdańsk, he showed the achievements of this distinguished teacher.

The volume also presents two interesting conversations. The first one, with Basil Kerski, director of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk, was conducted by Miłoslawa Borzyszkowska-Szewczyk. It seems that the title, promising to present little-known facts, encourages you to read the content of this interesting meeting: *Aftershocks of the caesura 1989/90. Interculturality experienced between Poland, Iraq and Germany*. The second conversation is not only a report from the meeting, but also a form of presentation – *Between economics and literature* – the (auto)biography of Professor Dariusz Filar, a well-known economist and writer. Maria Mrozińska talked to him, and we are publishing the conversation on the official website of the City of Gdańsk, gdansk.pl, thanking Lech Parell, president of the Gdańsk Media Center, the publisher of the website, for his consent to reprint. This conversation is important, among other things, from a historical perspective, important for the history of the Gdańsk Scientific Society. In the beginnings of the liberal-democratic movement, emerging in the late 1980s in Gdańsk, GTN played a significant role, certainly worthy of attention. Professor Filar recalls these beginnings as follows:

In 1988, we established an informal organization called the Gdańsk Social and Economic Society, Congress of Liberals. This was before the strikes this year and the announcement of the round table talks. A founding and program meeting was held at the headquarters of the Gdańsk Scientific Society. The Liberal Democratic Congress was registered as a party two years later.

In this light, the GTN headquarters at Grodzka Street seems to be an interesting sign of freedom and a symbol of change. The questions that arise in this context inspire not only the community of researchers gathered at GTN to study and research. These are questions, for example, about the meaning and status of this unique place that makes this type of event possible under the regime of the Polish People's Republic.

The texts collected in the volume have been traditionally organized in its structure as: I. Scientific dissertations and sketches (eight scientific articles in total); II. Reflections, conversations, memories (six texts, including four scientific articles and two conversations); III. Reviews, discussions, reports (four texts, including two review articles, two reports and one voice in the discussion).

Among the texts in the third section, Mateusz Rutkowski, in a review article, interestingly presents a broad local context in order to encourage people to read Tomasz Nowicki's book "The Zoo as a Laboratory of Power." The next review in the volume concerns Rita Jankowska's book *Drifting Suns*. In a moving way, in poetic prose, the author talks about pain, to which – as I wrote in this review – she seems to be particularly sensitive; "it absorbs it as if it were inhaling the air saturated with it, our native, Pomeranian and Polish air, carrying the memory of suffering, both those under the banner of war crimes and those embedded in family life, reproducing violence

between generations.” The publication was created as part of the Cultural Scholarship of the City of Gdańsk.

In turn, Monika Popow involves the reader in the content of an interesting text, expressing herself not only as a rapporteur, but also as a co-author of a unique artistic and social event, carried out in October 2023 with Krzysztof Wodiczko, an outstanding, socially engaged, world-famous multimedia artist. The event took place at the Łaźnia Center for Contemporary Art and the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theater (“Freedom: aboveground dialogue”). The next text is a voice that perfectly enriches the discussion published in the previous volume (LXXXII): “Teutonic Knight, Danziger, Grandfather of the Wehrmacht and other Pomeranian ghosts.” This is the voice of Zbigniew Cywiński and at the same time another valuable contribution to the volume – the second text by the Professor, who has been contributing to our magazine for years.

Finally, with the report by Marcel Jakubowski and the presentation of selected materials in the annex, we note a return to the beginning of the volume, i.e. the conference – “Przybyszewski et al. The beginnings of the social scientific movement of humanists in Gdańsk”.

As this non-traditional in terms of volume, relatively long editorial shows, volume LXXXIII appears to be a study rich in content and containing a record number of contributions. Perhaps this result refers to the changes brought by the year 2023 documented in this volume; an election year, extremely important and extremely promising for Poland, Pomerania and Gdańsk. Let’s keep it up!

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