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## Disciplinary Proceedings against Warsaw Astronomers Michał Kamiński and Maciej Bielicki for their Activities During World War II

I present post-World War II disciplinary proceedings against two astronomers from the University of Warsaw: Michał Kamiński and Maciej Bielicki. They both requested such proceedings, but the *de facto* accuser was another astronomer, Jan Gadomski. I also discuss the related topic of appointing Kamiński's successor as the director of the University of Warsaw Astronomical Observatory and some side topics found in the documents pertaining to the disciplinary proceedings.

**Keywords:** Maciej Bielicki, Jan Gadomski, Michał Kamiński, World War II, University of Warsaw, University of Warsaw Astronomical Observatory, astronomer, disciplinary proceedings

**Słowa kluczowe:** Maciej Bielicki, Jan Gadomski, Michał Kamiński, II wojna światowa, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Obserwatorium Astronomiczne Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, astronom, postępowania dyscyplinarne

### Introduction

Michał Kamiński (Fig. 1) had been the director of the University of Warsaw Astronomical Observatory (henceforth: Observatory) since 1923. In the following years, he hired junior astronomers, including Jan Gadomski (1927; Fig. 2), Maciej Bielicki (1928; Fig. 3), and Włodzimierz Zonn (1938). Soon after the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the University of Warsaw (then known as Józef Piłsudski University of Warsaw) was closed. The Observatory was re-established as an independent institution on 1 January 1940. First, it worked with very limited capacity. In April 1942, the occupiers appointed a German supervisor of the three astronomical observatories in the General Governorate (also in Krakow and Lviv) – Kurt Walter (Fig. 4). As a consequence, the financial situation of the Observatory improved. In 1944, the Observatory personnel were displaced, and the building was almost completely burned down during the Warsaw Uprising. The astronomers relocated to Krakow, where they renewed the Observatory at a temporary

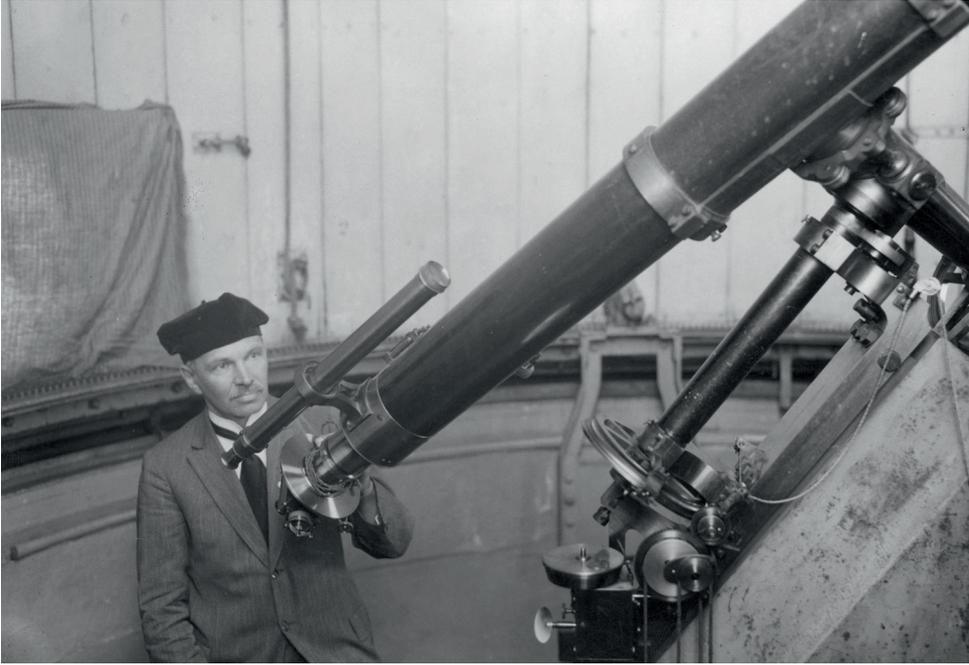


Fig. 1. Michał Kamiński in 1925. Fonds: Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny (source: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archives), sygn. 3/1/0/10/3311/6)

residence in February 1945.<sup>1</sup> After World War II, Michał Kamiński and Maciej Bielicki faced disciplinary proceedings due to accusations of submitting to the Germans during the war. The actions of Poles were meant to be directed by a set of moral rules that were announced during the war by the Polish Underground State as the Code of Civic Morality and are discussed in the literature.<sup>2</sup> Kurt Walter's actions were not judged by a similar disciplinary commission or court. His actions are portrayed in the literature in both a positive and negative light.<sup>3</sup>

I intend to present the archival sources on the disciplinary proceedings against Kamiński and Bielicki, which are only briefly discussed in the literature. The proceedings resulted in pensioning Kamiński off. This fact was first noted in a 1953 article by Gadomski, who indicates that pensioning off took place between 1945 and 1950.<sup>4</sup> Neither the proceedings nor their aftermath were mentioned in the celebratory speech marking 60 years of Kamiński's academic career in 1964.<sup>5</sup> After Kamiński's death, three obituaries

- 1 J. Gadomski, *Uzupełnienie do „Sprawozdania z działalności Obserwatorium Astronomicznego Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w okresie 1945–1950 r.”*, "Postępy Astronomii" 1953, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 104–109; M. Kamiński, *Zarys dziejów Obserwatorium Warszawskiego 1815–1945*, "Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej" series C, 1959, issue 2, p. 69–115; J. Hurwic, *Włodzimierz Zonn (1905–1975). Astronom i utalentowany publicysta naukowy*, "Analecta. Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki" 2004, vol. 13, issue 1–2, p. 303–310; J. Włodarczyk, *Astronomia*, [in:] *Nauki ścisłe i przyrodnicze na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim*, ed. by A.K. Wróblewski, Warszawa 2016, p. 19–49.
- 2 T. Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, Warszawa 2010, p. 427–443; S. Korboński, *Polskie państwo podziemne. Przewodnik po Podziemiu z lat 1939–45*, Warszawa 2008, p. 145–148; T. Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna. Społeczeństwo polskie a państwo podziemne 1939–1945*, Warszawa 2000, p. 88–129.
- 3 H.W. Duerbeck, *German Astronomy in the Third Reich*, [in:] *Organizations and Strategies in Astronomy*, vol. 7, ed. by A. Heck, Dordrecht 2006, p. 400.
- 4 J. Gadomski, *Uzupełnienie*, p. 104–109.
- 5 K. Rudnicki, *Jubileusz Profesora Michała Kamińskiego*, "Urania" 1964, vol. 35, no. 9, p. 246–250.

were published,<sup>6</sup> and only one mentioned that the University of Warsaw pensioned him off, but no further details were provided.<sup>7</sup> In 1981, the fact that Kamiński was pensioned off by the University of Warsaw was briefly noticed in the scientific autobiography of Wilhelmina Iwanowska (who studied with Włodzimierz Zonn at Vilnius University).<sup>8</sup> Bieliński died in 1988, and his obituary does not discuss the accusations.<sup>9</sup> The proceedings against Kamiński were first mentioned in a 1996 article by Konrad Rudnicki, who describes it as a sad misunderstanding that a University of Warsaw disciplinary commission punished Kamiński for serving as an administrator of the Observatory during the Nazi occupation.<sup>10</sup> Rudnicki was a fighter in the People's Guard and People's Army, the first post-war graduate in astronomy from the University of Warsaw, and a recipient of the Righteous Among the Nations title. Wilhelmina Iwanowska gave an interview, published in 1997, in which she commented on an offer she received in 1949 to become the director of the Observatory. She noted that others could not take the position, mentioning, among other reasons, that somebody had behaved inadequately during the war and subserviently towards Germans, which disqualified them from being hired. She does not provide any names.<sup>11</sup> A biographical article on Kamiński was published by Krzysztof Ziolkowski (Kamiński's junior colleague) in 2007, and it contains more details of the proceedings. For example, it states that they were opened and gives the name of Jan Wasilkowski (the Head of the Higher Disciplinary Commission for Professors of Academic Schools) but does not present the verdict of the proceedings. It is speculated that the proceedings were the cause of pensioning Kamiński off after the war. However, Krzysztof Ziolkowski did not retrieve the archival documents. His article suggests that the proceeding could have been an intrigue.<sup>12</sup> Similar texts were also published elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 2. Jan Gadomski (source: Archiwum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Archives of University of Warsaw), Akta osobowe, sygn. K 2985)

- 6 L. Zajdler, *Prof. Dr Michał Kamiński 1879–1973*, "Urania" 1973, vol. 44, no. 6, p. 162–166; J.M. Witkowski, *Obituary Michael Kamiński*, "Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society" 1974, vol. 15, p. 48–50; M. Bieliński, *Michał Kamiński*, "Postępy Astronomii" 1973, vol. 21, no. 4, p. 351–354.
- 7 Ibidem, p. 351–354.
- 8 W. Iwanowska, *Wileńskie korzenie. Astronomia i radioastronomia w Toruniu*, [in:] *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika. Wspomnienia pracowników*, ed. by A. Tomczak, Toruń 1995, p. 128; eadem, *Mój życiorys naukowy*, p. 246–278.
- 9 K. Ziolkowski, *Maciej Bieliński (1906–1988)*, "Urania" 1989, vol. 60, no. 10, p. 299–306.
- 10 K. Rudnicki, *Z historii uniwersyteckiego obserwatorium astronomicznego we Lwowie*, "Analecta. studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki" 1996, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 171–188; idem, *Jak zostałem astronomem*, [in:] *Astronomem być... Świadczenia życia i pracy astronomów polskich*, ed. by A. Woszczyk, Toruń 2007, p. 141–149.
- 11 A. Plaskacz, *Życie wśród gwiazd Profesor Wilhelminy Iwanowskiej*, Toruń 1997, p. 98–99.
- 12 K. Ziolkowski, *Michał Kamiński (1879–1973)*, "Urania – Postępy Astronomii" 2007, vol. 78, no. 6, p. 268–271.
- 13 Idem, *Michał Kamiński (1879–1973)*, [in:] *Sylwetki astronomów polskich XX w.*, ed. by A. Woszczyk, Toruń 2008, p. 77–86; idem, *Michał Kamiński 1879–1973*, [in:] *Portrety uczonych: Profesorowie Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 1915–1945 A–Ł*, ed. by P. Salwa, A.K. Wróblewski, Warszawa 2016, p. 335–343.

The above literature review reveals very little information. Therefore, I also tried to collect oral testimonies. The only living person who witnessed the events discussed here is the daughter of Włodzimierz and Rachela Zonn, Lidia Zonn-Karabas. She knew Kamiński was considered dubious during the war but did not know any details.<sup>14</sup> I also asked senior astronomers for second-hand information about the proceedings; they only knew gossip about these proceedings or information from the 2007 article.

Below, I first present the proceedings against Michał Kamiński and then discuss three accusations in detail. The following section covers the directorship of the Observatory. Next, I present the proceedings against Maciej Bielicki. The two subsequent sections are devoted to the accuser's identity and presenting side topics found in the archives. I conclude with a summary.

### Proceedings against Kamiński

The first accusations against Michał Kamiński were presented to the Home Army by Jan Gadomski. The Home Army intelligence decided to send Kamiński a warning. A friend of Kamiński, Witold Balcer, lived with Tadeusz Sielecki, a banker in the Home Army and the director of the insurance department at PKO Bank. In early 1944, Sielecki asked Balcer about Kamiński, and Balcer claimed that Kamiński had just some quirks in his behavior. Sielecki passed this information to the head of the Home Army intelligence, and based on that, the Home Army decided not to issue a warning. Balcer told this story on 18 March 1946 during his deposition for the disciplinary proceeding against Kamiński presented below,<sup>15</sup> and this was the only archival document about the Home Army and Warsaw astronomers I could find. It should be noted that Gadomski's obituary claims that he organized a Home Army aerial meteorological service and used the pseudonym *Radca* (Counselor).<sup>16</sup> Additionally, his daughter and granddaughter wrote in 2006 that plenty of weapons for insurgents were hidden at the Observatory during the first days of the Warsaw Uprising.<sup>17</sup>

On 14 February 1945, Michał Kamiński wrote a letter to the rector of the University of Warsaw. The letter stated that some individuals within the academic circles in Warsaw and Krakow were spreading rumors about his activities as the Observatory director from 1940 to 1944. These rumors portrayed Kamiński's actions in an unfavorable light. Consequently, he requested a disciplinary investigation to be launched against him to disclose his actions fully. The letter was accompanied by a statement on the activities of the Observatory during the war. On 5 April 1945, the letter was passed to the University of Warsaw Disciplinary Commission by the acting rector Włodzimierz Antoniewicz<sup>18</sup> (professor of

14 Interview with Lidia Zonn-Karabas, conducted by the author on 18.07.2023; Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich POLIN (POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews) [POLIN], Wirtualny Sztetl (Virtual Shtetl) [WSz], Lidia Zonn, sygn. 586.

15 Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archives of Modern Records) [AAN], Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (Ministry of National Education) [MEN], Michał Kamiński 1939–1946, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 78–79.

16 J. Pagaczewski, *Jan Gadomski – Wspomnienie pośmiertne*, "Urania" 1966, no. 5, p. 130–132.

17 E. Gadomska-Szczepanowska, B. Scudder, *Wspomnienia o dr. Janie Rola Gadomskim*, "Urania – Postępy Astronomii" 2006, no. 6, p. 258–260.

18 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 4.

archeology who later also faced disciplinary proceedings<sup>19</sup>). The Disciplinary Commission included professors Stefan Zaleski (chair), Wiktor Lampe, and Wacław Borowy.<sup>20</sup> I have not found the results of their investigation in the archives.

Kamiński was first questioned by the University of Warsaw vice-rector Bogdan Nawroczyński in mid-July 1945.<sup>21</sup> Nawroczyński wrote an autobiography in which he claims to have led an underground tribunal during the war, responsible for enforcing the moral and political discipline of Poles. The decisions of that tribunal were printed in a weekly newspaper published by the Home Army.<sup>22</sup> The University of Warsaw rector Stefan Pieńkowski formally tasked Nawroczyński to conduct a preliminary investigation on 1 August 1945. Nawroczyński read the documents submitted by Kamiński and questioned him, as well as Maciej Bielicki, Józef Grudkowski (a custodian at the Observatory), Roman Kobendza (an adjunct at the Botanical Garden), Rachela Zonn (a secretary of the Observatory<sup>23</sup>), Cezary Kundorowicz (a clerk of the University of Warsaw), and Jan Gadomski. On 6 September 1945, Nawroczyński signed his report, concluding that Kamiński's case should be presented to the University Senate<sup>24</sup> in accordance with Article 51 of the Presidential Decree issued on 24 February 1928. This decree concerned the service relationship of professors and auxiliary scientific staff at national academic institutions.<sup>25</sup> It formed the legal basis for further proceedings against Kamiński. Following Article 50 of the decree, the proceedings were kept secret, and the result could be made



Fig. 3. Maciej Bielicki in 1926 (source: Archiwum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Archives of University of Warsaw), Akta studenckie, sygn. RP 21990)



Fig. 4. Kurt Walter (source: Deutsches Museum, München, Archiv, Porträtsammlung des Deutschen Museums, Signatur: PT 03890/01)

19 R. Gawkowski, *Poczet Rektorów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, Warszawa 2016, p. 272.

20 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 4.

21 Ibidem, p. 80.

22 B. Nawroczyński, *Wspomnienia starego pedagoga*, [in:] *Oddech myśli*, ed. by L. Witkowski, Kraków 2020, p. 355.

23 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 16.

24 Ibidem, p. 19–22.

25 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 24 lutego 1928 r. o stosunku służbowym profesorów państwowych szkół akademickich i pomocniczych sił naukowych tych szkół.

public only if the Disciplinary Commission requested it and the Ministry granted approval. The secrecy of the verdict explains why the details of the proceedings were not widely known for many years.

There were three accusations against Kamieński:

1. He failed to maintain loyalty to Poland in times of danger.
2. He was excessively submissive towards the German authorities.
3. He informed occupant authorities that a person of Jewish descent resides at the Observatory.<sup>26</sup>

Nawroczyński's report was passed to the University Senate, which gathered for the first time after the war on 7 September 1945. The meeting agenda included an item titled "The case of Prof. Michał Kamieński", accompanied by a handwritten note reading "Nawroczyński". The agenda was prepared three days earlier. The minutes of the Senate meeting state that the Senate decided to open disciplinary proceedings against Kamieński and suspend him from service. Additionally, a subitem titled "The case of senior assistant M.Sc. Maciej Bielicki" was added, and the Senate's decision on this matter was to initiate an investigation. The nature of this investigation is unclear, as a different term is used compared to Kamieński's case: *śledztwo* (investigation) for Bielicki and *postępowanie dyscyplinarne* (disciplinary proceedings) for Kamieński. For both cases, the minutes state that the preliminary investigations were already conducted.<sup>27</sup> The documents of Kamieński's case were passed on 13 September 1945 to the vice disciplinary ombudsman of the University of Warsaw (plaintiff), Franciszek Czubalski,<sup>28</sup> who was highly active in underground education during the war.<sup>29</sup> Kamieński's salary was lowered by half.<sup>30</sup> However, on 24 October 1945, the Senate proposed that Kamieński's salary should not be reduced due to his health issues.<sup>31</sup>

The committee running the proceedings against Kamieński was composed of the University of Warsaw professors: Włodzimierz Kozubski (chair; at one meeting substituted by Stefan Zaleski<sup>32</sup>), Wacław Borowy, and Witold Doroszewski.<sup>33</sup> The ombudsman Czubalski demanded the highest penalty: removal from the chair.<sup>34</sup> Kamieński had chosen Stanisław Śliwiński (professor of law) as his defense attorney.<sup>35</sup> In the proceedings, the defense attorney could not be compensated for their services and was required to be a professor at a state academic institution.<sup>36</sup> The witnesses were: astronomers from the University of Warsaw (Maciej Bielicki<sup>37</sup> and Jan Gadomski<sup>38</sup>), other employees of the Observatory (Józef Grudkowski<sup>39</sup> and Rachela Zonn<sup>40</sup>), other employees of the University of Warsaw (Roman Kobendza<sup>41</sup> and

26 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 19–22, 32.

27 Archiwum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (University of Warsaw Archive) [AUW], Senat 26.07.1945–27.11.1945, sygn. BR/S–1, p. 14, 26.

28 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 30.

29 R. Gawkowski, *Poczet Rektorów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, p. 290.

30 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 28.

31 AUW, sygn. BR/S–1, p. 49.

32 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 63.

33 Ibidem, p. 50.

34 Ibidem, p. 31–32; Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 31.

35 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 50, 56.

36 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 49.

37 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 59.

38 Ibidem, p. 60–61, 81–82.

39 Ibidem, p. 58–59.

40 Ibidem, p. 63–66.

41 Ibidem, p. 61.

a clerk Cezary Kunderewicz<sup>42</sup>), witnesses from outside the University of Warsaw that knew Kamiński (Jerzy Blikle,<sup>43</sup> Bohdan Pniewski,<sup>44</sup> Antoni Buczyński,<sup>45</sup> Michał Waśkowski,<sup>46</sup> Witold Balcer,<sup>47</sup> and Robert Walter<sup>48</sup>), and the defendant himself.<sup>49</sup> The testimonies of Gadomski, Grudkowski, Kobendza, and Kunderowicz presented Kamiński in a negative light. Bieliński's and Zonn's testimonies were neutral. The other witnesses provided positive testimonies for Kamiński.

The committee debated whether the case against Kamiński should be handled solely as a disciplinary matter or referred to the Special Court,<sup>50</sup> which, in some instances, imposed sentences of long imprisonment or even the death penalty.<sup>51</sup> This discussion took place on 9 January 1946, and the decision was postponed until the disciplinary proceedings concluded.<sup>52</sup> The proceedings documents do not further discuss referring the case to the Special Court.

The accusations against Kamiński in the disciplinary proceedings at the University of Warsaw were as follows:

1. He removed the plaque bearing the Observatory's name in Polish, threw it onto the terrace, and instructed the custodian to destroy the Polish flag.
2. On his initiative, he introduced the German language to scientific notes.
3. He answered the phone in German.
4. He greeted Germans by raising his hand in a Nazi salute.
5. He did not limit himself to issuing the German work identification cards to the personnel; instead, he preached to them that they must fulfill their duties and serve the German Reich loyally.
6. He informed the German authorities in writing that Rachela Zonn, who was of Jewish descent, resided at the Observatory. This information inevitably put her at risk of being taken to the ghetto, where she would face anguish and death in the near future.

The verdict was announced on 2 April 1946, and Kamiński was found innocent of charges no. 2 and 3 while guilty of charges no. 1, 4, 5, and 6. Out of six possible penalties, the fifth harshest was chosen: immediate retirement and pension lowered by 25%<sup>53</sup> (maximum reduction allowed was 50%<sup>54</sup>).

Kamiński appealed the verdict on 5 August 1946. The typescript of the appeal is fifteen pages long and has many legal details, which suggests that this document was prepared by a lawyer (most likely Śliwiński). The text mentions Kamiński in the third

42 Ibidem, p. 82.

43 Ibidem, p. 58.

44 Ibidem, p. 61.

45 Ibidem, p. 61.

46 Ibidem, p. 67–70.

47 Ibidem, p. 78–79.

48 Ibidem, p. 69.

49 Ibidem, p. 80–81.

50 Ibidem, p. 148.

51 A. Paczkowski, *Polska*, [in:] *Sprawiedliwość, zemsta i rewolucja*, ed. by A. Paczkowski, Gdańsk 2016, p. 129–173; Dz.U. 1945, Nr 7, poz. 29, Dekret z dnia 16 lutego 1945 r. o zmianie dekretu Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego o wymiarze kary dla faszystowsko-hitlerowskich zbrodniarzy winnych zabójstw i znęcania się nad ludnością cywilną i jeńcami oraz dla zdrajców Narodu Polskiego.

52 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 148.

53 Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences) [APAN], Jakub Sawicki, sygn. III-236, unpaginated; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 86–93.

54 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 31.

person, yet it was signed by him.<sup>55</sup> Based on the appeal, the University Commission corrected some details of the minutes of the Commission meetings. The remaining aspects of the appeal, including the selection of witnesses to be questioned, were referred to the Ministry's Commission.<sup>56</sup> The appeal presents many arguments. Among them, the most important were an inadequately formulated accusation,<sup>57</sup> an improper swearing-in of Gadomski as a witness,<sup>58</sup> and reading a letter from Felicjan Kępiński (an astronomer and a land surveyor) as if it were a deposition.<sup>59</sup>

Ombudsman Czubalski also appealed the verdict. He requested to change the verdict to 'guilty' on charges no. 2 and 3 and to change the penalty to the harshest possible<sup>60</sup> (i.e., removal from the chair<sup>61</sup>). The disciplinary ombudsman at the Ministry, Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski, did not accept the main points of Kamiński's appeal and considered convicting him on four charges and acquitting him on two as a correct decision. Grzywo-Dąbrowski also considered immediate retirement a sufficiently harsh penalty and, therefore, requested that the pension not be reduced by 25%.<sup>62</sup>

The second proceedings were run by the Higher Disciplinary Commission for Professors of Academic Schools, which was appointed by the Ministry of Education. For Kamiński's proceedings, the Commission consisted of professors Jan Wasilkowski (head; dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Warsaw), Bolesław Hryniewiecki (director of the Botanical Garden, University of Warsaw), and Stanisław Turczynowicz (dean of the Agriculture Faculty, Warsaw University of Life Sciences).<sup>63</sup> For the second proceedings, Śliwiński could not be Kamiński's defense attorney because he was a member of the Ministry Disciplinary Commission.<sup>64</sup> This time, Kamiński chose Kazimierz Michałowski, who was aware of the details of the case. However, Michałowski traveled abroad and could not act as a defense attorney. Instead, Kamiński asked the University Senate to select an attorney for him,<sup>65</sup> and the Senate chose Jakub Sawicki (professor of law).<sup>66</sup>

During the second proceeding, testimonies were presented by six witnesses – five astronomers and one mathematician (Wacław Sierpiński). Three witnesses testified in favor of Kamiński: Tadeusz Banachiewicz, Wacław Sierpiński, and Ludwik Zajdler (an assistant at the Observatory until the outbreak of war<sup>67</sup>).<sup>68</sup> It is important to note that in 1919 Banachiewicz wrote a letter to Kamiński (who was then working in Vladivostok) urging him to come to Poland, which Kamiński did in 1922.<sup>69</sup> Felicjan Kępiński and Jan Gadomski testified against Kamiński.<sup>70</sup> The last witness was Fryderyk Koebcke, whose testimony was rather neutral.<sup>71</sup>

55 APAN, sygn. III-236, unpaginated; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 99–111 and unpaginated.

56 Ibidem, p. 112–113, 194.

57 Ibidem, p. 99–101.

58 Ibidem, p. 103.

59 Ibidem, p. 101–102.

60 Ibidem, p. 195 and unpaginated.

61 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 31.

62 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 119–120.

63 Ibidem, p. 154, 189.

64 Ibidem, p. 98.

65 Ibidem, p. 141 and 144; Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 49.

66 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, 154, 194.

67 K. Ziolkowski, *Ludwik Zajdler (1905–1985)*, "Urania" 1985, vol. 56, no. 7–8, p. 194–197.

68 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 155–160.

69 K. Rudnicki, *Jubileusz Profesora Michała Kamińskiego*, p. 246–250.

70 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 162–168.

71 Ibidem, p. 169–170.

The verdict of the second proceeding was announced on 7 February 1948.<sup>72</sup> Kamiński was found innocent on three charges: two were the same as before, with the addition of charge no. 1 mentioned above (destroying the Polish plaque and flag). He was found guilty of violating Art. 11 and 12.2 of the 1928 Decree based on three charges that were phrased slightly differently than in the first proceedings and in a different order:

1. He attempted to remove Rachela Zonn from the Observatory (who lived there and was the wife of Włodzimierz Zonn, an assistant held in German captivity), as he believed she was of Jewish descent. To achieve this, he contacted Zygmunt Zagórowski, the head of the Liquidation Commission established by the occupiers, in an attempt to shift the potential responsibility for concealing Rachela Zonn onto Zagórowski.
2. In 1942, while distributing the work identification cards issued by the occupiers, he encouraged the Polish employees to remain loyal to them, even though he was not forced to do so by the direct pressure of the German authorities.
3. During the German occupation at the Observatory, he did not abandon his old habit of greeting people by raising his right hand, a gesture that, to the Polish university employees, resembled the Nazi salute.

The penalty was reduced to an immediate retirement without lowering the pension.<sup>73</sup> The sentence was announced when Kamiński was nearing the age of 70, at which point he was to be pensioned off due to his age.<sup>74</sup> After the verdict, the documents issued by the Ministry changed Kamiński's academic title to *magister*.<sup>75</sup> Kamiński earned that title in the Russian Empire in May 1910,<sup>76</sup> where it was the equivalent of a Ph.D. (rather than the equivalent of an M.Sc. following the Polish nomenclature),<sup>77</sup> and he was using it before the war in addition to his professor title.<sup>78</sup> Michał Kamiński stayed in Krakow after the Observatory moved back to the reconstructed building in Warsaw.<sup>79</sup>

During his visit to Warsaw in 1959, the chair of Observational Astronomy at the Jagiellonian University, Eugeniusz Rybka, met with Sierpiński. Rybka proposed that Kamiński should be awarded an *honoris causa* doctorate from the University of Warsaw. Sierpiński declined this proposal. Rybka then proposed Kamiński to become a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Sierpiński considered that unlikely.<sup>80</sup>

Kamiński was employed as a half-time professor at the Institute of Astronomy of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IA PAS) from 1 March 1960 until 30 September 1961. These dates are noted in Kamiński's personal file at the PAS,<sup>81</sup> whereas his employment from

72 AAN, MEN, Michał Kamiński 1946–1951, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2002, p. 7; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 169, 171.

73 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2002, p. 15–19; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 189–193.

74 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 24.

75 AUW, Wydział Matematyczno-Przyrodniczy (Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences) [WMP], Organizacja Wydziału Matematyczno-Przyrodniczego 1945–1951, sygn. WMP-19, p. 197; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2002, unpaginated.

76 K. Ziolkowski, *Michał Kamiński (1879–1973)*, p. 268–271; Archiwum Centrum Astronomicznego im. M. Kopernika Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Archives of Nicolaus Copernicus Astronomical Center of the Polish Academy of Sciences) [ACAMKPAN], Michał Kamiński, sygn. 8/58, p. 14.

77 P. Flin, E. Panko, *Stopnie naukowe w carskiej Rosji*, "Prace Komisji Historii Nauki Polska Akademia Umiejętności" 2015, vol. 14, p. 269–272.

78 *Skład Uniwersytetu na rok akademicki 1935–1936*, Warszawa 1936, p. 30.

79 K. Ziolkowski, *Michał Kamiński (1879–1973)*, p. 268–271.

80 E. Rybka, *Kronika mego życia*, ed. by J. Złotorzycka-Kalisz, M. Tomczak, Warszawa 2024, p. 714.

81 ACAMKPAN, sygn. 8/58, p. 1–3, 8, 16.

1959–1960 is listed in published biographical entries.<sup>82</sup> Before the employment started, Kamiński submitted a questionnaire stating his highest scientific title as *magister*.<sup>83</sup> The personal file includes a copy of Kamiński's appointment as a full professor, based on the decision made by the President of Poland on 14 February 1930.<sup>84</sup> Kamiński is referred to as 'professor' in the IA PAS documents.<sup>85</sup> Surprisingly, the formal reason for the termination of his employment was that Kamiński was 70 years old (though he was 81 at the time of his appointment at PAS).<sup>86</sup> The fact that Kamiński was employed at IA PAS suggests that at least some astronomers did not consider his actions during the war as severe wrongdoing.

Kamiński moved back to Warsaw from Krakow in 1963. The Science Board of IA PAS celebrated 60 years of his scientific career in 1964, and the speech was delivered by Józef Witkowski (director of the Astronomical Observatory at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań from 1929 till 1962, except during the war).<sup>87</sup> The celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday was organized at the Observatory by the director Włodzimierz Zonn, and the speeches were offered by Zonn, Bielicki, and Rybka.<sup>88</sup> Michał Kamiński died in 1973.<sup>89</sup>

## Discussion of the accusations

Below, I discuss the accusations of which Michał Kamiński was found guilty by the Ministry Commission.

## Removal of Rachela Zonn

Rachela Zonn was Włodzimierz Zonn's wife. Before the war, they lived with their daughter, Lidia, at the Observatory.<sup>90</sup> Włodzimierz Zonn was a reserve officer and was mobilized just before the outbreak of World War II. He was sent to the Oflag VII-A Murnau (prisoner-of-war camp for officers) in 1939<sup>91</sup> (Rachela Zonn testified it was in December 1939<sup>92</sup>). Before going to the oflag, he had a conversation with Kamiński about the coal supplies for Rachela.<sup>93</sup> During the 1939/40 winter, Kamiński talked with Rachela Zonn about the coal supplies, but they did not reach an agreement.<sup>94</sup> They did not talk to each other after that, and their only communication was by exchanging notes on paper, even though they lived in the same building.<sup>95</sup>

Kamiński wanted Rachela Zonn to vacate her apartment. He claimed that the reason for that was her unemployment, combined with a German decree prohibiting the

82 M. Bielicki, *Michał Kamiński*, p. 351–354; K. Ziołkowski, *Michał Kamiński (1879–1973)*, p. 268–271.

83 ACAMKPAN, sygn. 8/58, p. 14.

84 *Ibidem*, p. 11.

85 *Ibidem*, p. 1–9 and 16.

86 *Ibidem*, p. 1.

87 K. Rudnicki, *Jubileusz Profesora Michała Kamińskiego*, p. 246–250.

88 E. Rybka, *Kronika mego życia*, p. 890–891.

89 M. Bielicki, *Michał Kamiński*, p. 351–354.

90 POLIN, WSz, sygn. 586.

91 J. Hurwic, *Włodzimierz Zonn (1905–1975)*, p. 303–310.

92 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 63.

93 *Ibidem*, p. 11, 16, 64.

94 *Ibidem*, p. 11, 16, 18, 58, 64, 210.

95 *Ibidem*, p. 16, 215.

residence of unemployed individuals in the area of Belvedere Palace, Łazienki Park, the Botanical Garden, and the Observatory.<sup>96</sup> Some of the witnesses linked his request to German laws targeting Jews.<sup>97</sup> Kamiński only once claimed that he wanted Rachela Zonn to move out as a consequence of the anti-Jewish laws: in the appeal of the verdict from the first proceeding.<sup>98</sup> The common opinion was that Rachela Zonn was Jewish, and only during the proceedings did she reveal her half-Jewish status.<sup>99</sup> During the war, she had appropriate marriage and birth certificates and obtained a Kennkarte indicating she was Polish.<sup>100</sup> Since she was considered half-Jewish according to German law, she should not be taken to the ghetto.<sup>101</sup>

Kamiński asked various people – Roman Kobendza,<sup>102</sup> Michał Waśkowski (judge of the Supreme Administrative Tribunal and Kamiński's distant relative),<sup>103</sup> and Zygmunt Zagórowski<sup>104</sup> – what he should do in that case. Zagórowski was a Polish head of the Liquidation Commission (*Abwicklungsstelle für das polnische Kultusministerium*) established by the occupier to replace the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education.<sup>105</sup> The German counterpart of Zagórowski was Werner Tzschaschel.<sup>106</sup> Zagórowski met with Rachela Zonn and told her she had to move out.<sup>107</sup> Rachela contacted a female friend, asking for help in finding the apartment. This friend was most probably Aldona Karnicka, who was helping Rachela during the war and was the daughter of the member of parliament, Aleksandra Karnicka.<sup>108</sup> The friend then informed Felicjan Kępiński about the situation.<sup>109</sup> Kępiński and Gadomski talked to Zagórowski, and then Zagórowski presented the case to Tzschaschel in such a way that Tzschaschel agreed that Rachela Zonn could stay at the Observatory.<sup>110</sup> Both Kamiński and the Ministry Commission considered Zagórowski a loyal Pole.<sup>111</sup> Zagórowski could not have been questioned about Kamiński and Rachela Zonn because he died during the first days of the Warsaw Uprising.<sup>112</sup>

At some point, Maciej Bielicki and his wife (Lutosława Leoniak) visited Rachela to view her three-room apartment. She suggested that they take two of the rooms they had chosen. However, they did not move in.<sup>113</sup> Gadomski testified that both Kamiński and Bielicki wanted to evict Rachela Zonn, and Bielicki wanted to get both her apartment and her coal supplies.<sup>114</sup>

96 Ibidem, p. 81.

97 Ibidem, p. 58, 60, 163, 214.

98 Ibidem, p. 103–104.

99 Ibidem, p. 58, 63, 105, 120, 190, 192.

100 Interview with Lidia Zonn-Karabasz, conducted by the author on 18.07.2023; POLIN, WSz, sygn. 586; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 64, 65, 166.

101 Ibidem, p. 65.

102 Ibidem, p. 62.

103 Ibidem, p. 67.

104 Ibidem, p. 7, 8, 13, 59, 81, 205, 211.

105 E.C. Król, *Grabież polskich szkół wyższych w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, "Przegląd historyczny" 1979, vol. 70, issue 3, p. 475–497.

106 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 7.

107 Ibidem, p. 16, 18, 81.

108 Interview with Lidia Zonn-Karabasz, conducted by the author on 22.03.2024.

109 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 16.

110 Ibidem, p. 13, 16, 18, 60, 163, 167, 205, 211.

111 Ibidem, p. 7, 8, 191.

112 B. Olszewicz, *Lista strat kultury polskiej*, Warszawa 1947, p. 319; AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 104.

113 Ibidem, p. 64.

114 Ibidem, p. 166.

Later, Rachela Zonn was informed she had to move out. On 15 December 1942, she moved to an apartment at Hoża 69 St., which Zagórowski accepted.<sup>115</sup> She considered this relocation temporary and left important private belongings and large pieces of furniture in the basement at the Observatory.<sup>116</sup> The building at Hoża 69 St. hosted the University of Warsaw Institute of Experimental Physics before the war, and it was replaced by an official Physical Measurements Facility during the war.<sup>117</sup> Stefan Pieńkowski and his wife took care of Rachela and her daughter.<sup>118</sup> At that time, Pieńkowski was a director of the Physical Measurements Facility and, in the underground, the head of both the University of Warsaw and the Department of Science and Higher Education of the Government Delegation for Poland (since 1942).<sup>119</sup>

The three-room apartment vacated by Zonn was taken over by Tryfon Karpowicz, who was a technician at the Observatory. He and his wife earlier stayed in a one-room apartment.<sup>120</sup> According to Grudkowski, Karpowicz asked Kurt Walter to remove Rachela Zonn so that he could take over the apartment.<sup>121</sup>

At the end of February 1945, Kamieński apologized to Rachela Zonn for his wrongdoing. She accepted the apology because she was about to assume the position of the Observatory secretary and had no other place to stay at the time. This apology took place in Gadomski's apartment and in his presence. Rachela Zonn also wrote that she sincerely forgave him.<sup>122</sup> She survived the war and died in December 1948,<sup>123</sup> i.e. after the second proceedings against Kamieński took place.

Kamieński defended himself by claiming that he informed Zagórowski about the situation in confidence, believing that Zagórowski would not share this information with anyone and that Zagórowski was a Polish official.<sup>124</sup> Kamieński also claimed that he either had not written any document about Rachela Zonn or maybe he had written such a document in Polish, i.e. only for Polish officials.<sup>125</sup>

### Encouraging employees to be loyal to the occupier

The proceedings have shown that Michał Kamieński organized the meeting with Polish employees, told them they could conduct scientific work legally, and asked them not to conduct underground activities.<sup>126</sup> Both Bielicki and Gadomski were outraged by

115 Ibidem, p. 64.

116 POLIN, WŚz, sygn. 586.

117 J. Pniewski, *Stefan Pieńkowski. 1883–1953*, [in:] *Portrety uczonych: Profesorowie Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 1915–1945 M–Ż*, ed. by P. Salwa, A.K. Wróblewski, Warszawa 2016, p. 121–126.

118 Interview with Lidia Zonn-Karabas, conducted by the author on 18.07.2023.

119 R. Gawkowski, *Poczet Rektorów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, p. 212; J. Pniewski, *Stefan Pieńkowski*, p. 124, 125; T. Strzębosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna*, p. 137.

120 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 58, 59, 214.

121 Ibidem, p. 12.

122 Ibidem, p. 17.

123 POLIN, WŚz, sygn. 586.

124 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 8, 81, 211.

125 Ibidem, p. 81, 211.

126 Ibidem, p. 90–91, 192.

Kamiński's words.<sup>127</sup> The testimonies differ when it comes to further details of this meeting. Once Gadomski said that Kamiński called him, Bielicki, Leoniak, and possibly the custodian<sup>128</sup> (Grudkowski testified he was not present at that meeting<sup>129</sup>). On another occasion, Gadomski claimed that Kamiński called around five members of the personnel and that work identification cards were not distributed at that time.<sup>130</sup> Bielicki twice claimed that the work identification cards were distributed, and Kamiński spoke only to him and Gadomski.<sup>131</sup>

Kamiński confirmed that he gave a speech while handing the German work identification cards and said that the employees had to preserve the Observatory. He acknowledged that the words he used might have been too strong – however, he denied asking them to serve the German Reich.<sup>132</sup>

### Raising a hand in a gesture resembling the Nazi salute

Kamiński's habit of raising his hand while greeting people was confirmed by the testimonies of five witnesses (Gadomski, Grudkowski, Kępiński, Kobendza, and Kunderowicz) and some of them also noted that the gardeners from the Botanical Garden had seen the same. Kępiński testified that Kamiński was saying 'Heil', while Gadomski claimed that Kamiński was not saying anything.<sup>133</sup> Bielicki claimed he had not seen Kamiński greeting people with the Nazi salute.<sup>134</sup> Kunderowicz was questioned twice, and in both cases, he recalled a visit by the German authorities in October or November 1939. Kamiński had been informed about the visit in advance and greeted the Germans, accompanied by Kunderowicz and another Polish clerk, by standing on the Observatory stairs, raising his hand in the Nazi manner, and saying something that Kunderowicz did not hear.<sup>135</sup>

Kamiński's defense was based on claiming that raising a hand while greeting people had been his habit for a long time. He admitted that he might have raised his hand in a greeting gesture a few times during the war. He also noted that he had never said 'Heil Hitler'.<sup>136</sup> Kamiński's pre-war habit of raising a hand in a greeting gesture was confirmed by Balcer, Banachiewicz, Bielicki, Grudkowski, Waśkowski, and Zajdler.<sup>137</sup> Balcer warned Kamiński that such behavior made a bad impression during the occupation.<sup>138</sup> Gadomski testified that he did not remember how Kamiński greeted people before the war.<sup>139</sup>

127 Ibidem, p. 59, 60, 213–214.

128 Ibidem, p. 60.

129 Ibidem, p. 58.

130 Ibidem, p. 166, 167.

131 Ibidem, p. 59, 213.

132 Ibidem, p. 81, 210, and unpaginated.

133 Ibidem, p. 12, 13, 58, 61–62, 82, 163, 164, 167, 202.

134 Ibidem, p. 59.

135 Ibidem, p. 13, 61–62.

136 Ibidem, p. 81, 171, 209.

137 Ibidem, p. 58–59, 68, 79, 134, 158.

138 Ibidem, p. 79.

139 Ibidem, p. 167.

The Ministry Commission confirmed that raising a hand was Kamieński's long-time habit and that he did not do it in order to please the Germans. The Commission also noted that the Nazi salute was the exclusive privilege of Germans.<sup>140</sup>

In his defense, Kamieński stated a few times (both in oral testimonies and in letters) that his actions had been aimed at ensuring the survival of the Observatory.<sup>141</sup> During the proceedings, nobody invoked the Code of Civic Morality directly. However, Kamieński's actions were portrayed as violations of Articles 1, 3, and 6 of that Code.<sup>142</sup>

## Observatory directorship

Under the 1928 law, Kamieński's employment should have ended in 1944, as he exceeded the age limit of 65. However, the employment could be extended until 70 if the Faculty Board submitted such a request.<sup>143</sup> Sierpiński testified that the Faculty Board authorized the dean to apply for an extension of the right to lecture for all professors who exceeded the age of 65, but the dean had not done so for Kamieński.<sup>144</sup> Thus, Kamieński should have been pensioned off in November 1944.<sup>145</sup>

The University of Warsaw rector Stefan Pieńkowski decided to suspend Kamieński from his duties as Observatory director and transferred them to Gadomski on 12 September 1945. In the same decision, Kazimierz Kuratowski was appointed as the supervisor of the Observatory. In the decision, Kuratowski's name is misaligned with the rest of the text and appears to be written in faded ink.<sup>146</sup> The rector apparently signed the document without Kuratowski's name, which seem to have been added afterwards. The late addition of the supervisor's name is supported by the Faculty Board meeting minutes stating that the Board selected Kuratowski for the supervisor after the rector's decision, i.e. on 14 September 1945.<sup>147</sup> Kuratowski was a professor of mathematics at the University of Warsaw. Mathematicians and astronomers moved to the observatory building after it was rebuilt in 1949.<sup>148</sup>

Gadomski could not become the director of the Observatory director because he did not have a habilitation degree. He applied for it on 10 November 1946, and the stamp on the application says it was delivered 18 days later.<sup>149</sup> The habilitation application of Gadomski is mentioned in the minutes of the Board of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences meetings only once. It was on 16 December 1946, and the minutes have a standard note stating 'acknowledged'.<sup>150</sup> Waclaw Sierpiński testified that he pointed

140 Ibidem, p. 192.

141 Ibidem, p. 5, 8, 21, 50–51, 80, 208, 211.

142 T. Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, p. 432–433.

143 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 24.

144 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 157–158.

145 Dz.U. 1933, Nr 76, poz. 551, art. 24.

146 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 23.

147 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP–4, p. 7.

148 W. Bacewiczówna, *Odbudowa gmachu Obserwatorium Astronomicznego*, "Stolica" 3.04.1949, no. 14 (125), p. 5; B. Brzostek, *Życie społeczne uniwersytetu 1945–1989*, [in:] *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego po 1945*, ed. by P.M. Majewski, Warszawa 2016, p. 75.

149 AUW, Przewód habilitacyjny Jana Gadomskiego 1946–1947, sygn. WF–534–140.

150 AUW, WMP, Rada Wydziału Matematyczno-Przyrodniczego, Protokoły posiedzeń 1946–1947, sygn. WMP–5, p. 16.

out at the Board of Faculty meeting that the habilitation should not be processed, as it seemed that Gadomski was benefiting from the accusation he made.<sup>151</sup> The habilitation file at the University of Warsaw Archive does not have documents related to the processing of the application.<sup>152</sup> A few years later, Gadomski wrote that the habilitation paper on the comet Whipple-Fedtke-Tevezadze (1942g) was handed to the dean on 26 February 1948.<sup>153</sup> The paper contains 43 observations made by Gadomski between December 1942 and May 1943.<sup>154</sup> In his reports, written in February and August 1945, Kamiński praised Gadomski's work on this comet (in an overly positive tone) and deemed it highly significant.<sup>155</sup>

The Faculty Board decided to circulate a questionnaire on who should be the director of the Observatory a day after Gadomski sent his application for habilitation.<sup>156</sup> The dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Kazimierz Bassalik, organized a meeting to discuss the future of the Observatory on 1 February 1947. The participants of this meeting were Stefan Pieńkowski, Władysław Dziewulski (astronomer from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), Józef Witkowski, Eugeniusz Rybka (then at the University of Wrocław), Felicjan Kępiński, Kazimierz Kuratowski, Czesław Białobrzeski, Wojciech Rubinowicz (both were physicists from the University of Warsaw), and Bolesław Hryniewiecki. Jan Gadomski was a minute-taker for that meeting. No personal decisions were made at the time.<sup>157</sup> On 2 December 1948, a separate commission was convened to decide about the chair of astronomy. The participants were Wiktor Kemula (dean and head of the Commission), Białobrzeski, Pieńkowski, Władysław Kapuściński (physicist from the University of Warsaw), Sierpiński, and Wojciech Rubinowicz. Kuratowski was not present because of an international trip. This Commission decided that there should be three chair vacancies, and the candidates were Wilhelmina Iwanowska (for the chair of astronomy and the director of the Observatory; she was a professor of astronomy at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń at the time<sup>158</sup>), Jeremi Wasiutyński (for the chair of theoretical astrophysics; an astronomer who then resided in Norway<sup>159</sup>), and Stefan Piotrowski (name of chair not indicated; astronomer at the Jagiellonian University at the time<sup>160</sup>).<sup>161</sup>

Wilhelmina Iwanowska received a message with the offer for the Observatory directorship during her trip to the USA. She left the USA in April 1949 and, after returning to

151 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 157.

152 AUW, sygn. WF-534-140.

153 J. Gadomski, *Uzupelnienie*, p. 104-109.

154 Idem, *Definitive Curve of the Total Light Variability of Comet Whipple-Fedtke-Tevezadze (1942g), Deduced from 996 Visual Observations of More than 36 Different European Observers by the Aid of a New Formula in Consideration of the Dislocation in Time of the Curve Relatively to the Moments of Passage of the Comet through Perihelion and Perigee*, "Publications of the Astronomical Observatory of the Warsaw University" 1947, vol. 13, part 1, p. 5-31.

155 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 8, 199.

156 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP-5, p.15.

157 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP-19, p. 107-108; J. Włodarczyk, *Astronomia*, p. 19-49.

158 W. Iwanowska, *Mój życiorys naukowy*, "Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki" 1981, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 246-278.

159 E. Wróblewska-Kucharska, *Wasiutyński Jeremi Maria Franciszek*, [in:] *Encyklopedia polskiej emigracji i polonii S-Ż*, vol. 5, ed. by K. Dopierata, Toruń 2005, p. 227.

160 J.I. Smak, *W stulecie urodzin wielkiego astrofizyka profesora Stefana Piotrowskiego (1910-1985)*, "Prace Komisji Historii Nauki PAU" 2012, vol. 11, p. 139-148.

161 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP-19, p. 221.

Poland, she visited the observing station at Ostrowik on 7 June 1949.<sup>162</sup> The station had been under preparation by Gadomski since 1948.<sup>163</sup> Iwanowska sent a letter with her answer four days after the visit to Ostrowik. The main condition on which she could accept the directorship offer was securing funds for a 1.5–2 m telescope and spectrographs.<sup>164</sup> At that time, there were only three telescopes worldwide with diameters larger than 2 m (all located in the USA): Hale Telescope (5.1 m, opened in January 1949), Hooker Telescope (2.5 m, opened in 1917), and Otto Struve Telescope (2.1 m, opened in 1939).<sup>165</sup> Iwanowska requested that the Faculty Board and Senate pass the necessary resolutions to secure funding for the telescope. She also accepted the offer for a one-year trial period, with the condition that she would return to Toruń if an adequate telescope was not acquired. Additionally, she requested the following: connecting the Ostrowik station to power and water supply networks, dismissing adjunct Janusz Pagaczewski, providing a three-room apartment (or optionally a two-room apartment) for her and her family, and reimbursing relocation costs.<sup>166</sup>

The Faculty Board supported Iwanowska's request for funds for a telescope and appointed her to the position of astronomy chair on 20 June 1949. The next day, dean Kemula wrote to Iwanowska regarding the matter and requested written confirmation of her acceptance of the position. He also noted that the apartment (two rooms plus kitchen) is secured, and Iwanowska could move in soon. Finally, he promised that he would address the matter concerning Pagaczewski in the near future.<sup>167</sup> A week later, Iwanowska replied that she could sign the contract only if Pagaczewski were dismissed.<sup>168</sup> He is listed as an adjunct for the academic year 1948/49 but not for 1949/50,<sup>169</sup> which indicates that the University of Warsaw fulfilled all of Iwanowska's requests. The Senate accepted her for the chair of astronomy on 6 July 1949.<sup>170</sup> On 14 September 1949, she sent another letter asking when she would be appointed. The letter notes that the semester starts soon.<sup>171</sup> A week later, Kemula replied that the information from the Ministry said that the nomination should happen promptly.<sup>172</sup> In her autobiography, Iwanowska wrote that, in September, the Ministry had verbally assured her that the appointment would be approved soon. In November, however, the opposite decision was made.<sup>173</sup>

The commission met once more on 9 January 1950. The participants of that meeting were Kemula (head), Rubinowicz, Pieńkowski, Kuratowski, and Białobrzewski. The decision was to appoint Włodzimierz Zonn as vice-chair until the chair position was filled. At that

162 Ibidem, p. 208, 209; W. Iwanowska, *Mój życiorys naukowy*, p. 246–278.

163 J. Włodarczyk, *Astronomia*, p. 19–49; J. Gadomski, *Uzupełnienie*, p. 104–109.

164 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP–19, p. 210, 211; W. Iwanowska, *Mój życiorys naukowy*, p. 246–278.

165 H.J. Smith, *50 Years of McDonald Observatory*, [in:] *Frontiers of Stellar Evolution: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary McDonald Observatory (1939–1989)*, ed. by D.L. Lambert, San Francisco 1991, p. 1–17; R.N. Wilson, *Reflecting Telescope Optics I*, Berlin, Heidelberg 1996, p. 414–430.

166 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP–19, p. 210, 211.

167 Ibidem, p. 212.

168 Ibidem, p. 213.

169 *Skład Uniwersytetu i spis wykładów na rok akademicki 1948–1949*, Warszawa 1948, p. 45; *Skład Uniwersytetu i spis wykładów na rok akademicki 1949–1950*, Warszawa 1950, p. 37–44.

170 AUW, Senat 19.01.49–22.12.49, sygn. BR/S–5, p. 82, 85.

171 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP–19, p. 214.

172 Ibidem, p. 215.

173 W. Iwanowska, *Mój życiorys naukowy*, p. 246–278.

meeting, the request from 2 December 1948 to establish an astrophysics chair was supported.<sup>174</sup>

Sierpiński testified that Edward Warchałowski (land surveyor at the Warsaw University of Technology) told him that Kępiński had proposed the chair of astronomy to Gadomski. However, Gadomski was deemed unqualified for the position, according to the opinions of Banachiewicz, Witkowski, and others.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Zajdler said that Gadomski should not be granted his habilitation, according to the opinions of Bielicki, Lucjan Orkisz (astronomer who worked at the Observatory in 1928–1938<sup>176</sup>), Rybka (Observatory employee in 1923–1932<sup>177</sup>), and Kępiński (Observatory employee in 1918–1927<sup>178</sup>).<sup>179</sup>

Włodzimierz Zonn was appointed to the chair of astronomy by the University of Warsaw Senate on 25 January 1950.<sup>180</sup> He became the director of the Observatory in April or May of 1950.<sup>181</sup> His habilitation was transferred from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń to the University of Warsaw by the Senate decision on 30 June 1950.<sup>182</sup>

### Accusations against Bielicki

I have not found a file with documents from disciplinary proceedings against Bielicki. As presented below, he is mentioned in Kamiński's files, a prosecutor's file against him, and Senate minutes.

Kamiński's proceedings file includes five interrogation protocols dated 6, 7, 8, 17, and 31 August 1945. The headers of these protocols indicate that they were for the cases of Bielicki – one time (on 6 August<sup>183</sup>), Kamiński and Bielicki jointly – two times (on 7<sup>184</sup> and 8<sup>185</sup> August), and Kamiński – two times (on 17<sup>186</sup> and 31<sup>187</sup> August). The pagination of these documents suggests that the protocols from 7 and 8 August 1945 were kept separately from the other three. Bielicki's case is also mentioned in the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 7 September 1945 (as presented above<sup>188</sup>).

Zajdler testified that it was a common belief that Bielicki had been inviting Germans to the Observatory for alcohol-fueled parties. He noted that once Bielicki hosted friends, both of whom were called Królikowie (which suggests they were Poles). They got drunk and left a mess on the Observatory stairs. The following day, Kamiński expressed his outrage over the incident. To calm him down, Bielicki claimed that the mess was made by the

174 AUW, WMP, sygn. WMP-19, p. 226.

175 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 157.

176 J. Włodarczyk, *Astronomia*, p. 19–49.

177 E. Rybka, *Kronika mego życia*, p. 164–249.

178 M. Ciara, *Materiały Felicjana Kępińskiego (1885–1966) (III–167)*, archiwum.pan.pl/images/zasob/Inwentarze/III\_-167\_Felicjan\_Kpiski.pdf [accessed 15.03.2024].

179 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 159.

180 AUW, Senat 25.01.50–13.12.50, sygn. BR/S-6, p. 3.

181 J. Włodarczyk, *Astronomia*, p. 19–49; J. Gadomski, *Uzupelnienie*, p. 104–109.

182 AUW, sygn. BR/S-6, p. 47.

183 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 212.

184 Ibidem, p. 10.

185 Ibidem, p. 13.

186 Ibidem, p. 208.

187 Ibidem, p. 202.

188 AUW, sygn. BR/S-1, p. 49.

Germans.<sup>189</sup> Grudkowski was asked whether he had witnessed Bielicki's interactions with Germans, but he denied it.<sup>190</sup>

Bielicki acknowledged that he knew one person who declared to be a Volksdeutsche during the war. They met a dozen or so times and chatted only in Polish.<sup>191</sup> Bielicki also testified that Gadomski had told him the source of the rumors against Bielicki was Bielicki's wife's interactions with Germans (see below).<sup>192</sup>

In January 1948, Gadomski was asked about the accusations against Bielicki and admitted to being the source of these accusations. He was interviewed by Nawroczyński, but the proceeding ended due to a lack of evidence.<sup>193</sup>

Bielicki sent a letter to the University of Warsaw rector on 2 May 1949, contents of which I present below. Bielicki had heard rumors, both during the war and afterwards, that he was hosting Gestapo members at his apartment. He suspected that somebody from the Observatory had spread this gossip. In the summer of 1945, he asked rector Pieńkowski for an investigation and suggested that Gadomski could be a witness. Bielicki then informed Gadomski that he had suggested him as a witness. Gadomski later presented his accusations to Bielicki in person. Bielicki urged him to present these accusations to rector Pieńkowski, which he did later that same day. Gadomski said that he had presented all the accusations he had. At that meeting, Bielicki presented written evidence of his innocence and clarified the misunderstanding that had led to the accusations. In the following months, Bielicki and several witnesses testified. Based on these testimonies, a disciplinary proceeding was started. In 1946, the proceeding was terminated, and Bielicki was found innocent. The questions that Bielicki was asked during his testimony pointed to Gadomski as a source of all allegations. Bielicki considered requesting a disciplinary investigation against Gadomski for defamation. He chose not to pursue this idea at the time. Gadomski continued spreading the gossip. During the war, Gadomski accused Bielicki of having a formal affiliation with the German nation. On 15 November 1948, at some meeting, Gadomski stated that Bielicki had planted a firearm on the former during the war to discredit him. Bielicki requested disciplinary proceedings against Gadomski for defamation and provided a list of proposed witnesses who were present at the aforementioned meeting or could otherwise testify to the accusations: Włodzimierz Zonn, Maria Karpowicz (assistant at the Observatory and Tryfon Karpowicz's wife), Grudkowski, Zajdler, Irena Bóbr-Modrakowa (director of the Seismological Observatory), Kępiński, and Kamiński.<sup>194</sup>

The document used by Bielicki to disprove accusation during the meeting in the summer of 1945 could have been his Kennkarte because such documents were not issued to Volksdeutsche or German citizens. The copy of Bielicki's Kennkarte is in the University of Warsaw Archive.<sup>195</sup> Additionally, Bielicki was arrested for ten days during the first days of

189 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 159, 160.

190 Ibidem, p. 10.

191 Ibidem, p. 212.

192 Ibidem, p. 212.

193 Ibidem, p. 167.

194 Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance) [IPN], Akta sprawy Bielicki / Bielicki Maciej podejrzany o współpracę z Niemcami podczas okupacji niemieckiej, to jest o czyny z art. 2 Dekretu z dnia 31.08.1944, do sprawy załączono akta Prokuratora Sądu Okręgowego w Warszawie, sygn. GK 384/288, p. 6, 7, and unpaginated,

195 AUW, Akta Osobowe [AO], Maciej Bielicki, sygn. K-7278, unpaginated.

the Warsaw Uprising and was later released to the hospital. He claimed that Kuratowski could confirm this.<sup>196</sup>

The University of Warsaw Senate discussed the conflict between Bielicki and Gadomski on 6 July 1949. The Senate rejected Bielicki's proposal for disciplinary proceedings against Gadomski.<sup>197</sup> On 19 November 1949, Rector Franciszek Czubalski forwarded Bielicki's letter to the prosecutor and requested an inquiry into the accusations of national deviation and collaboration with the occupier.<sup>198</sup> On 1 December 1949, the prosecutor decided not to start the investigation due to a lack of specific accusations and lack of evidence.<sup>199</sup> The prosecutor's documents mention the decree from 31 August 1944 as a legal basis of accusation<sup>200</sup> and the title of the file references accusations under Article 2 of that decree.<sup>201</sup> This article specifies penalties for those who acted against Poland or Poles jointly with Germany.

### Personal aspects of the accusations

The letter from Kamiński to the rector of the University of Warsaw, which initiated the case, did not directly identify who was spreading rumors about Kamiński's actions. The letter mentions Warsaw and Krakow as places where the information was spread,<sup>202</sup> which would be consistent with Gadomski's involvement. Kamiński informed Waśkowski that Gadomski was the accuser.<sup>203</sup> Zajdler claimed that Gadomski was averse to Kamiński before the war.<sup>204</sup> Gadomski confirmed the pre-war differences of opinion. In one instance, his testimony includes a sentence written in the third person, stating that he had tried to remove Kamiński from his position.<sup>205</sup> Sawicki claimed that the main point of the proceedings was the fight for the Observatory directorial position. Thus, Gadomski was spreading gossip for a long time to 'stir the waters', and Kępiński was helping Gadomski in this effort.<sup>206</sup> As presented above, Gadomski presented his accusations against Kamiński to the Home Army and accused Bielicki during and after the war.

Zajdler attended a meeting with Kępiński and two assistants, Czerski and Jasnorzewski (all three from the Warsaw University of Technology). They were discussing the proceedings against Kamiński, with one person stating that the question of the charges' validity was irrelevant – the main concern was that this was the only opportunity to remove Kamiński and vacate the chair.<sup>207</sup>

The disciplinary proceedings against Michał Kamiński and Maciej Bielicki were started because they asked for them, but the documents presented here indicate that the *de facto* accuser was Jan Gadomski, probably in cooperation with Felicjan Kępiński.

196 Ibidem, unpaginated.

197 AUW, sygn. BR/S-5, p. 80 and 84.

198 IPN, sygn. GK 384/288, p. 5.

199 Ibidem, p. 3, 10, 11.

200 Ibidem, p. 10.

201 Ibidem, unpaginated.

202 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 4.

203 Ibidem, p. 69.

204 Ibidem, p. 159.

205 Ibidem, p. 82.

206 Ibidem, p. 155.

207 Ibidem, p. 160.

## Side topics

The review of disciplinary proceedings documents revealed one more person who, although not formally accused of collaborating with the Germans, was portrayed negatively by several witnesses – Lutoslawa Leoniak. She started work at the Observatory in 1933 when she was a student and conducted observations for years, even though she was officially hired as a secretary either in 1938<sup>208</sup> or 1942.<sup>209</sup> She married Bielicki, but then they lived separately, and they eventually divorced in 1944 (he remarried in July 1944<sup>210</sup>). Bielicki claimed that she had had contacts with the Germans and told her (even though he did not consider her his wife at that time) that these contacts were against the dignity of a Pole and a University of Warsaw employee.<sup>211</sup> Waškowski saw Leoniak sitting with the Germans on a bench in the Botanical Garden. He also noted that his housekeeper had seen Leoniak with the Germans and that Kamiński's wife lamented that Leoniak was befriending them.<sup>212</sup> Blikle claimed that Leoniak was frequently meeting with the Germans, and once she was escorted out from his cake shop by the German police.<sup>213</sup> Five other witnesses vaguely mentioned that Leoniak had hosted Germans at the Observatory or was otherwise considered dubious.<sup>214</sup> These statements portray Lutoslawa Leoniak's conduct as though she had developed close relationships with the Germans, which was against Article 11 of the Code of Civic Morality.<sup>215</sup> I have found only one post-war document about her – a labor certificate issued in 1947, which lists her last name as 'Leoniak-Skrzypkowa'.<sup>216</sup>

During the war, Kamiński gave lectures on astronomy and astrology for the general public at the Blikle cake shop. The lectures were ticketed, and the collected funds supported the lecturer. The participants of these meetings also read the underground press.<sup>217</sup> The lectures were described by Jerzy Blikle (a close friend of Kamiński)<sup>218</sup> and Bohdan Pniewski in their testimonies. Pniewski asserted that there had been other lecturers at these meetings as well.<sup>219</sup>

Kamiński claimed that M.Sc. astronomy exams had been held for two students in underground education during 1940–1944. One of them was by S. Kamelak, who also had a math exam with Waclaw Sierpiński.<sup>220</sup> This claim could be perhaps verified by examining Sierpiński's documents. The University of Warsaw Archive indicates that Stanisław Kamelak matriculated in 1928.<sup>221</sup> However, his personal file was destroyed during the war.

208 AUW, AO, Lutoslawa Leoniak-Skrzypkowa, sygn. K-894, unpaginated.

209 M. Kamiński, *Zarys dziejów Obserwatorium Warszawskiego*, p. 99.

210 AUW, AO, sygn. K-7278, unpaginated.

211 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 212.

212 Ibidem, p. 68.

213 Ibidem, p. 58.

214 Ibidem, p. 10, 80, 82, 159, 160, 163.

215 T. Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, p. 433.

216 AUW, AO, sygn. K-894, unpaginated.

217 AAN, MEN, sygn. 2/2521/0/1/2001, p. 58, 61.

218 Ibidem, p. 58.

219 Ibidem, p. 61.

220 Ibidem, p. 201.

221 AUW, Album Studentów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, t. 6, p. 706–707.

## Summary

The review of archival sources shows clearly that Michał Kamiński and Maciej Bielicki faced disciplinary proceedings for their actions during World War II. Bielicki was cleared of all charges, whereas Kamiński was found guilty both by the University and Ministry Commissions. In both cases, the proceedings were initiated at the request of these two astronomers, who sought to put an end to the gossip. The gossip, alleging improper conduct, was spread by Jan Gadomski and possibly Felicjan Kępiński. It is important to note that Gadomski and Kępiński went to the official bureau and persuaded the Polish and German officials to let Rachela and Lidia Zonn stay at the Observatory. Surprisingly, the proceedings extended Kamiński's employment at the University of Warsaw. He was later hired by the IA PAS, suggesting that at least some astronomers did not view Kamiński's actions negatively. I also presented the process of selecting the director after Kamiński in more detail than has been done previously. Part of this process involved soliciting funds to build a 2-meter-class telescope.

The archival sources indicate two possible reasons why the gossip about Kamiński and Bielicki was spread. First, Gadomski wanted to become the director of the Observatory, but he failed to obtain his habilitation, which was a prerequisite for the position. Second, the gossip was partly fueled by the behavior of Bielicki's wife, Lutostława Leoniak. A few witnesses expressed negative opinions about her actions.

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### Postępowania dyscyplinarne przeciwko warszawskim astronomom Michałowi Kamińskiemu i Maciejowi Bielickiemu w sprawie ich działań podczas drugiej wojny światowej

Przedstawiam postępowania dyscyplinarne przeciwko dwóm astronomom z Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Michałowi Kamińskiemu i Maciejowi Bielickiemu, które prowadzono po drugiej wojnie światowej. Obaj wystąpili o takie postępowania, lecz faktycznym oskarżycielem był inny astronom, Jan Gadomski. Omawiam także powiązany temat wyznaczenia następcy Kamińskiego na urzędzie dyrektora Obserwatorium Astronomicznego UW oraz kilka pobocznych tematów znalezionych w dokumentach dotyczących postępowań dyscyplinarnych.