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The Tenth Anniversary of Politology at the University of Rzeszów

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THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF POLITOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RZESZÓW

On 1 July in 2011 ten years will have passed since *Katedra Politologii* [Chair of Politology] was established as part of the Sociological-Historical Faculty at the University of Rzeszów, or, more precisely, at Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna [Pedagogical University], since Katedra was created two months before the University was called into existence. Having functioned for a relatively short period of time, and because Katedra's operations have been marked by both successes and some failures, we have decided not to celebrate this tenth anniversary with so called pomp – for which a time will certainly come. Instead of spending money on organizing a conference and compiling a book dedicated to the anniversary, we have limited ourselves to the editing of this special issue of our journal „Polityka i Społeczeństwo” [Politics and Society]. The money thus saved will be earmarked for publishing a few books by Katedra's staff in the near future.

I officially learnt that there was an intention to establish politology at Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna [WSP] in Rzeszów on 19 November in 1999 during a meeting with the then WSP's Rector, Professor dr hab. Włodzimierz Bonusiak and Dean of the Sociological-Historical Faculty, Professor dr hab. Alojzy Zielecki. Our conversation pertained issues related to my come-back from Olsztyn to Rzeszów. After I had decided to return to Rzeszów as of 1 February in 2000, I was employed at the Institute of Philosophy. The very same day I was nominated „Pełnomocnik Rektora do tworzenia kierunku politologia na Wydziale Socjologiczno-Historycznym w Wyższej Szkole Pedagogicznej w Rzeszowie” [Rector's plenipotentiary to create political studies at the Sociological-Historical Faculty of Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna]. The Venerable Rector had probably taken this decision *inter alia* because in the years of 1995–1997 I had headed Zakład Historii Myśli Społeczno-Politycznej XIX/XX w. [Unit for the History of Social-Political Thought of the XIX/XX century] at the WSP's Institute of History.

The politological studies in Rzeszów were organized according to a method that had already been earlier practised by Rector W. Bonusiak,

that is by creating new entities *ex nihilo*. Apart from the plenipotentiary, there were no staff or premises. I had been promised money that was, as it turned out later – virtual. By contrast, there did exist some loosely formatted drafts of curricula for studies in political science and European studies. Rector W. Bonusiak favoured the creation of the latter, whereas I had some doubts since at that time there were no national teaching standards for European studies.

Rector W. Bonusiak and Dean A. Zielecki were then the two initiators of the politological studies. The latter let me temporarily use a room in the Institute of History that was essentially reserved for W. Bonusiak. We had planned with Dean A. Zielecki to include politology organizationally in the Institute of History or the Institute of Sociology. However, this plan was opposed by quite an influential lobby that surfaced within the authorities of both of those Institutes, which is why Katedra Politologii was ultimately created as an independent unit. Some time later another lobby emerged within the Council of the Sociological-Historical Faculty that opposed the transfer of politology to the Faculty of Law and Administration, which in hindsight proved to be beneficial but at that time it threatened the right of the former Faculty to grant the habilitation degree in history. Such developments did not stop two professors, anti-lobbyists from the vantage point of politology, to turn to me and ask me to employ at Katedra Politologii a daughter of one of them and a wife of the other. I obviously rejected both of those requests. However, I must admit that – despite many efforts – I was not able to avoid that kind of lobbying in a 100 percent. In hindsight, I believe that it had turned out just well that in organisational terms Katedra Politologii remained an independent unit, although this is not the case in financial terms, which generates certain problems.

On 1 August in 2001 I was appointed Katedra Politologii's Head. A little earlier, in June, we had recruited students for the first year of the studies. This was made possible owing to the kindness of the Institute of History's staff who were mainly affiliated at Zakład Dydaktyki Historii i Wiedzy o Społeczeństwie [Unit for didactics of history and the knowledge of society] headed by Professor dr hab. A. Zielecki. Despite the fact that the information had not been adequately publicised, the ratio of candidates applying was 6:1. We admitted 60 candidates to study in the day-system and another 60 to study in the extramural system. So far, those were probably our best students even though in the subsequent academic year we even had the ratio of candidates 13:1, which reinforced our conviction that politological studies were needed in Podkarpacie. For the last three years we have also offered post-graduate studies [*studia II stopnia*].

Following that first recruitment, we faced another problem to be resolved – the teaching premises. On 1 September of 2001, the University of

Rzeszów was established. Ten days later I went to talk with the new Rector, Professor dr hab. Tadeusz Lulek, a physicist by education, who some five years earlier had come to Rzeszów from Poznań. This was, I believe, my first conversation with the Venerable Rector ever, and so I informed him about those problems of Katedra Politologii, inter alia about the fact that we had planned our first session with extramural students for 23 September, but had no place to go. Although there was no time to lose, the Rector told me to come back later and so I got upset and began to talk with him like a man. In the end we had agreed that I would find a place to have the first session with the students on my own but the Rector would ultimately locate the premises of Katedra Politologii in a building at Moniuszki Street 10, then occupied by the Faculty of Law and Administration, a unit of UMCS that was included in the University of Rzeszów [UR]. Unfortunately, we were not granted an exclusive ownership of this building that – having been constructed in 1928 – has required constant repair. This has limited our development considerably. Nevertheless, I need to add that my subsequent contacts with Rector T. Lulek and especially with Pro-Rector Halina Zięba-Zalućka, were pragmatic and nice. Still, in spite of at least three written-down decisions signed by the next Rector of UR, Professor dr hab. W. Bonusiak, we could not have the other residents evacuated from our building – who were, in their decisive majority, very nice ladies. Finally, the decisions were implemented as late as November 2008, basing on a resolution signed by the current Rector – Professor dr hab. Stanisław Uliasz.

The problem of our premises was thus temporarily solved. However, we had also problems with attracting research and teaching staff, especially professorial. Our team was built in the following manner: apart from me (I was granted the „Belweder” title of Professor on 31 March of 1993 and as of 1 September in 2001 I was appointed by the Minister for National Education Ordinary Professor [*profesor zwyczajny*] at the University of Rzeszów), dr hab. Tadeusz Chrobak, who was the first at the University of Rzeszów to earn the habilitation degree in political science, came to our Katedra Politologii from the Institute of Philosophy, but stayed only a couple of months. Then we attracted, also from the Institute of Philosophy, Professor dr. hab. Waczesław Szalkiewicz, a Pole from Belarus, who got his habilitation in philosophy and earned the title of Professor in politology. Initially, there were two research-teaching units (*Zakłady*) within our Katedra Politologii: Zakład Myśli Społeczno-Politycznej (Unit of Social-Political Thought) and Zakład Współczesnych Doktryn Politycznych (Unit of Contemporary Political Doctrines). They were headed, respectively, by Professors H. Cimek and W. Szalkiewicz. Subsequently, Katedra’s staff was joined by, inter alia, Maria Ożóg (PhD), Katarzyna Cwynar (MA) and Tomasz Bereza (MA). We started to attract staff from other academic cen-

tres. Bartosz Wróblewski (PhD) from Łódź was employed as first of them. Later there came others, primarily graduates from the Faculty of Political Science at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS). Most of them did not feel at home in Rzeszów or they are still not quite feeling at home here. Some contributed to mounting unnecessary tensions in our otherwise well developing co-operation with the Faculty of Political Science at UMCS. Personally, I am eager to maintain good relations with this Faculty and would not want its weakening. As a matter of fact, I myself also studied at UMCS and was employed at this University until October 1974; I was granted PhD in history there.

According to the state of matters as of 1 March in 2011, Katedra Politologii has employed 21 persons in four of its Zakłady: Myśli Społeczno-Politycznej [Social-Political Thought], Stosunków Międzynarodowych [International Relations], Systemów Politycznych [Political Systems] and Administracji Publicznej i Polityki Społecznej [Public Administration and Social Policy]. Katedra's staff have published 592 academic pieces over the 10 years of its operation, including 48 books (25 as authors, 23 as editors), 215 chapters, 174 papers, 7 translations and 47 reviews (see pp. 414–458).

We co-operate with many academic centres, Polish and foreign, mainly with the Faculty of Political Science at UMCS and the Institute of Politology at the Pedagogical University in Cracow. We have at our Katedra our own computer lab and a library. Only at the end of 2008 did we manage to satisfy the computer needs at a reasonable level. Unfortunately, some of the University's authorities are lacking understanding of the need and even necessity to maintain the library at Katedra – which I personally had begun to create immediately after Katedra had been established, starting from gifted books, initially my own. So far, we have been granted only 2000 PLN by Pro-Rector Professor dr hab. Aleksander Bobko to buy books to the library, which I still recognized as a manifestation of generosity. Recently we have been „happily disappointed” to have been granted by the Rector further 6000 PLN earmarked for „PiS”.

Unfortunately, initially not even Faculties had financial independence within UR. Probably this, though not exclusively, is the reason why we partook in the income that we had produced only minimally. We had the highest income ever during the second year of our operation, earning more than 620 thous PLN. In this situation, it was humiliating when our requests to have sometimes absolutely indispensable expenditures financed were frequently rejected by the University's authorities. I remember the beginnings of Katedra's operation, when we had two old xerox machines and a fax that were gifts from the Head of the Polish Senate's Chancellery. We inherited telephones and some of the furniture from our predecessors, while our Dean bought us our first computer.

Within Katedra there is operating, fairly actively, Koło Naukowe Politologów [Academic Society of Political Scientists] that was registered on 13 January in 2003. It cultivates lively contacts with its counterparts in Poland and abroad. By contrast, we are not quite satisfied with our students' exchange with foreign universities. Koło's members co-operate with political parties' youth organizations, organise meetings with leading politicians, participate in conferences and academic colloquia, organise fieldwork research sessions too. For some time Koło published its own periodical. Its activity reports are now published in „Polityka i Społeczeństwo”, which has been awarded 4 points (Komunikat nr 8 Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyzszego z dnia 31 marca 2009 r.).

This journal has been published by Katedra since 2004. Being a year-book, with the exception of issues 1 and 6, it comes out in Polish and English language versions. We decided to do so in spite of financial constraints, which was motivated primarily by the expected consequences of Poland's accession to the European Union. Currently, our journal is awarded 6 points in the 9-point scale used by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It welcomes submissions of papers by authors from other academic centres, too, including from abroad. We also publish papers by our graduates, prepared on the basis of best diploma theses.

The ten years of our experiences have given rise to a few conclusions that mainly regard the prospects of politology at the University of Rzeszów. We could, for example, attempt to merge it with some other studies and to establish a new faculty following transformation of Katedra into an Institute and organising doctoral studies. The tertiary education institutions in Podkarpacie still do not offer studies, especially at the graduate level [*III stopnia*], such as: international relations or regional co-operation, including international co-operation. This development depends, however, on staff that are employed here who should be recruited primarily from among our own graduates, born in Podkarpacie, which requires time. This is borne out by our experiences with so called „Foreign Legion” whose presence is often indispensable at the beginning but who do not adapt satisfactorily, occasionally demanding too much and frequently restricting their involvement solely to their teaching duties. For example, had it been not for the changeable mind of some of our senior research-teaching staff regarding their employment at UR as their main workplace, we could have today Instytut Nauk Politycznych [Institute of Political Science], which otherwise had existed only since 1 September of 2007 till 5 March of 2008.