The Foundation of the Polish Cardiac Society and the "Polish Heart Journal"

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The Foundation of the Polish Cardiac Society and the "Polish Heart Journal"

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The Foundation of the Polish Cardiac Society

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Abstract

Polish cardiology began to evolve as a separate branch of internal medicine before the year 1918, and further development came in the interwar period. Until 1939, the greatest contribution to the development of cardiology as an independent clinical specialty was made by Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, Professor of the University of Warsaw, who continued these efforts after World War II. In 1950, on his initiative, the Section of Cardiology was created at the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. In 1954, the Section was transformed into the Polish Cardiac Society. Jerzy Jakubowski became its President. At that time, Polish cardiologists had already managed to prepare several independent publishing projects, including five volumes of the collective monograph Advances in Cardiology [Postępy Kardiologii]. The culmination of these activities was the "Polish Heart Journal" ["Kardiologia Polska"], a quarterly issued by the Polish Cardiac Society regularly since 1957. Jerzy Jakubowski became its Editor-in-Chief. The editorial office was located in Łódź.

KEY WORDS: cardiology journals, history of medicine, Polish Cardiac Society
Polish cardiology in the years 1918-1939

Cardiology began to be distinguished from other internal medicine sciences before 1918. However, during the entire interwar period, there was no separate cardiology professorial chair or department at any Polish university. Nor were separate cardiology classes offered to medical students. This area of medical knowledge was developed within chairs and departments of internal medicine [1-3]. Nevertheless, some Polish internists did specialize in cardiology in the years 1918-1939. An important role was played by a group of professors employed at university faculties of medicine. A few of them held chairs of internal medicine (there were usually two such chairs at a university). Those who were most cardiology-oriented were: Witold Orłowski, who held the Chair of Internal Medicine at the Jagiellonian University (1920-1925), then at the University of Warsaw (1925-1939); Jerzy Latkowski – Chair at the Jagiellonian University (1925-1939); Kazimierz Rzętkowski – Chair at the University of Warsaw (1919-1924); Aleksander Januszkiewicz – Chair at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius (1921-1939); and Jan Henryk Lubieniecki – Chair at the Poznań University (1923-1939) [4-11].

Apart from professors of internal medicine, academics who specialized in other fields also took interest in cardiology, particularly those who held surgical chairs at faculties of medicine. Cardiac issues were also dealt with by: Professor Marian Franke, Chair of General and Experimental Pathology at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, in the years 1921-1939; Włodzimierz Koskowski, Chair of Experimental Pharmacology at the same University, in the years 1925-1939; and Marian Eiger, Chair of Physiology at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, in the years 1922-1938 [12-14].

The people listed above were not only cardiology practitioners but also published the results of their cardiological research. However, it should be emphasized that usually they also had the publications in other areas of medicine. The professor who focused mainly on
cardiology was Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski. In contrast to the previously mentioned, he did not have his own university chair, but in the years 1929-1935 was the so-called Titular Professor at the University of Warsaw. It was him who, already in the interwar period, and even more extensively after 1945, worked in order to establish cardiology as a separate clinical specialization [15].

The Cardiology Section of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (1949/1950-1954)

Before 1939, and directly after the end of World War II, physicians-cardiologists could join the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (PSIM), which had been operating since 1906. Polish cardiologists made more extensive efforts towards creating their own independent scientific society at the end of the 1940s. The group was headed by Professor Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski. In November 1949, at the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine in Warsaw, he organized a meeting of heads of several internal medicine departments that specialized in cardiology. They agreed to establish a Cardiology Section within the PSIM and elected its temporary Board which consisted of Chairman Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, Vice-Chairman Jerzy Jakubowski, Secretary Dymitr Aleksandrow, and Treasurer Edmund Żera [10, 16].

On January 15, 1950, at a meeting in Warsaw, 120 cardiologists from all over Poland approved the creation of the Section and the composition of its Board. Even then it was suggested that the Section should be transformed into an independent cardiological society [10, 16]. The death of Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, in 1953, delayed the plan. His duties in the Section were taken over by Jerzy Jakubowski.

Ultimately, Polish cardiologists realized the idea of establishing an independent cardiological association at the beginning of 1954. On February 27-28, 1954, at the Medical
Academy in Łódź, a scientific conference of the PSIM's Cardiology Section was organized in the newly built lecture hall of the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine. It was devoted to the achievements of Polish cardiac surgery. The first day (February 27) began with a remembrance of Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski; his contribution to cardiology was discussed in four speeches, then the main part of the conference began. Ten papers were presented and discussed. The following day, another seventeen speeches were delivered and debated; then Jerzy Jakubowski summarized the meeting. The great significance of the conference lay in the lectures given, and most of all, in the historic resolution, adopted on February 28, which transformed the PSIM's Cardiology Section into the Polish Cardiac Society (PCS) [17].

Beginnings of the Polish Cardiac Society (from 1954)

February 28, 1954, can be considered the symbolic day when the new organization was created. The formal establishment of the PCS required a written statute and appropriate registration measures. Its first authorities were the people previously involved in the PSIM's Cardiology Section. With the transformation of the Section into an independent organization the Executive Board was expanded. Jerzy Jakubowski, Chairman (until 1953 Vice-Chairman) of the PSIM's Cardiology Section, became President of the PCS; Leon Tochowicz - Vice-President; Izabella Krzemińska-Ławkowiczowa - Secretary; Edmund Żera - Treasurer (previously held such a post in the Cardiology Section). Also, the following persons were appointed as Members of the Board: Zdzisław Askanas, Mieczysław Fejgin, Wiesław Markert, Włodzimierz Musiał, Klementyna Rachoń, Marian Tulczyński, and Stanisław Wszelaki. Soon Mieczysław Gamski, and Hugo and Zofia Kowarzyk were co-opted. This composition of the Board was operational until November 22, 1963. Edmund Żera was President of the subsequent Executive Boards, until 1972 [10].
In 1956, the PCS became a member of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). Three representatives of the PCS entered the ESC Board: L. Tochowicz, E. Żera, and J. Jakubowski. Polish cardiologists began to take an active part in the ESC scientific conferences, e.g. during the congress in Brussels (1958) and Rome (1960), where the Poles delivered 10 presentations at either of them [10, 18].

Throughout the next years of operation, the PCS significantly expanded its structures. Initially, the Society had no branches, then the first appeared in 1964, and a year later there were six of them [10, 18, 19]. The first PCS Board adopted the principle that a general meeting of members would be organized once a year, each time in a different city, and the Board itself would meet at least three times a year. They also stressed the importance of scientific conferences organized cyclically by the Society [10].

A lot of information on the history of the PCS can be found on their official website. Also the first point of the current statute of the organization touches on that history by mentioning the date of its creation (1954) [20].

The first Polish publications and journals on cardiology

In Poland, the need to create a specialized cardiology journal was already noticed before 1939. Texts on cardiology were published in other journals, such as the "Polish Archives of Internal Medicine", but the branch was developing fast enough to produce a big number of valuable texts on cardiology. In 1939, Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski started to prepare for printing two issues of the new quarterly which was to be titled "Heart". Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War II made it impossible to complete his undertaking, and the collected materials were lost during military operations.
After the war, Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski returned to the idea of publishing a Polish cardiology journal. He managed to realize it only in the fifties. The most important undertaking was the publishing of "Polish Heart Journal" (from 1957), a journal that became the official periodical of the PCS. Soon, other publishing initiatives were underway.

a) *Advances in Cardiology* - a collective monograph devoted to cardiology, 1952-1957 (vol. 1-5)

Before the publishing of the "Polish Heart Journal" the community of Polish cardiologists had agreed on the idea of issuing a collective monograph to facilitate the publication of expert texts on cardiology. The concept of this multi-volume publication was implemented in 1952. It was titled *Advances in Cardiology*. The first volume of *Advances* (FIGURE 1) was of exclusive nature, as it was dedicated to Professor Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski on the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of his medical career (he himself was the originator of this publishing project). Jerzy Jakubowski became the Editor-in-Chief of the first volume while Dymitr Aleksandrow, Zdzisław Askanas, and Izabela Krzemińska-Lawkowiczowa constituted the Editorial Committee. Dedicating the first volume to Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, the editorial team expressed the wish that he would become the editor of the following volumes. So it was in the case of volume two (1953), though Semerau-Siemianowski died before it was published. Again, Jerzy Jakubowski became Editor-in-Chief for volumes three (1954) and four (1956). The Editor of the last published volume five (1957) was Izabela Krzemińska-Lawkowiczowa [21].

The title itself indicated that the editors preferred to accept papers that concerned the latest developments in cardiology, and most of them were indeed of such nature. Twelve specialized articles were collected in the first volume and a text about Semerau-
Siemianowski's professional and scientific achievements. The following volumes contained fewer papers, from six to eleven. In total, there were forty-three texts in the five volumes, most of which had one author, only three were co-written. Most of them were quite extensive and consisted of at least a dozen pages. Some of them were enriched with illustrations such as photographs (especially X-rays), drawings, and engravings. All the authors were Poles, and all the texts were published in Polish. Apart from cardiologists, *Advances in Cardiology* was also addressed to physicians of other specializations, though the editors were in favor of texts that contained expert findings without introductory content rather than that of a more general nature [21]. The publication of *Advances* was discontinued because the "Polish Heart Journal", issued since 1957, became a priority.

b) "Polish Heart Journal" (1954) - the periodical of the PSIM's Cardiology Section

The first issue (vol. 1, parts 1-2) of the "Polish Heart Journal" was published in 1954 (FIGURE 2). It became the official periodical of the PSIM's Cardiology Section. The next issue was published in 1955, but the official date was 1954 (vol. 1, parts 3-4). Although already dead at the time of the first issue, its originator and creator, Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, was listed as the Editor of the journal. Izabela Krzemińska-Ławkowiczowa was the Secretary; also of the following issue where the Editor was Jerzy Jakubowski [22].

The first issue of the "Polish Heart Journal" was impressive, with 20 articles in the content. Similarly to *Advances in Cardiology*, all the authors were Polish, and the papers were written in Polish. The editors decided that both publications, *Advances in Cardiology* and "Polish Heart Journal", would complement each other. It was considered that the number of valuable texts on cardiology in Poland was sufficient to publish the two titles at the same time. The great interest in the subject of cardiology was evidenced by around 50-60 original
scientific papers delivered annually during sessions of the PSIM's Cardiology Section. The sessions were held several times a year. An additional argument for the preparation of expert cardiology publications was the need to concentrate such texts in one place, also to guarantee faster issuing of individual articles, so that they did not lose their relevance. The second issue of the "Polish Heart Journal" (vol. 1, parts 3-4) contained papers presented at the cardiology conference on February 27-28, 1954, at the Medical Academy in Łódź (mentioned in point two above). The conference was of great scientific significance and for cardiologists also important for another reason, as it was there where they decided to create the PCS [22].

The editorial board decided that the "Polish Heart Journal" would be issued irregularly, depending on the needs. In total, only two volumes appeared. According to the intention of the originators, the publication was a journal. It should be noted that before the first issue of the "Polish Heart Journal" (1954), the community of Polish cardiologists had managed to successfully implement other publishing initiatives in journals. In the early fifties, for example, special issues of the "Polish Archives of Internal Medicine" and the "Polish Medical Weekly" were devoted exclusively to cardiology [22].

c) "Polish Heart Journal" (since 1957) - the official periodical of the PCS

The title "Polish Heart Journal" was reused in the journal that was first published 1957. The numbering suggested that, formally, it was a new journal. The 1957 numbers were published as part of the first volume (year) (FIGURE 3). The journal was published as a quarterly. The new "Polish Heart Journal" became the official periodical of the PCS, established in 1954. The Editor of the journal was Jerzy Jakubowski (until 1965). In 1957, the first members of the Editorial Board were: Dymitr Aleksandrow (Warsaw), Zdzisław Askanas (Warsaw), Mieczysław Gamski (Lublin, Gdańsk), Zofia Kowaryzkowa (Wrocław), Izabela Krzemińska-Lawkowiczowa (Warsaw), Włodzimierz Musiał (Łódź), Edward Szczeklik
(Wrocław), and Leon Tochowicz (Kraków). At the time, the editorial office was located in Łódź [23].

In the first issue of the journal (1957, no. 1-2), in the introductory From the Editor, there was no direct reference to the previous, irregularly published "Polish Heart Journal", however, there was a mention that a few years before Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski made the first attempts to publish a cardiology journal. In the introductory word, a wish was also expressed that the magazine would take "a prominent position among Polish medical journals". The Editorial Board wanted the journal to become a link between the Polish and international cardiology, which seemed a challenge because most texts were published in Polish. However, at the end of each paper published in Polish there was usually an abstract in English and Russian. Of the initial parts, the most "international" was number 1-2 (1957). Most of the foreign papers were published in Polish, and the translations were probably made after submitting the texts to the editorial office in order to expand the audience in Poland. Some foreign papers in this issue were published in English [23].

It is worthwhile to list the topics discussed by the authors who submitted for the first issues of the "Polish Heart Journal" (those from 1957-1958) [24]. The articles included (all the following, including the foreign ones, were published in Polish):

- L. Manteuffel-Szoege (Warsaw), A. Piotrowski (Warsaw), *Functional and pathological anatomy of mitral orifice* (it was the opening article in number 1-2, 1957, with a comprehensive abstract in English and a short one in Russian at the end);

- N. du Bouchet (Paris), *Electroencephalographic observations on cerebral anoxia due to cardiac surgery*;

- A. W. Gulajew (Moscow), *Surgical treatment of mitral stenosis*;

- I. Boerema (Amsterdam), *Unilateral commissurotomy*;
In 1957 and 1958, five issues of the "Polish Heart Journal" were published; the largest number of articles, twenty-one, were included in the "double" no. 1-2 (1957); the least, only eight, in no. 4 (1958). Each of articles usually contains over a dozen references. Most of texts had one or two authors. Apart from articles (most of them were original papers, in no. 1 – reports from the Congress of Thoracic Surgery) all the issues also contained the permanent sections: Review of Cardiology Literature and Abstracts. Some issues included reviews of books and reports on important cardiology events, e.g. in no. 2 (1958), there was a report from the 15th session of the PCS, while in no. 4 (1958), a report from the 3rd World Congress of Cardiology. Similarly to Advances in Cardiology and the "Polish Heart Journal" of 1954, some articles were enriched with illustrations such as photographs, drawings, and engravings [24]. The circulation of the "Polish Heart Journal" grew rapidly. In the years 1957-1960, it increased from 260 to 850 copies [10].

Personal profiles of the creators of the PCS and the first Polish cardiology journal

Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski (1885-1953), was born in Ruszczuk (now Ruse), Bulgaria. In 1911, he received his Ph.D. in medicine at the University of Strasbourg, where, until 1918,
he was an assistant at the Faculty of Medicine. In the years 1918-1935, he was employed at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Warsaw, where, in 1929, he became a Titular Professor. Except that, from 1924, he was the Head of the Internal Diseases Ward at the St. Lazarus Hospital in Warsaw. It was the first Ward in Poland to specialize in cardiology. Some of Semerau-Siemianowski's cardiology studies were pioneering on a global scale. During World War II, he worked at the St. Lazarus Hospital (from 1942), was involved in underground university teaching, engaged in helping Jews, and took part in the Warsaw Uprising (his two sons died in the Uprising). After the war he was a professor at the University of Łódź, then at the Medical Academy in Gdańsk, and, from 1948, at the University of Warsaw, where he held the 2nd Chair and Department of Internal Medicine. During that time, he made several foreign scientific trips (to Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Italy). He was known for his fluent knowledge of several foreign languages. In Warsaw, in addition to his professional work, he provided training for physicians in the field of cardiology and electrocardiography. In the years 1931-1936, and 1949-1951, he was President of the PSIM [15, 25-31] (FIGURE 4).

**Jerzy Jakubowski (1887-1967)**, was born in Warsaw (as Jerzy Muszkatenblit). In his youth he was active in leftist organizations, for which he was sent into the depths of Russia. He managed to escape and take medical studies in Paris. In the following years, he was still politically active. In the interwar period, he ran a private medical practice. In the Polish defensive war, in September 1939, he was a military doctor. After World War II he became a professor at the University of Łódź, where, until 1963, he headed the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine. He was the first President of the PCS and the first editor of the "Polish Heart Journal" [32, 33].

**Leon Tochowicz (1897-1965)** was born in I golomia, near Kraków; took part in the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war. In 1926, he received his Ph.D. at the Jagiellonian University and was
employed at the 1st Department of Internal Medicine of the Jagiellonian University, initially as an assistant, then, in 1938, became a docent. In September 1939, Tochowicz took part in the Polish defensive war. In November 1939, he was arrested by the Germans and together with a group of employees of the Jagiellonian University taken to the camp in Sachsenhausen. Released in 1940, he worked as a physician in Kraków. After the war, he was employed at the Jagiellonian University again, where, in 1947, he became professor and the Head of the 1st Department of Internal Medicine. In the years 1957-1965, he was the Rector of the Medical Academy in Kraków. Tochowicz is considered the creator of the Kraków school of cardiology [34-37].

Dymitr Aleksandrow (1909-1993) was born in Piotrków Trybunalski. In 1935, he graduated as a medicine doctor from the University of Warsaw. In September 1939, he took part in the Polish received war. During World War II he worked as a physician in Warsaw, provided underground university teaching, and participated in the Warsaw Uprising. After the war, he defended his Ph.D. (1945) and worked as an assistant in the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Warsaw. From 1953, he was professor and the Head of the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine at the Medical Academy in Warsaw. In 1964, he was employed as a professor at the Military Medical Academy in Warsaw and became General in 1967 [38, 39].

Edmund Żera (1899-1993) was born in Warsaw; took part in the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war. He received his Ph.D. in medicine at the University of Warsaw in 1925. After graduation, he worked under the supervision of Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski at the Internal Medicine Ward at St. Lazarus Hospital in Warsaw and other Warsaw hospitals, he also further studied abroad. During World War II he was the Head of the Internal Diseases Ward at the St. Roch Hospital in Warsaw. In the years 1936-1939, and 1945-1947, he was the Secretary of the PSIM, then Treasurer until 1951. From 1948, he headed the Circulatory Diseases Ward at
Hospital No. 6 in Warsaw. In 1954, the Ward was transformed into a Cardiology Department operating at the Institute for Development and Specialization of Medical Staff at the Medical Academy in Warsaw. The Cardiology Department was the first institution in Poland with the term "cardiology" included in its name [40, 41].

**Izabela Krzemińska-Lawkowiczowa (1909-1999)** was born in Warsaw. In 1934, she graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Warsaw. She was the commander of a dressing point during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. In 1948, together with Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, she organized a cardiac catheterization laboratory at the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine of the University of Warsaw, and the same year together they carried out the first right heart catheterization in Poland. In the following years she was a professor at the Institute of Hematology in Warsaw. Scientifically, she worked closely with her husband, hematologist, Professor Włodzimierz Ławkowicz [32, 42].

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KARDIOLOGIA POLSKA

ORGAN SEKCJI KARDIOLOGICZNEJ TOWARZYSTWA INTERNISTÓW POLSKICH

TOM I

część I i II

PAŃSTWOWY ZAKŁAD WYDAWNICTW LEKARSKICH

WARSZAWA

1954
FIGURE 3 „Polish Heart Journal” 1957 [„Kardiologia Polska” 1957]
FIGURE 4 Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski (photo courtesy of the Central Medical Library in Warsaw, Poland)