

Professor Tadeusz Tempka (1885–1974)

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Tadeusz Tempka (FIGURE 1) was born on October 15, 1885 in Kraków, in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Jagiellonian University in 1911. He received his degree of Doctor of Medicine with an amethyst ring from Emperor Franz Joseph I.

From the beginning of his medical career, Tadeusz Tempka was characterized by impeccable ethics and diligence. Between 1912 and 1914, he worked at the Internal Diseases Department of St. Lazarus Hospital in Kraków. When World War I came, young doctor Tempka was conscripted to the Austro-Hungarian Army.

In 1920, he was appointed as an assistant at the 1st Department of Internal Diseases headed by Professor Witold Orłowski. In 1923, Tadeusz Tempka presented his habilitation thesis entitled “Calcium chloride as a cardiac drug.”

At the beginning of 1928, Tadeusz Tempka received the position of an associate professor and was nominated to head the 1st Department of Internal Diseases at Jagiellonian University. For the next decade, together with his team, he conducted multiple scientific research projects. Professor Tempka introduced the cytological examination of bone marrow biopsies into the diagnostic workup of blood diseases as the second researcher in the world. At that time, he demonstrated that morphological changes in the myelogram in pernicious anemia are not limited to the erythroblastic system yet also related to the leukoblastic system. Together with Bronisław Braun, they were the first to describe the Tempka–Braun cells (also known as giant metamyelocytes). Professor Tempka was also the first to demonstrate the presence of the Castle factor in the saliva. In collaboration with Mieczysław Kubiczek, he conducted the first study to investigate the normal morphological features of the spleen by biopsy. There is no doubt that the 1st Department of Internal Diseases of Jagiellonian University was one of the leading institutions worldwide in clinical hematology at that time.

In November 1939, Gestapo arrested Professor Tadeusz Tempka during Sonderaktion Krakau and he was deported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He returned to Kraków in February 1940, but rejected to work with Ludwig Heilmayer, who was in charge of the 1st Department of Internal Diseases. Professor Tempka continued working at home and focused especially on writing the first textbook on clinical hematology. The 2 volumes of *Haematopoietic system diseases* were published in 1950. It was the source of knowledge for future generations of Polish hematologists.

After World War II, Tadeusz Tempka was appointed as a professor and took charge of the 2nd Department of Internal Diseases in Kraków. He remained its head until his retirement in 1962.



FIGURE 1 Professor Tadeusz Tempka (courtesy of Jagiellonian University Medical College Archives)

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Tadeusz Tempka was one of the founders of the Polish Society of Hematology. The First National Congress of Hematologists in Poland took place in 1950. Professor Tempka was the president of the Polish Society of Hematology from 1950 to 1969.

Many famous Kraków-based hematologists have been taught by Professor Tadeusz Tempka: Julian Aleksandrowicz, Mieczysław Kubiczek, Józef Bogdał, Leon Cholewa, Zygmunt Hanicki, Józef Japa, Stanisław Kirchmayer, Jan K. Kostrzewski, Adam Sokołowski, Tadeusz Struzik, Leon Tochowicz, and Ignacy Urasiński.

Professor Tadeusz Tempka was a great physician, scientist, and teacher. He was hard-working and devoted to medicine, and yet he always had time for his patients and students.

He passed away on March 14, 1974 in Kraków.

In 2020, we are celebrating the 135th anniversary of Tadeusz Tempka's birthday and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Polish Society of Hematology.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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