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## **JANUSZ DURKO (1915–2017). IN MEMORIAM**

On 20 September 2017, at the Powązki Communal Cemetery (formerly Powązki Military Cemetery) the relatives, colleagues and residents of Warsaw paid their last tribute to Janusz Durko, the doyen of Varsaviana studies and legendary founder and director of the Historical Museum of Warsaw who remained in the post for over half a century.

Janusz Durko was born on 23 February 1915 in Warsaw, the son of Jan and Janina Durko. He was exposed to the socialist ideology relatively early, as both his father and grandfather Stanisław were active members of the Polish Socialist Party [PPS] at the initial stage of its existence and operation. Jan Durko (1880-1943) was member of various leftist organisations; in the years 1900-1917 he belonged to of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, next he became active in the PPS. In 1901, he was arrested for his activity in the labour movement; incarcerated in the 10th Pavilion at the Warsaw Citadel, he was later was sentenced to exile in Vjatka (today Kirov). Luckily, he managed to escape from the Citadel, and thus evaded the exile.

At the time of the Second Republic, Jan Durko was active at the Warsaw Trade Union Board; as an avid reader, he undertook initiatives aimed at increasing readership among the population. He also belonged to the “Nasz Dom” [Our House] Association which managed the pedagogical centre for orphans in the Warsaw district of Bielany, still existing today. There, he cooperated with Maryna Falska (1877-1944) and Janusz Korczak (1878-1942). In the 1930s, he was affiliated with the Warsaw Housing Cooperative [WSM]

in Żoliborz, where he engaged in the activities of the “Szkłane Domy” [Glass Houses] WSM Residents’ Mutual Help Association. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1942, he was held at the Pawiak prison. He died at the Majdanek concentration camp on 20 February 1943<sup>1</sup>.

Jan Durko’s broad area of activity, both in the field of politics and in the organisational-social realm, made an impact on the ambience at the Durko family home, and shaped his son’s worldview. In his childhood, Adolf Walery Formiński (1845-1928)<sup>2</sup> was a frequent guest at the Durko household. Formiński was an insurgent of the January Uprising who fought under the command of Marian Langiewicz, and was later active in the First Proletariat where he collaborated with Ludwik Waryński. Arrested in 1884, he was sentenced to exile—he spent eighteen years on the Sakhalin Island. Janusz Durko considered Formiński his adoptive grandfather whose stories and recollections sparked his interest in the history of Polish labour movement<sup>3</sup>.

In the years 1925-1934, Durko attended the Jan Zamoyski Gymnasium, the school which boasts many eminent historians and scholars engaged in Warsaw studies amongst its alumni, e.g. Janusz Woliński (1894-1970), Tadeusz Manteuffel (1902-1970), Stefan Kieniewicz (1907-1992) or Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (1909-2006). It seems that Janusz Durko recalled his school years with fondness—he was one of the editors of the school’s monographic volume published half a century later<sup>4</sup>. Having passed his *matura* exam, he enrolled at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw.

Janusz Durko studied history in the years 1934-1938. Alas, his student record has not been preserved, apart from a folder with the materials of the Masters Exams Commission<sup>5</sup>. Among Durko’s teachers were, i.a., Tadeusz Wałek-Czernecki (1889-1949), Marcei Handelsman (1882-1945), Oskar Halecki (1891-1973), Stanisław Kętrzyński (1876-1950) and Stanisław Arnold (1895-1973). His Master thesis was supervised by Waław Tokarz (1873-1937), a unique scholar among the staff of the Institute of History. Tokarz was a graduate, and later professor of the Jagiellonian University, and was formally associated with the Kraków faculty until 1920. He was appointed lecturer at the University of Warsaw in 1928, after he had left—due to the conflict between Józef Piłsudski and Marian Kukiel—the Military Academic Publishing Institute that he himself had established. Once at the University of Warsaw, Tokarz succeeded Władysław Smoleński, who had passed away in 1926, as the head of the Department of Modern Polish History. Classes run by Tokarz were very popular among students, due to various reasons—one of them being the historian’s area of interest, namely the three national insurgencies,

1 "Durko Jan" (1880-1943), in: *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, vol. 1, ed. F. Tych, Warsaw 1978, pp. 650-652; "Durko Jan", in: *Encyklopedia Warszawy*, Warsaw 1975, p. 132; Account of Janusz Durko, Warsaw 20 September 2013 [the author’s collection].

2 See: S. Kalabiński, "Formiński Adolf Walery", in: *Słownik biograficzny działaczy...*, pp. 126-127.

3 The account of Janusz Durko...

4 See: *Smolna 30: Gimnazjum im. Jana Zamoyskiego*, ed. J. Durko et al., Warsaw 1989.

5 The University of Warsaw Archive, sign. KEM 6614.

as well as his legionary past and the recent conflict with Józef Piłsudski. The seminar taught by Waław Tokarz that Janusz Durko attended was devoted to the subject of Varsaviana. Majority of Master and doctoral theses supervised by Tokarz pertained to the history of Warsaw, as proven by the volume of collected works *Studia z dziejów Warszawy 1830–1831* [Studies in the History of Warsaw 1830–1831] which he edited in 1937. The volume comprised essays written by his students<sup>6</sup>. The seminar of Waław Tokarz was attended by future historians without whom there would be no post-WW2 historiography of Warsaw: Stanisław Herbst (1907–1973), Henryk Jabłoński (1909–2003), Mieczysław Chojnacki (1900–1978), Jan Wegner (1909–1996) or Ksawery Świerkowski (1897–1979).

Janusz Durko met many of the above-mentioned scholars after the Second World War. Interestingly, the topic of his Master thesis, supervised by Tokarz, did not concern the history of Warsaw—it was devoted to “The Gdańsk Stance During the Swedish-Polish War in the Years 1626–1629”<sup>7</sup>. However, Durko did not manage to complete his thesis under his mentor’s supervision—Waław Tokarz passed away on 3 May 1937. Ultimately, Waław Tomkiewicz (1899–1982), a disciple of Oskar Halecki, scholar of the seventeenth-century history, became Durko’s supervisor. In the 1930s, Tomkiewicz delivered lectures and ran classes at the Department of the History of Eastern Europe. After the war, he got engaged in the field of art history, including the history of the Warsaw’s Royal Castle. Regardless of the research conducted as part of the seminars taught by Tokarz and Tomkiewicz, Durko’s interests began to focus on the issues related to the Polish labour movement. He collaborated with the editorial office of the *Kroniki Ruchu Rewolucyjnego w Polsce* [Chronicles of the Revolutionary Movement in Poland] quartet published in the years 1935–1939 by the Main Board of the Former Political Prisoners Association in Warsaw. His father Jan was also affiliated with this journal<sup>8</sup>. At the time, Janusz Durko also published in *Tydzień Robotnika* [A Labourer’s Week], a press organ of the PPS Main Board. At the University of Warsaw, the future director of the Historical Museum of Warsaw encountered not only an excellent pedagogical staff, but also antisemitism which was on the rise in the 1930s<sup>9</sup>. The experience of being a first-hand witness of acts of violence exerted an enormous influence on Durko’s social conscience. As he later recalled, he witnessed the National-Radical Camp activists beating Jewish students, both male and female, on their way to classes with the clubs with razor blades stuck in them<sup>10</sup>.

6 *Studia z dziejów Warszawy 1830–1831*, ed. W. Tokarz, Warsaw 1937. The reader will find here the essays which had been defended, in a slightly altered form, as Master theses, penned by: Nikodem Jaruga, Revd. Stanisław Kontek, Maksymilian Meloch, Adam Moraczewski and Edmund Oppman.

7 The University of Warsaw Archive, sign. KEM 6614.

8 The Central Archive of Modern Records, the Ministry of Higher Education, Bureau of the Central Membership Committee for the Affairs of the Employees of Academia [referred to, accordingly, as: AAN, MSW, BCKKdsPN], Curriculum Vitae, sign. 2992, p. 19.

9 See: M. Natkowska, *Numerus clausus, getto ławkowe, numerus nullus, „paragraf aryjski”: antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim 1931–1939*, Warsaw 1999.

10 The account of Janusz Durko...

During the occupation, Janusz Durko was employed at the Social Housing Enterprise as a secretary of the board. Next, he got a post as a researcher at the Architecture and Urban Planning Studio [PAU] run by the Enterprise. There, he came across a milieu of famous architects, such as Helena and Szymon Syrkus, Zygmunt Skibniewski or Stanisław Dziewulski, as well as many activists affiliated with the Warsaw Housing Cooperative, including sociologist Stanisław Ossowski. It was there that the plans of the future reconstruction of Warsaw originated. It is also worth mentioning that the Studio employed approximately thirty Jews; they were all holders of the so-called “Aryan papers” and yet their appearance made it difficult for them to function in the Nazi-occupied city. As an employee of the Studio, Janusz Durko conducted research on spatial arrangement of residential estates from the point of view of demographic issues. The fruit of his research was the thesis titled “The project of spatial planning of residential estates in the area of Warsaw”, written under the supervision of Stanisław Tołwiński, the future Mayor of Warsaw. Durko combined his research towards the thesis produced for the Studio with studies in the field of art history. On one hand, it was required by the nature of the research he was conducting; on the other, it covered the issues which had interested him for a very long time<sup>11</sup>.

Amongst the most outstanding merits of Janusz Durko is the one related to the period of Nazi occupation and his engagement in providing aid to Jews. He began to help Jews—together with his wife Janina (1915-2002)—at the time of the great liquidation *Aktion*, i.e. in the summer of 1942. He organised a hideout for the escapees from the ghetto in a flat he had previously occupied on Krechowicka Street in Żoliborz. The older brother of Feliks Tych hid there, among others, under a false name of Józef Groniek<sup>12</sup>. After he had been traced by the *sh maltzovniks*, Durko organized a new hideout for him—a garage adapted into a flat on Senatorska Street, where he ran a shoemaker’s workshop. Feliks Tych, who himself resided in Miedzeszyn, visited his brother regularly—that is how he met his future boss, Janusz Durko<sup>13</sup>. Durko rescued others from the Holocaust as well—Irena Laundberg stayed at the hideout together with her 5-year old son. Architect Waclaw Marciniak stayed there too, along with actor Leon Rytowski; the latter, however, eventually decided to go to the Hotel Polski on Długa Street. A young actor, Aleksander Węgierko, one of Durko’s closest friends (Węgierko was a son of the pre-war theatre director from whom he had inherited his first name), decided to go there as well, despite a promise he had made to Durko. Once he fell into the trap set up by the Germans at the Hotel Pol-

11 AAN, MSW, BCKKdsPN, Curriculum Vitae, sign. 2992, s. 19; the account of Janusz Durko...: S. Jankowski, “Profesor Janusz Durko. W trzydziestolecie pracy naukowej”, *Kronika Warszawy*, 1982, vol. 2, p. 121.

12 Feliks Tych (1929-2015), professor of history, scholar of the history of international revolutionary movement and of Polish Jews. Employee of, i.a., the Institute of History at the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Faculty of History of the Party at the PZPR Central Committee, and the Central Archive of the PZPR Central Committee. In the years 1995-2006 director of the Jewish Historical Institute.

13 The account of Lucyna Tych; telephone conversation from 8 October 2017 [a note from the author’s collection].

ski, he was sent to Auchwitz (via Poznań and Hamburg) where he died. Janusz Durko often recalled the tragic story of his friend<sup>14</sup>. On 18 April 1989, Janusz and Janina Durko were honoured with the medal of Righteous Among the Nations<sup>15</sup>.

After the decline of the Warsaw Uprising, Janusz Durko spent several months in Piotrków Trybunalski; he returned to the capital only in the spring of 1945. He worked briefly at the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, which was a continuation of sorts of his activity in the Architecture and Urban Planning Studio during the wartime<sup>16</sup>. However, Durko soon returned to his research into the history of the labour movement and of socialist organisations, especially in the initial phase of their operation. Already in October 1945 he began to work at the Institute of National Remembrance [IPN] – the Institute of Recent History which was established towards the end of 1944 by the Polish Committee of National Liberation [PKWN]. The Institute, whose goal was the study and research of the recent history of Poland (namely the history after 1864, with a particular emphasis on the Second World War), was originally led by Jerzy Kornacki (1908–1981), soon succeeded by Stanisław Płoski (1899–1966), a socialist, PPS active member and disciple of Marcelli Handelsman. It was Płoski who brought historians such as Witold Kula (1916–1988) and Henryk Werszycki (1898–1990) to the IPN. The Institute staff also boasted many former Home Army soldiers<sup>17</sup>. Ideologically, the IPN was far removed from the “politics of memory” pursued by the Polish Workers’ Party [PPR], and later the United Polish Workers’ Party [PZPR]—that is why it was dissolved in October 1950.

Janusz Durko worked at the Institute until 1949. He published the outcome of his research in the quarterly *Dzieje Najnowsze* [Modern History] published by the IPN, of which he acted as an editorial secretary. At the same time, he worked on his doctoral dissertation titled “Początki ruchu socjalistycznego w Królestwie Polskim” [The beginnings of socialist movement in the Kingdom of Poland] and attended Stefan Kieniewicz seminar at the Institute of History at the University of Warsaw. He defended his doctoral thesis in 1948<sup>18</sup>. Simultaneously, since 1947, he worked at the Academy of Political Sciences [ANP] as an assistant of Henryk Jabłoński, an older colleague he had acquainted at the seminar of Waław Tokarz. Aside from his didactic duties at the Academy, Durko continued to indulge his archival passion which he had inherited from his father. He conducted academic research in this field as an employee of the State Archives Executive Board—he held a post of the governor of the Academic Publishing Department<sup>19</sup>.

14 The account of Janusz Durko...; Video recording of Janusz Durko recounting the story of Aleksander Węgierko is available at: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-rodzina-durko>, [accessed on 7 October 2017].

15 M. Grynberg, *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, Warsaw 1993, pp. 125–126.

16 "Wywiad z Januszem Durko", *Kronika Warszawy*, 2006, vol. 3, pp. 35, 37.

17 T.P. Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce. Zagadnienia polityczne i organizacyjne*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 64–65.

18 K. Groniowski, "Seminarium Stefana Kieniewicza", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 2000, vol. 3, p. 417.

19 AAN, MSW, BCKKdsPN, Curriculum Vitae, sign. 2992, p. 20.

The cooperation between Janusz Durko and Stanisław Płocki turned out to be particularly fruitful. The head of the Institute of National Remembrance invited Durko to join works on the project of a Museum of Labour and Social Advancement, where the idea to organise the Historical Museum of Warsaw arose<sup>20</sup>. Soon the year 1951 arrived—a very special one in Janusz Durko's biography. That is when his adventure with the Academy of Political Sciences and the State Archives Executive Board ended; instead, he joined both the Department of History of the United Polish Workers' Party as a head of the archival division, and the Historical Museum of Warsaw which was to become the most vital area of his activity<sup>21</sup>.

Let us begin with the Department of History of the Party [WHP] at the Party's Central Committee [KC PZPR]. It was by no means an institution held in high esteem—run by Tadeusz Daniszewski<sup>22</sup> and Józef Kowalski<sup>23</sup> for whom a belief in the idea of the Communist Party was more important than reliability and scholarly integrity. The institution's main goal was to fill in blanks in the historiography of Radical Left in the Polish lands. Janusz Durko, who stemmed from a leftist rather than communist tradition, did not fit the ideological profile of the WHP. However, the institution management must have been aware of the need of professional running of the archive whose repository was expanding at a very quick pace. Janusz Durko suspected that it was his articles published in *Dzieje Najnowsze* in the late 1940s and often based on source materials collected by his father, Jan Durko, that drew Daniszewski's attention<sup>24</sup>.

Janusz Durko's beginnings at the Department were not easy; the studies and documents published by the institution were often falsified. As a result, it was reorganised and attempts were made at making it more "scholarly" under a new name—the Faculty of History of the Party at the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers' Party [ZHP at the KC PZPR], established in 1957. Here,

20 J. Durko, *Muzeum Warszawy i jego współpracownicy w mojej pamięci 1951–2003*, Warsaw 2008, p. 9.

21 AAN, MSW, BCKKdsPN, Curriculum Vitae, sign. 2992, p. 20.

22 Tadeusz Daniszewski (1904–1969), Communist activist. He was engaged in radical Left organisations since the age of 15. He was member of, i.a., the Communist Workers' Party of Poland, the Union of Communist Youth, and the Communist Polish Party [KPP]. In the years 1928–1930 and 1932–1935 he resided in the USSR, where he joined the WKP. He was sentenced on charge of communist activity by the courts of the Second Republic on numerous occasions. All in all, he spent eight years in prison, including seven months in Bereza Kartuska. He spent the years of WW2 in the Soviet Union, while remaining active in the Union of Polish Patriots. He returned to Poland in 1944 and got engaged in organising the partisan educational system. Since 1948, he was head of WHP at the KC PPR (soon PZPR), and next ZHP at the KC PZPR. Removed from his post on the wave of the 1968 antisemitic purge, he passed away not long afterwards. See: T. Siewierski, "Komuniści i historycy. Polski ruch robotniczy w badaniach uczonych w PRL – wybrane aspekty", in: *Partia komunistyczna w Polsce. Struktury – ludzie – dokumentacja*, ed. D. Magier, Lublin 2012, pp. 472–475.

23 Józef Kowalski (1904–1986), Communist activist, journalist and historian. In the 1920s he was active in the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, in 1933 he joined the Communist Polish Party [KPP]. In 1935, he was sentenced to eight years of prison for his communist activity. In October 1939, he went to Białystok where he joined WKP a year later. Active member of the Union of Polish Patriots, editor at the Tadeusz Kościuszko radio station. He returned to Poland for good in 1951, and was appointed the deputy head of the WHP and later ZHP at the KC PZPR. In 1968, in the course of the antisemitic hate campaign, he was forced to retire. Author of numerous publications pertaining to the Communist Party in Poland. See: T. Siewierski, „Komuniści i historycy...” p. 465.

24 The account of Janusz Durko...

Durko continued to run the archival division; simultaneously, in mid-1957, he was appointed deputy head of the Faculty. Tadeusz Daniszewski retained his post as the Faculty's head, and Józef Kowalski remained his first deputy. With time, another deputy head was appointed—Norbert Kołomejczyk (1930–1994)<sup>25</sup>. The Faculty activity at the KC PZPR was not discussed extensively in the historiography from 1989, and it surely deserves to be thoroughly researched.

Janusz Durko and his role ought to be remembered at least for two reasons. Firstly, the output of the archival division which he used to run is of special value for the subsequent generations of historians who research the history of the Polish Left. The materials that are now held at the Central Archive of Modern Records, and which had been collected and studied by the team led by Durko, are an invaluable resource of documents that were not taken advantage of prior to 1989, due to the censorship restrictions. After the transformation, the materials—treated as a legacy of the Communist party—were unjustly ignored by historians. It is also worth mentioning that the archive contained not only sources pertaining to the history of communist circles, but also to the labour movement as a whole and its organisations in the period following the national insurgencies. The second reason which proves to the positive role of Janusz Durko in the history of the Faculty is his attitude in 1968. One might say that he remained faithful to the ideals which he had pursued, at a risk of losing his own life, during wartime.

The antisemitic purge, initiated by a large group within the Faculty staff affiliated with the executive organ of the Party, affected also the management, namely Tadeusz Daniszewski and Józef Kowalski<sup>26</sup>. That is when, on Janusz Durko's initiative, the idea of establishing the Party Archive as a separate institution was born. Ultimately, the Faculty was dissolved in 1971, and the Central Archive of the KC PZPR was established in its stead. Members of the staff who had had their input in provoking the conflict within the Faculty were later employed at the Academy of Social Sciences at the KC PZPR. Janusz Durko was appointed head of the Central Archive of the KC PZPR; he remained in the post until 1981. One of the Archive's greatest achievements was publishing a journal titled *Archiwum Ruchu Robotniczego* [*The Labour Movement Archive*], designed as a periodical which featured fully developed source materials. Feliks Tych was appointed the journal's editor-in-chief. The publishing process was made easier by the sheer fact that it was an institution operating at the very heart of the Party and as such was safe from excessive censorship's interference. That is why the periodical was held in high esteem not only by local historians, but also by the émigré milieu of the former PPS members led by Lidia Ciołkosz (1902–2002)<sup>27</sup>.

25 W. Janowski, A. Kochański, *Informator o strukturze i obsadzie personalnej centralnego aparatu PZPR*, ed. K. Persak, Warsaw 2000, p. 142.

26 T. Siewierski, *Komuniści i historycy...*, pp. 466–467.

27 L. Tychowa, A. Romanowski, *Tak, jestem córką Jakuba Bermana. Z Lucyną Tychową rozmawia Andrzej Romanowski*, Kraków 2016, p. 191.

When asked about the happiest moment in his life, Janusz Durko replied that it was the moment he would enter the Museum each day in the morning<sup>28</sup>. Without a doubt, Durko's post at the Historical Museum of Warsaw was most dear to him. In December 1951, following a short period of management by Stanisław Arnold, and even shorter by Mieczysław Chojnacki (1900-1978), Durko was appointed director of the Museum. The beginnings were difficult. In his conversation with Jarosław Trybuś, Durko recalled: "There was no Warsaw, there was no Old Town, there were no tenement houses. It was all burnt and razed to the ground, and that was truly appalling."<sup>29</sup> The ruins of three tenement houses were all that remained from the museum which had existed prior to the Second World War as a branch of the National Museum. The houses had to be built anew. Meanwhile, as Stanisław Lorentz (1899-1991) emphasized, Janusz Durko not only reconstructed the pre-war tenement houses, but also significantly expanded their internal area: "He created the basis for his Museum's operation in a far larger capacity than we had designed it before the war. Not three tenement houses, but eleven! I find this very moving," wrote Lorentz<sup>30</sup>.

Following the advice of Michał Walicki (1904-1966), director Janusz Durko engaged in cooperation with Stanisław Zamecznik (1909-1971), an established artist who was to create the original, cutting edge scenography of the Museum's permanent exhibition. The exhibition which presented the history of Warsaw since the 10th century was opened in 1955, to a spectacular success of Janusz Durko and his associates. The exhibition had been altered and updated several times, but its core concept remained unchanged until the recent times. It was accompanied by temporary exhibitions which totalled nearly four hundred in the course of Durko's directorship. The operation of the Historical Museum of Warsaw has been analysed in numerous studies<sup>31</sup>; it has also been covered in detail in the memoirs of Janusz Durko himself<sup>32</sup>. As a Museum director, he knew how to make eminent historians and art historians as well as artists join his team. It is enough to mention that Stanisław Jankowski "Agaton"<sup>33</sup> was the co-author of a part of the exhibition devoted to the Second World War.

Through the Historical Museum of Warsaw Janusz Durko expressed his love for the city in which he had spent the first two decades of his life. While working on the Museum expositions, he recreated the climate of the 700-year history of the city. He said in one of his last interviews: "[...] I am a Varsovian through and through who lost all that made up his youth, namely Warsaw as it once had been; and yet I continue to live in this city which functions, hav-

28 S. Jankowski, *Profesor Janusz Durko...*, p. 124.

29 <https://muzeumwarszawy.pl/rozmowa-z-prof-januszem-durko-2013-rok/> [accessed on 8 October 2017].

30 S. Lorentz, "Janusz Durko", *Kronika Warszawy*, 1987, no. 3, p. 31.

31 See: A. Sołtan, "Muzeum Historyczne m.s.t Warszawy 1936-2006", *Almanach Muzealny*, 2007, vol. 5, pp. 7-54.

32 See: J. Durko, *Muzeum Warszawy...*

33 Interview with Professor Janusz Durko, authorized record from 23 November 2016; interview conducted by Izabella Maliszewska [typescript].

ing risen the rubble. In fact, it functions pretty well.”<sup>34</sup> It is no accident that when Durko set off to write his memoir, he dedicated it entirely to his work at the Museum and to its co-creators. It is a unique volume which testifies to Janusz Durko’s modesty—he was one of the few managers who appreciated the power and importance of a cohesive team. It also proves to the fact that the Museum was his biggest ambition and his fulfilled dream. The memoir is by no means a personal reflection on his own achievements. In fact, it is more of a monograph of the 50-year history of the Historical Museum of Warsaw, since the opening after the Second World War until the year 2003<sup>35</sup>.

As a director of the Historical Museum of Warsaw, Durko was a prime mover and participant of numerous associations active in the interest of the field of Varsaviana. He was member of museum boards, e.g. at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the National Museum in Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature and the Museum of the Polish Army. He was active in several dozen institutions engaged in museum affairs and historic monument preservation, e.g. the Civic Committee for the Reconstruction of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the Board for Cultural Goods Preservation at the Office of the Conservation Officer for Warsaw, the Cultural Goods Preservation Team at the National Culture Board; the Society for the Preservation of Monuments, the Social Committee for the Preservation of the Old Powązki Cemetery. It should also be stressed that in the years 1954–1970 he fulfilled the function of a secretary of the International Museum Council ICOM. He was member of editorial committees of numerous journals such as *Muzealnictwo* [Museum Studies], *Rocznik Warszawski* [The Warsaw Yearbook], *Kronika Warszawy* [The Warsaw Chronicle], *Ochrona Zabytków* [Monument Preservation] and *Almanach Muzealny* [The Museum Almanac]<sup>36</sup>.

Despite various administrative functions, Janusz Durko never gave up his academic career. In 1955, he was granted a *docent* degree, and became professor ten years later. He did not publish much, but his output consisting of approximately 140 publications comprises most important titles. As far as historical research was involved, Durko was most interested in publishing primary source materials. In this category, the two titles clearly stand out: a selection of recollections by Warsaw labourers from the turn of the 20th century<sup>37</sup> and three volumes of *Wspomnienia* [Memoirs] by Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935)<sup>38</sup>, one of the most interesting examples of a memoir devoted to the history of Polish labour movement. Durko was also an academic editor of the eight-volume *Bibliografia Warszawy* [The Bibliography of Warsaw].<sup>39</sup>

34 Ibid.

35 See: J. Durko, "Muzeum Warszawy..."

36 <http://nekrologi.wyborcza.pl/0,11,400801,Janusz-Durko-kondolencje.html> [accessed on 8 October 2017]; "Durko Janusz", in: *Kto jest kim...*, p. 251; *Wywiad z Januszem Durko...*, p. 33

37 See: *W pracy i w walce: wspomnienia robotników warszawskich z przełomu XIX i XX wieku*, ed. J. Durko, Warsaw 1970.

38 See: B. Limanowski, *Pamiętniki*, vol. 2–4, ed. J. Durko, Warsaw 1958–1973.

39 See: *Bibliografia Warszawy*, ed. J. Durko, vols. I–VII, Wrocław 1958–1992, vol. VIII, Warsaw 2006.

Janusz Durko was granted numerous honours and prizes for his contribution in the field of museum studies and Varsaviana, i.a. the Prize of the City of Warsaw (1962 and 1967), the 1st Prize of the Ministry of Culture and Art for preservation of cultural heritage; the “Homo Varsoviensis” Prize (1987), the Commander’s and Officer’s Order of Polonia Restituta, the Deserving Cultural Activist, the Golden Honorary Badge for “Contribution to the City of Warsaw”, the Grand Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2001), Golden Medal for “Gloria Artis Contribution towards Culture” (2006), the King Stanisław Poniatowski Medal granted by the Society of Friends of Warsaw (2008). He was also honorary member of the Society for the Preservation of Monuments, the Society of Friends of Warsaw and the Association of Polish Museum Employees<sup>40</sup>.

Janusz Durko passed away on 6 September 2017, at the age of 102. His organisational legacy will leave a lasting mark on the museum studies in Poland. The Warsaw residents shall remember Janusz Durko as a noble man, and a creator of their Museum. Those who had the privilege to meet the Professor in person will surely remember his authentic kindness and selflessness of the spirit; they will cherish the memory of a person who was always willing to share his knowledge and experience.

40 “Durko Janusz”, in: *Kto jest kim...*, p. 251; *Wywiad z Januszem Durko...*, p. 33.