

JOANNA KRÓL

University of Szczecin

ORCID: 0000-0003-4500-9730

Historical, social and cultural background for establishing the University of Szczecin¹

The history of each social institution, including universities, is shaped by the multi-context network of historical, political, social, cultural and economical conditions, backgrounds and circumstances. The case of the University of Szczecin is similar; its establishment in 1985 can be treated as the crowning achievement of the complex and long process initiated at the time of incorporation of Szczecin into the Polish national borders. The aforementioned process, within the framework of which year 1945 can be recognised as the first of the milestone dates, was not easy and, as previously indicated, it was a process based on a plenitude of backgrounds, circumstances and conditions from among which the geopolitical state of affairs and the social standing of Szczecin following the conclusion of military operations as well as the political and economical factors of local and national reach come to the forefront of the issue. It is prudent to recall what event served as the starting point for the long-term battle for materialising the idea of the University of Szczecin, in what direction the aforementioned battle went and what events accompanied it.

The geopolitical background

Despite the conclusion of the military operations and the formal incorporation of the western territories, including Szczecin, into the territory of the Republic of Poland the situation was not entirely clear. The tense international relations, the frequently emerging gossips concerning the possible outbreak of the Third World War and the accompanying suggestions concerning the legal invalidity of the decisions regarding the shape of the national borders did not facilitate stability in this region of Poland (Czubiński, 2000, pp. 268–270). Suffice to say that since July 1945 Szczecin had been taken over thrice by the Polish administration which, in turn, left the city twice. The ultimate takeover and the incorporation of the city by Poles took place on the 5th of July 1945 when “the Polish president of Szczecin Piotr Zaremba, Bachelor of Engineering,

¹ The foundation for this paper is in the chapter that I have written included in the book co-written with Elżbieta Magiera (Król, 2015, pp. 13–48).

took over the office from the already formed German administration of the city upon the permission granted by marshal Georgy Zhukov” (Kozłowski, 2000, p. 22). The education authorities, including the School Inspectorate of the Szczecin School District, came to Szczecin even later; the education authorities returned to Szczecin permanently in November 1945 (Nowtoniak, 1992, p. 6).

The aforementioned circumstances and even the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany recognised the German-Polish border running along the Odra and Nysa rivers as late as in 1970 (Czubiński, 2000, p. 274) had to and did indeed influence the issue of the attitude of the central authorities towards establishing an academic centre in Szczecin. The long-term process of normalisation of the geopolitical situation in this area definitely did not contribute to making the binding decisions concerning institutionalisation of the scientific life of Szczecin.

It must be also strongly emphasised that capturing the city did not put an end to the problem. Tadeusz Białecki wrote: “What Poland received after the 5th of July 1945 and what was called Szczecin did not spark optimism among the Poles coming to the area from across the entire country and from abroad” (Białecki, 1998, p. 60). Szczecin maintained the grim reputation of “wild west” among residents of Poland not without a reason.

The economical background

Along with the geopolitical background we must also explain the economical background and circumstances.

The difficulties the local authorities had to face amounted to the three basic issues: the destruction caused by the war (primary in the areas of communication and transport systems), the issue of providing city’s population with sustenance and the related issue of security. In the aftermath of the military operations Szczecin was destroyed in approximately 60% and the greatest percentage of the destroyed buildings (43.6%) were completely obliterated. The data demonstrating the damage to the electrical systems (80%), municipal public transport (45%), gas plants (40%), waste processing facilities (30%) and sewage systems (15%) are equally dire. The industrial plants, bridges and overpasses as well as the railway infrastructure of Szczecin were almost completely destroyed (Białecki, 1998, pp. 60, 64–65). The unbelievably difficult task of rebuilding the city was further compounded by the pressing problem of providing sustenance to city’s residents. The difficulties with providing sustenance to Szczecin resulted in the residents of the city coming under the threat of famine. This crisis was averted only towards the end of July 1945 when the first shipments of food arrived in the city (Białecki, 1998, pp. 64–65).

The extent of the post-war destruction also contributed to the material shortages regarding providing education facilities and school supplies. In the context of the

higher education we may speak of the total shortage during that period due to lack of academic traditions. Henryk Lesiński writes: “Before 1945 there were no higher education schools or an appropriate infrastructure in the form of buildings, equipment and supplies” (Lesiński, 1998, p. 425).

The sociological and cultural background

The aforementioned lack of the academic traditions was in the material context one of the primary components of the socio-cultural background and circumstances decisively influencing the process of establishing the University of Szczecin. Quoting Lucyna Turek-Kwiatkowska Szczecin primarily lacked the creative component consisting of people (Turek-Kwiatkowska, 1977, p. 13). The population of Szczecin was almost completely replaced and across the entire western Pomerania the degree of depopulation reached almost 73.3% in comparison to the state from before 1939 (Białecki, 1996, p. 109). The rapid and efficient process of resettling the post-German areas with Poles, which would simultaneously repel the frequently invoked argument of the unauthorised presence of Poles in these areas, became the primary issue. The process of populating and developing the new land immediately became a priority for the contemporary Party and administration authorities and a mass propaganda action accompanied the entire operation (Król, 2005, p. 24). As a result the resettling process obviously concluded successfully but also rapidly produced certain new social issues. As a result of migration the area of Szczecin became settled with the community forming a social and cultural mix – diverse in terms of origin, culture and customs. This state of affairs is perfectly reflected in the following data:

as of the 31st of December 1948 Szczecin was inhabited in 57.4% by the displaced persons from the Central Poland and in 26.6% by the displaced from the eastern areas of the II Republic of Poland. The remaining groups consisted in 5.6% of the persons repatriated from the western countries and in 0.3% of the indigenous population (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 37).

Such high degree of variety unavoidably resulted in the problems with integration and identity and in the conflicts between individual groups of settlers as well as, regrettably, in emergence of pathological social behaviour (Król, 2005, p. 33).

The additional problem for establishing a system of education was the socio-cultural profile of the residents of Szczecin who primarily were representatives of the rural population among whom educational aspirations were a rarity (Turek-Kwiatkowska, 1975, pp.14–15). The discoveries and ascertainments of historians explicitly indicate that these lands were primarily settled with people originating from rural areas or the poor residents of cities who represented a rather low level of education. Despite the fact that Szczecin itself was in a rather privileged position in comparison to other

districts of the voivodeship the city was in fact in a much direr situation compared to the other voivodeship cities (Turek-Kwiatkowska, 1975, pp. 14–15).

The post-war processes related to settlers' population and the destabilisation of said processes, the sense of impermanence prevalent among the settlers, the lack of sense of security and the factual problems related to the pathological social behaviour as well as the aforementioned socio-cultural profile of settlers (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 37) resulted in the idea of establishing a higher education institution being perceived as a utopia for a long time.

The myth regarding Szczecin being the compensation for the lost Vilnius, the compensation which was supposed to present the practical opportunity of continuing scientific traditions, was also revealed as utopian in character. Such expectations turned to be valid only in reference to Wrocław where the educational and cultural institutions were actually moved – with the John Cassimir University being the primary example. The institutions of Vilnius along with the Stefan Batory University did not reach Szczecin (Faryś, 1996a, p. 3). As Jan Faryś wrote: “Only in the realm of poetry Szczecin became the successor of Vilnius. The reality was much more mundane. The decisions made at that time set the course of the Szczecin science for decades to come” (Faryś, 1996b, p. 72). Such course of events had numerous not entirely researched causes. One certain factor was the aforementioned lack of university traditions and the related issue of the deficit of materials and facilities. Buildings, laboratories and libraries are usually largely universal in character and taking such facilities over from Germans was a sure method of securing the material foundation for operations of a Polish university (Faryś, 1996b, p. 72). The opportunity of capturing such facilities did not exist in Szczecin.

The initial stage of the development of Szczecin (1945–1948) had passed but it did not mean that the circumstances for establishing the University of Szczecin became more favourable. The difficulties the authorities and residents of Szczecin had to overcome since the incorporation of the city into the territory of Poland became less intense but it did not mean that these difficulties disappeared. The macro-conditions, i.e., the direction for the political, economical and social development of Poland, were also significant. This national development was largely decisive for the development of humanities in Szczecin not being a priority issue for authorities. Janusz Faryś explicitly stated that even facing the obstacles present in Szczecin”

the dictatorial central authorities could have enforce any solution. They did not, however, make a decision favourable for Szczecin. The authorities occupied with eradicating the opposition and consolidating own position did not have time to tackle such issues as establishing a university in Szczecin (Faryś, 1996b, p. 72).

On the other hand the post war condition of the education system staff inclined towards the conclusion that establishing a humanities higher education school was

becoming an increasingly urgent matter. In the defiance of the obvious needs of the academic community of Szczecin the political and economical considerations were once again victorious and thus the process of establishing a higher education institution in Szczecin was redirected towards technical, agricultural and medical sciences which were of explicitly pragmatic character. Undoubtedly in relation to the aforementioned priorities in the field of the political and economical development of the country the decisive factor was the top-down priority of educating specialists: engineers, economists and medicine practitioners (Lesiński, 1998, p. 425). Thus the Academy of Commerce (established in 1946) became the first higher education institution in Szczecin established due to the favour of Józef Górski, the Rector of its parent school, i.e. the Academy of Commerce in Poznań. In 1950 the Academy in Szczecin became independent and changed its name to the Higher School of Economy. The further schools established in Szczecin were: the School of Engineering (1947) and the Academy of Medicine (1948). Establishing these institutions was the first stage of developing the organisational framework for the higher education system in Szczecin. The subsequent stage, i.e., years 1954–1955, was a period of establishing the Higher Agricultural School (1954) and establishing the Technical University of Szczecin in place of the Higher School of Economy and the Engineering School (1955). In the next decade these three higher education institutions were joined by the State Maritime School (1963) which was combined with the previously established State School of Maritime Fishery in 1967. In the subsequent year the Higher Maritime School (the then Maritime Academy) was established on the foundation of the State Maritime School (Lesiński, 1998, pp. 425–427, 449).

These circumstances were unfavourable to the idea of establishing the University of Szczecin because

focusing on developing the vocational, technical and medical higher education, followed by the maritime and agricultural higher education, resulted in abandonment of the initial plans for establishing a university in Szczecin (Turek-Kwiatkowska, 1996, p. 42).

The purport of the words of Lucyna Turek-Kwiatkowska can be further bolstered by the statement made by Włodzimierz Stępiński:

The humanists of our city did not become ‘darlings’ of the Presidium of the Voivodeship National Council and the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Szczecin and its executive bodies. The broadly understood humanities were for a long time a victim of the imagination of the supporters of mass social advancement for whom the collective-land use agriculture, the technical sciences accompanied by the slogan proclaiming industrialisation of the entire country on the foundation of the post-German industrial potential of the northern and western territories and the medical sciences

advocating for healthy society provided better ideological and social legitimacy of People's Republic of Poland in the northern and western lands (Stępiński, 2003, p. 20).

A major issue which persisted over the subsequent long years was the emergence of Szczecin in the Poland-wide scientific awareness. W. Stępiński wrote

If we were sharing the scale of the post-war destruction and the tasks of containing the post-war chaos and putting the research workshop in order with these regions (Silesia, Warmia and Mazury, Gdańsk Pomerania) we were about to face the difficult and arduous road towards not only gaining independence but also towards simply leaving our own mark on the scientific map of Poland and becoming recognised at all by the luminaries of humanities as a study and research centre (Stępiński, 2003, p. 20).

All the geopolitical, social and economical circumstance outlined above resulted in the process of establishing a humanities university in Szczecin being primarily characterised by the bottom-up initiative based on a numerous throng of volunteers (teachers, regionalists, journalists. The institutional support was in turn provided by the domestic scientific centres, primarily Poznań, Toruń and Gdańsk (Chmielewski, 1999, pp. 199–200). December 1956 was the crucial period for the history of the University of Szczecin; at that time the Szczecin Scientific Association under the leadership of professor Leon Babiński was established as a result of the October transformation and, as stated by Kazimierz Kozłowski, “[the Association] took up the task of acting as the consciousness and the avatar of the entire scientific community in 1956” (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 201). The bottom-up actions aimed at establishing a university were undertaken by the members of the Szczecin Scientific Association who engaged the issues of the university charter, staff, infrastructure and financial support within the framework of specially appointed commissions. The actions aimed at securing allies among the authorities of the voivodeship and the Party, in the Polish Academy of Sciences, in the Ministry of Higher Education and, primarily, among the Poznań community were also taken. The efforts and the hard work of the members of the Szczecin Scientific Association were defeated by a rather predictable argument presented by the other side of the conflict which drew attention to the lack of personnel for the university which was supposed to be established (Faryś, 1996a, p.3). Establishing the Consultation Centre of the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań in Szczecin, which could have been considered a surrogate of the regular humanistic studies, could be considered as the bridge leading towards the goal of establishing a true university (Chmielewski, 1999, p. 200) as well as the “educational life-belt” to be used in the face of the previously indicated problems with providing adequate university staff and even more importantly, the primary schools staffs. Approximately 500 persons concluded the education in the institution – the number which in the face of the deficit of qualified teachers was proven to be of the utmost significance.

Special time came for the Consultation Centre and Szczecin itself in 1964 because on the grounds of the Ordinance of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Higher Education the Consultation Centre became subordinate to the Higher Education Ministry and the institution itself was taken over by the University of Poznań and turned into one of its organisational units. This event was a milestone on the path towards establishing the University of Szczecin because, as emphasised by Gerard Labuda, “only this organisational form paved the way towards establishing a regular independent university in the future” (Labuda, 2003, pp. 21–22).

Another such milestone, if we are to stick to the metaphor we have adopted, was establishing the Higher Teachers’ School and, subsequently, the Higher School of Pedagogy.

The Higher Teachers’ School in Szczecin was established on the grounds of the Ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of the 1st of July 1959 as a branch of the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań (Koźmian, 1985, p. 47). The then Vice-Rector of this institution, associate professor PhD Benon Miśkiewicz, became the representative of the Rector of the Adam Mickiewicz University for the HTS affairs. Establishment of this institution should be treated as a breakthrough event because the newly established School was the first higher education institution in Szczecin focusing on humanities and the first institution providing higher education to teachers (Koźmian, 1985, p. 46). Similarly to other institutions of this kind it provided a 3-year education cycle and focused on educating primary school teachers. The inauguration of the academic year at the Higher Teacher’s School took place at the Pomeranian Dukes’ Castle in Szczecin on the 4th of October 1968.

The organisational structure of the Higher Teacher’s School consisted of four faculties which in turn consisted of 13 institutes: the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, the Faculty of Physical Education and the Faculty of Primary Education. Inter-faculty units were also established within the framework of the Higher Teacher’s School: The Department of New Teaching Techniques, The Department of Philosophical and Social Sciences, the Pedagogical Practice Workshop; the independent organisational units in the form of the Practical Foreign Language Learning College and the Military College were also developed within School’s structure. The first rector of the HTS was associate professor PhD Antoni Warzecha who was replaced in the 1969/1970 academic year by associate professor PhD Henryk Lesiński. The school soon expanded its offer with studies in the part-time system. In the 1970/1971 academic year, having taken into consideration the professionally active teachers – the former graduates of teaching courses, a 3-semester college covering three fields of study: primary education, Polish philology and mathematics, was established. At a later date the following forms of studies were also developed: the half-year studies for the graduates of Teacher Training Institutes; the 3-year studies for the graduates of pedagogical secondary schools; the part-time studies for the graduates

of pedagogical secondary schools as well as the studies at the Faculty of Physical Education for the graduates of Teacher Training Institutes (Koźmian, 1985, pp. 54–88).

As evidenced by the fact that throughout the entire period of School's existence the number of candidates exceeded the projected limits for admittance the establishment of the School was an excellent response to the continuously growing interest of the youth of Szczecin in education. In total 887 primary school teachers of various specialisations who later replenished the staff in the educational establishments in the towns and villages of the region completed education in Szczecin in years 1968–1973. This number surely could have been greater if the ministerial authorities provided the HTS with better accommodation conditions and material assistance. As the practice demonstrates these conditions and assistance (or lack of thereof) also influenced the condition of the teaching staff as well as its scientific and research activity. The teaching capabilities of the School varied; the teaching staff consisted of the employees of the dissolved Teacher Training Institutes, the Education Supervision Office and schools of various levels. A small percentage of the teaching staff consisted of employees from other science and education centres, including the Adam Mickiewicz University. The situation of the teaching staff of the Higher Teachers' School was very difficult. The obligations and responsibilities resulting from the process of organising the School, overtime teaching work, the tasks related to educating students and the difficult material standing resulted in little time for own scientific pursuits and development. We must also add that the opportunities of academic advancement existed only in the scientific institutions outside of Szczecin, i.e. in Poznań, Wrocław, Warszawa and Kraków, and this is where doctoral proceedings and dissertations were primarily realised. The necessity of going on excursions further destabilised the staff and hindered the process of scientific integration of the community of the Higher Teachers' School. The staff shortages referred to both the qualifications of employees as well as to their number. It was a malady against which the School struggled for the entire duration of its existence. The staff limitations influenced the profile of the conducted scientific research activities. These activities primarily covered own studies and the fundamental studies. The majority of these studies, particularly in the fields of sociology and history, was focused on the regional issues with the particular attention drawn to the subjects of maritime, the sociology of cities and rural areas as well as the issues from the field of the integration or history of the education systems and institutions in the Western Pomerania. The cooperation of Schools' employees with the Szczecin Scientific Association and the Western Pomerania Institute as well as publishing own "Zeszyty Naukowe [Scientific Notebooks]" journals were all measurable indicators of the scientific and research activity of the HTS (Koźmian, 1985, pp. 80–88).

On the 1st of October 1973 on the grounds of the Ministerial Ordinance of the 29th of September 1973 the Higher Teacher's School was renamed to the Higher School of Pedagogy. It was a fundamental change in terms of the formal and legal status of

the institution as it put the School under the direct authority of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology. The HSP gaining independence was simultaneously equated with the improvement of the financial standing of the School in comparison to remaining under the legal and organisational supervision of the Adam Mickiewicz University. Associate professor PhD H. Lesiński became the Rector of the HSP. The office of the Vice-Rector for Education was taken over by the then Secretary of the University Committee of the PUWP PhD Kazimierz Jaskot and the office of the Vice-Rector for School's Development was taken by associate professor PhD Tadeusz Klanowski. Analogously to the Higher Teacher's School the tasks of the HSP consisted of improving qualifications of the primary and secondary school teachers of Szczecin (Kozmian, 1985, pp. 85–87). The HSP inherited from its predecessor not only its tasks but also the material and accommodation difficulties. Becoming independent of the Adam Mickiewicz University slightly improved the situation but not enough to speak of the end of School's problems. The facilities and premises taken over from the Higher Teacher's School required general overhaul and the related significant financial expenses. The available stock of teaching aids and equipment was also far from satisfactory. This state of affairs meant continuation of the struggles aimed at improving and developing the material and accommodation base of the School over the coming years. If the rationales behind establishing the HSP were to be taken into account taking these actions was a necessity. Consistently with the decision of the Ministry the HSP was to be a four-year higher education school providing uniform Master's degree courses in the full-time and the part-time systems. In the case of Szczecin it was a significant task because as we can read:

Highly qualified teachers are required for primary and secondary education, from among 6620 primary school teachers in the Szczecińskie voivodeship 2057 teachers possess secondary education obtained through a secondary school of pedagogy and 3993 teachers completed education in a Teacher Training Institute. We have to gradually provide these teachers with higher education (Kozmian, 1985, p. 86).

The nation-wide and regional demands of the education system were also the decisive factor behind the newly established School adopting a particular organisational structure. This structure was determined on the basis of the Ordinance of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology of the 11th of January 1974. The School consisted of four primary faculties: the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, the Faculty of Pedagogy and the Faculty of Physical Education, as well as of six inter-faculty units: the Department of Philosophical and Sociological Sciences, the Department of New Teaching Techniques, the Pedagogy Practice Workshop, the Practical Foreign Language Learning College, the Military College and the Physical Education College. The School also included: the Vocational Administration College and the Main Library as extra-faculty units. Over the following

years the structure of the HSP was on several occasions corrected and amended. Towards the end of its operations the School still consisted of the four aforementioned faculties but within their framework four new institutes were established: the Institute of History and Library Studies, the Institute of Polish Philology, the Institute of Social and Philosophical Sciences as well as the West Pomerania Institute (Kozmian, 1985, pp. 87–91). The interest in Master's degree courses in the field of humanities was significant among the Szczecin youth as evidenced by the fact that in the first year of operations there were 500 hundred candidates for the 395 spots available at full-time studies. Similarly to the Higher Teacher's School the greatest number of students (nearly 80%) came from general preparatory secondary schools. In presentation of the data regarding the graduates of the HSP we must take note that the graduates holding the degree of Master of Arts concluded their education in the School only in 1977. Until then the graduates consisted of students who began their studies at the Higher Teacher's School and who passed the diploma exam. Over 15 years of School's operations, during the 1968-1983 period (taking into account the HSP period), 6588 individuals in total completed their education at the HSP pursuant to the full-time and part-time modes of studies. If we were to account only for the students of the HSP this number is 4656 (Kozmian, 1985, pp. 108–122).

The holistic depiction of operations of the HSP cannot be developed without discussing the growth of School's staff in terms of quantity and quality. The analysis of this issue demonstrates that similarly to the case of the material and accommodation circumstances and conditions for School's operations in the case of School's staff growth we are also dealing with continuation of the difficulties plaguing the institution since the time of the Higher Teacher's School. At the time of changing its legal and organisational status the School employed 76 teachers in total (7 associate professors, including 3 habilitated; 18 employees holding a degree of PhD employed in the position of an assistant professor or a senior lecturer as well as 51 assistants and lecturers). In the terms of numbers and scientific capabilities this staff was disproportionately underwhelming in comparison to the tasks assigned to the HSP and, furthermore, the staff members were plagued by frequent and numerous instances of teaching overtime. The situation was made worse by the fact that the School could not count on the influx of employees from other scientific centres which meant that improving the existing state of affairs had to progress through utilising own assets, i.e. through educating own staff rapidly. To this effect attempts were made at supporting School's own employees through granting sabbatical leaves, doctoral and post-doctoral scholarships, organising domestic and international internships and assigning as little overtime teaching work as possible. It would seem that these actions produced the desired results as in 1983 the number of employees grew to 304. The qualifications of School's staff also improved as among their numbers there were now 5 professors, 27 associate professors, 77 assistant professors, 44 senior lecturers, 26 lecturers, 2 instructors, 71 senior

assistants, 33 assistants, 16 trainee assistants, 2 foreign language teachers and a single trainee foreign language teacher. Nevertheless, this data is hard to recognise as a symbol of the complete success, particularly if we were to consider the ratio of the dependent scientific staff members to the independent scientific staff members. The necessity of further academic advancement and thus bolstering the staff of the HSP translated into the changes in the direction of the scientific and research work and its character. Similarly to the work conducted at the Higher Teacher's School this work focused due to objective reasons on own research i.e. the academic advancement work realised in various scientific research centres scattered across the country. Similarly to the Higher Teacher's School this fact hindered integration of the scientific life within the confines of a single university.

In the context of the operations of the Higher Teacher's School and the Higher School of Pedagogy the idea of establishing a university in Szczecin was constantly re-surfacing. For various reasons the idea never went beyond the conceptual stage. These reasons consisted of various factors, including the lack of academic traditions previously indicated in numerous instances, the entanglement of Szczecin in the top-down and regional economical plans and the related preference for technical, agricultural and medical sciences (Ślepowroński, 2008, pp. 222–223). It is within these conditions and circumstances where we should seek the answer to the question of why the field of humanities never became “an object of particular care of the Presidium of the National Voivodeship Council or the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP” (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 20). In turn, this negligence on the part of the voivodeship authorities translated into lack of initiative on the part of the central authorities. The argument concerning lack of the appropriate staff for a possible university institution was repeated ad nauseum. This argument was used by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Professor Osman Achmatowicz, when he was asked about the validity of establishing a university in Szczecin:

What we are discussing is the possibility of establishing a proper accommodation and material base for a university. However, for me buildings and facilities are not the most important. I would consider establishing a university in Szczecin if someone would introduce me to thirty professors who would be willing to work there, teach students and engage in scientific research work (Puchalski, 2005, p. 15).

And thus a vicious cycle developed: a university could not be established because there were not enough professors whereas professors did not want to come to Szczecin because the city did not possess appropriate university structures (Puchalski, 2005, p. 15). Only in the Eighties of the XX century this vicious cycle, this curse was broken and it happened not by accident. The political events of that period resulted in the idea of establishing a university in Szczecin being perceived more favourably.

One such component which bolstered the faith in the idea was the fact that numerous communities and their representatives became involved in the subsequent stages of the battle for establishing own university. Voices were raised by – obviously – the Szczecin Scientific Association led by Professor Kazimierz Stojalowski. He was soon after joined by the scientists and scholars of the HSP representing various political options (Józef Kopeć, Kazimierz Jaskot, Alina Młyńczak) as well as by the scholars-political activists from the Technical University of Szczecin and the Higher Agricultural School (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 21). The support for the idea of establishing a university was also expressed by the representatives of the cultural communities focused around the Voivodeship and the Municipal Public Library vigorously led by Stanisław Krzywicki. A significant role was also played by Archbishop Kazimierz Majdański who on numerous occasions lent his authority to the great work of establishing the University of Szczecin (Puchalski, 2005, p. 17).

The community of journalists played a particular role in the action of lobbying in favour of the University. Through numerous pieces published in press, radio and television journalists advocated for and popularised the idea of a university not only on the regional level but on the national level as well. To this effect interviews were carried out with the exceptional representatives of science and culture as well as with the distinguished and prominent politicians whom journalists attempted to convince to the idea of establishing a humanities university in the north-western frontier of Poland (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 21). With this goal in mind Szczecin hosted such authority figures as Professor Bohdan Suchodolski – the Chairman of the National Culture Council, or Professor Aleksander Gieysztor – the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences. A cyclical series of interviews was also carried out with rectors of domestic universities: the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, the University of Warsaw, the University of Wrocław, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (Puchalski, 2005, p. 16). Professor Gerard Labuda, the subsequent doctor honoris causa of the University of Szczecin, was also among the devoted friends and advocates of the development of humanities in Szczecin and the subsequent establishment of a university. Years later W. Stępiński recalled the figure of professor with the following words:

he was involved in, (...) as we would call it today, consistent lobbying for the benefit of Szczecin becoming independent of the capital and other major cities. Professor was a great advocate of making Warsaw elites aware of the importance of the northern and western territories, including Szczecin. He supported us consistently when we were taking further steps on the road towards establishing the university we longed for. If the University had not been established in 1984/1985 it would have not been established at all; the establishment of the University was the crowning achievement of two generations of efforts of our scientific, administrative and political communities as well as the efforts made by Professor Gerard Labuda himself (Stępiński, 2003, p. 15).

In conclusion “a peculiar Szczecin camp involved in actions aimed at establishing a humanities university has been established” (Puchalski, 2005, p. 16) in the capital of the West Pomerania. What differentiated this period from the previous years was the fact that the representatives of the political and administrative authorities granted their assistance to the initiators of the movement aimed at establishing a university in Szczecin despite the objections of the Ministry and certain scientific communities. The Resolution of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP of May 1981 adopted under the inspiration sparked by a part of the scientific community obliged the then First Secretary Stanisław Miśkiewicz and the subordinate activists in the voivodeship authorities and in the Party University Committees to support the idea of establishing a humanities university in their communities. The community of the HSP was the most involved and initiated the conceptual works aimed at developing the vision of the future university (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 22). On the 31st of May of 1982 the voivode of Szczecin Stanisław Malec made a decision regarding organisation and functioning of the Committee for Establishing a West Pomerania University in Szczecin which brought together 29 persons led by the first president of Szczecin, Piotr Zaręmba. A month later, also upon the motion of the voivode, the National Voivodeship Council adopted the Resolution regarding the preparatory works aimed at establishing a humanities university. Following development of the joint Szczecin stance a time had come to convince the nationwide institutions and authorities. Special role was once again played by the journalists from Szczecin (incl. Zbigniew Puchalski, Janusz Ławrynowicz, Zdzisław Sośnicki) who provided press coverage of the process of establishing the University or aided the efforts through organising science and journalism sessions or through broadcasting the periodic broadcast titled “Nasz Uniwersytet [Our University]”. The journalists from Szczecin were also occupied with preparing materials which were initially broadcast in the nationwide radio and television. Another community, apart from journalists, involved in the actions for the benefit of the humanities centre of Szczecin was the aforementioned Committee for Establishing a West Pomerania University. Work of the Committee was inspired and coordinated by the Committee Secretary Zofia Mielczarek. The Committee managed the multipartite actions consisting primarily of conducting talks with representatives of the most important political, scientific and cultural institutions. The statement made by Professor Bohdan Suchodolski at the Pomeranian Dukes’ Castle in Szczecin became particularly important:

Culture must be always developed now and not later. Culture is not afraid of the times of crisis. It has its own strengths and tools. Staff shall never be developed if an institution will not be established. It is a kind of a feedback – an institution must be established to bring together the staff (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 31).

On the 30th of September, the delegation of the Committee along with the representatives of the regional political and administrative authorities met in Warsaw with the Socio-Political Committee of the Council of Ministers. At that time the Deputy Minister Mieczysław Rakowski made a significant statement: “I consider establishing a university in Szczecin to be a necessity” (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 32). Not a year later, on the 22nd of June 1984, the Council of Ministers approved the draft of the Act on establishing the university which was later submitted to the Sejm. This Act, groundbreaking for Szczecin, was passed on the 21st of July 1984 (Act, 1984). The foundations for the University consisted of the Higher School of Pedagogy and the Faculties of Engineering, Economics and Transport of the Technical University of Szczecin. The time has come to turn the legal provisions into concrete and attainable solutions (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 35).

The first step taken towards establishing the University consisted of the appointment of the Organization Commission for the University of Szczecin effected by the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology, professor Benon Miśkiewicz. The Commission primarily consisted of attorneys, economists and management specialists who took up the arduous challenge of developing the legal and organisational foundations for operations of the University of Szczecin. The Commission was led by Kazimierz Jaskot – the future first Rector of the University of Szczecin (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 36). The efforts of the Organization Commission resulted in the University opening a year earlier than projected, i.e., in 1985, despite the suggestions of the central authorities and doubts on the part of the local communities. The fact that opening the University a year earlier coincided with the 40th anniversary of Szczecin being incorporated into the Polish territory surely contributed to the negotiations (Puchalski, Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 36). We must not forget about the fact to which attention was drawn by various individuals incl. Zbigniew Puchalski:

the decision of the Sejm regarding establishing a university in Szczecin was a purely political decision made in the particular time, in the period shortly following lifting of the martial law and under the circumstances of significant social tensions – the time when the central authorities of the centralised state were significantly weakened. The position of the authorities from the so called ‘field’ within the regime was bolstered. The opinions of communities and various other circles gained in importance, the authorities began to listen more attentively to voices of the people who due to their accomplishments were frequently authority figures valued by the society. (...) even the residents of Poznań who were customarily sympathetic towards Szczecin (...) were repeating: ‘not yet... wait...’

Apart from the political rationales one of the basic factors, and even maybe the primary factor, behind the success of the efforts aimed at establishing the University

was the manner in which these affairs were handled in the beginning of the Eighties of the XX century (Puchalski, 2005, p. 16).

On the 30th of September of 1985, the event of historical importance for the community of Szczecin took place at the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle where the inauguration of the first ever academic year at the University of Szczecin was held. The solemn celebrations were held and among participants of this momentous historical event there were representatives of the highest authorities: General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the deputy Chairman of the National Council Kazimierz Barcikowski, the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology professor Benon Miśkiewicz as well as representatives of the regional authorities. The representatives of scientific communities were also present: rectors of all Polish universities and higher education institutions of Szczecin; members of the local cultural circles and media, political and social communities also attended the ceremony (Puchalski, 2005, p. 16).

This day was marked by enormous satisfaction, joy and sense of accomplishment for all those who were over the decades attempting to materialise the idea which some considered to be a utopia impossible to realise. Owing to their persistence, hard work and drive the vision became a reality and within the halls of the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle the „Gaude Mater Polonia” song could be heard for the first time in the post-war Szczecin.

Works Cited

- Bialecki, T. (1998). Pierwsze lata polskiego Szczecina (1945–1949). In: T. Bialecki, Z. Silski (eds.), *Dzieje Szczecina 1945–1990* (pp. 51–73). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo „13 Muz”, Księgarnia Literacka.
- Bialecki, T. (1996). Zmiany struktury demograficznej w województwie szczecińskim w latach 1945–1994. In: K. Kozłowski, E. Włodarczyk (eds.), *Pięćdziesiąt lat Polski na Pomorzu Zachodnim. Polityka. Społeczeństwo. Kultura*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Archiwum Państwowego „Dokument” w Szczecinie.
- Chmielewski, Z. (1999). Nauka i szkolnictwo wyższe w życiu intelektualnym Pomorza Zachodniego po 1945 roku. In: H. Bronk, E. Włodarczyk (eds.), *Kongres Pomorski. Od historii ku przyszłości Pomorza* (pp. 189–206). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Czubiński, A. (2000). Polska i Pomorze Zachodnie w latach 1945–1995. In: P. Bartnik, K. Kozłowski (eds.), *Pomorze Zachodnie w tysiącleciu* (pp. 267–278). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Archiwum Państwowego „Dokument” w Szczecinie.
- Faryś, J. (1996a). Pięćdziesięciolecie nauki polskiej na Pomorzu Szczecińskim. *Przegląd Uniwersytecki*, 1–3, 2–4.
- Faryś, J. (1996b). 50 lat szkolnictwa wyższego na Pomorzu Zachodnim. *Technika Poszukiwań Geologicznych. Geosynoptyka i Geotermia*, 6, 71–76.

- Kozłowski, K. (2000). *Między racją stanu a stalinizmem. Pierwsze dziesięć lat władzy politycznej na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1945–1955*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Archiwum Państwowego „Dokument”.
- Kozłowski, K. (2012). *Pomorze Zachodnie w latach 1945–2010. Społeczeństwo – władza – gospodarka – kultura*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Koźmian, D. (2000). *Droga do Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego w opinii prasy centralnej i regionalnej w latach 1981–1985 (w 15. rocznicę powstania uczelni)*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Koźmian, D. (1985). *Rozwój Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Szczecinie w latach 1968–1983*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwa Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej.
- Król, J. (2015). Geneza i utworzenie Instytutu Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. In: J. Król, E. Magiera (eds.), *Instytut Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego (1985–2015)* (pp. 13–48). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego Minerwa.
- Król, J. (2005). *Uchronić przed zapomnieniem – średnie szkoły ogólnokształcące w województwie szczecińskim w latach 1945–1948*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Labuda, G. (2003). Moja naukowa droga do Szczecina. In: M. Drzonek (ed.), *G. Labuda. Doktor honoris causa Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego*. Szczecin: Biuro Promocji i Informacji Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Lesiński, H. (1998). Uczelnie wyższe i nauka. In: T. Białecki, Z. Silski (eds.), *Dzieje Szczecina 1945–1990* (pp. 425–459). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo „13 Muz”: Księgarnia Literacka.
- Nowotniak, W. (1992). *Szkoły ponadpodstawowe w województwie szczecińskim w latach 1945–1990. Informator*. Szczecin: Oficyna Wydawnictwa Regionalnego Ośrodka Kształcenia Praktycznego Zachodniopomorskiego Centrum Edukacyjnego.
- Puchalski, Z., Włodarczyk, E. (2010). Na drodze do uniwersytetu. In: W. Stępiński, W. Tarczyński (eds.), *Uniwersytet Szczeciński. Na przełomie wieków i czasów*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Puchalski, Z. (2005). Jubileuszowe refleksje. In: Z. Puchalski (ed.), *Uniwersytet Szczeciński. Fakty i refleksje* (pp. 14–17). Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Archiwum Państwowego „Dokument” w Szczecinie.
- Stępiński, W. (2003). Wniosek promotorski w sprawie nadania Gerardowi Labudzie godności doktora honoris causa Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. In: M. Drzonek (ed.), *Gerard Labuda. Doktor honoris causa Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego*. Szczecin: Biuro Promocji i Informacji Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Ślepowroński, T. (2008). *Polska i wschodnioniemiecka historiografia Pomorza Zachodniego (1945–1970). Instytucje – koncepcje – badania*. Szczecin: ZAPOL.
- Turek-Kwiatkowska, L. (1975). Polityczne i społeczno-demograficzne przesłanki kształtowania się szkolnictwa na Pomorzu Zachodnim. In: L. Turek-Kwiatkowska (ed.),

Pionierskie lata oświaty szczecińskiej 1945–1948 (pp. 11–17). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

Turek-Kwiatkowska, L. (1977). *Udział szkolnictwa w rozwoju społeczno – gospodarczym regionu szczecińskiego w latach 1945–1970*. Warszawa–Poznań: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Turek-Kwiatkowska, L. (1996). Rozwój szczecińskiego środowiska naukowego. In: A. Grzech (ed.), *50 lat rozwoju nauki na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych* (pp. 33–47). Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk.

Act of 21 July 1984 on the establishment of the University of Szczecin. *Journal of Laws of 1984*, no. 36, item 190.

Abstract

The subject of this paper consists of the historical, sociological and cultural background influencing the establishment and development of the University of Szczecin. The goal of the studies conducted on this issue was to determine and analyse all the determinants of historical, sociological and cultural character which were decisive for the process of establishing the Alma Mater of Szczecin. The source materials and the subject literature query enabled defining the basic background, circumstances and conditions which defined the essence, the character and the results of the efforts aimed at establishing the University of Szczecin as well as the circumstance and conditions which hindered these efforts. As a result of the conducted studies it has been determined that in comparison to other cities Szczecin was from the very beginning facing incomparably more difficult conditions for developing scientific life. The issues related to the early pioneer stage of University's development, the prolonged period of social instability, the direction adopted by the Polish education policy and the cautious or even, at times, reluctant attitude of the central authorities towards the idea of establishing a university resulted in Szczecin waiting as much as 40 years for establishing own university. The political changes at the threshold of the Eighties of the XX century, the increasing educational needs of the region, the activeness of the local community as well as the support of other academic centres were of primary significance.

Keywords: the University of Szczecin, education, education policy