

## 80th ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSOR ALFRED JAHN

It is a great privilege to commemorate such an important and uncommon anniversary of a friend in Polar research. Professor Alfred Jahn, the Honorary Chairman of the Polish Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, certainly deserves this. Born on 22 April, 1915, in Lwów, he studied at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, where he got his M.Sc. degree in geography in 1937. As a young scientist, he began his Polar research the same year, during the First Polish West Greenland Expedition organized and led by Professor Aleksander Kosiba. The observations he gathered during that expedition, allowed him to prepare his Ph.D. Thesis on *Investigations on the structure and temperature of soils in West Greenland*, defended at the same university in 1939.

Though his Polar studies were interrupted by the II<sup>nd</sup> World War, Professor Jahn immediately joined ranks of the Polar explorers and researches during the III<sup>rd</sup> International Geophysical Year, 1957–8. He became one of the most scientifically productive members of the Polish III<sup>rd</sup> I.G.Y. Expeditions to south Spitsbergen, led by Professor Stanisław Siedlecki, being the head of the „Periglacial Group North” of that expedition, and at the same time one of the builders of the Polish Scientific Station at Isbjørnhamna, Hornsund, as well.

The research in West Greenland and south Spitsbergen made Professor Jahn one of the leading scientists in the world, in the field of Polar geomorphology and studies of glacial and periglacial zones. His position in the Polar sciences was strengthened by his further studies in Spitsbergen, moreover in Alaska, Siberia, and northern Scandinavia. His scientific papers exceed 200 in this field alone. Popular–scientific books about Greenland and Alaska, earned Professor Jahn popularity also outside professional circles.

There is a long list of scientific distinctions and functions of Professor Jahn since his *veniam legendi* obtained at the A. Mickiewicz University in Poznań (1946), first as the Docent at the Maria Curie–Skłodowska University in Lublin, then as the Professor (since 1949), the Director of the Institute of Physical Geography/Geomorphology (1958–1968), and the President (1962–1968) of the Wrocław University. His high position at this university, from which he retired in 1985 after illustrious academic career, allowed him to continue his own research in the Arctic, and to guide his junior colleagues in the Polar geomorphology and glaciology as well.

Professor Alfred Jahn is renowned for his strong patriotic feelings and firm beliefs in morals. This was evident in 1968 when, as the President of the Wrocław University, he defended his students who went on strike demanding more freedom of thought from the communist regime. This defense had cost Professor Jahn his position as the President of the University. And again, in 1982, during the martial law imposed on the country by the communist regime, he stood fast in his beliefs in truth and science when addressing the meeting held on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Polish Polar research.

Professor A. Jahn's scientific activities earned him the membership of the Polish Academy of Sciences (in 1971), of Academia Leopoldina (Halle), of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and honorary membership of many scientific societies, committees and unions in Poland and abroad. In 1985, on the 70th Birthday, and at the same time the 50th Anniversary of Professor Jahn's scientific career, he was honoured with the title Doctor Honoris Causa by the Wrocław University. His monograph on *Cryoturbation phenomena of the Recent and Pleistocene Periglacial Zone* was awarded the State Prize in 1952.

Professor A. Jahn is one of the founders of the Polar Club of the Geographical Society of Poland, and its first President (1972–1982). His ideas about the Polish Polar tradition and the importance of Polar research and exploration, not only for science but also for personal development, are being expressed in the activities of the Club's members.

Professor Alfred Jahn's longtime activities in the Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, of which he was the Chairman (1981–1984), and is the Honorary Chairman (since 1984), the Member of its Presidium, and for many years the Chairman of its Commission on Permafrost, earned him our great gratitude. He is considered one of the pillars of the Polish Polar research in the Arctic. The Polish National Committee on Polar Research takes this great opportunity of Professor Alfred Jahn's 80th Anniversary, to Wish Him Long Life and Good Health, while enjoying the friendship of all of us.

Polish National Committee on Polar Research  
Krzysztof BIRKENMAJER (Chairman)