

## PROFESSOR ELŻBIETA DZIEGIEĆ: ACADEMIC, DIDACTIC AND ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In July 2009 Professor Elżbieta Dziegieć would have celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday but she did not live to enjoy this anniversary as she died suddenly on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009. The outline of her life and professional work presented here will preface the next volume of *Turyzm*. It had already been dedicated to her and she had been its co-editor for many years.

### 1. ACADEMIC CAREER

Elżbieta Dziegieć was born on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1939 in Stobiecko Miejskie, which today is a district of Radomsko. She did not remember her father very clearly because he had been arrested during World War II and died in the Oświęcim labour camp. She went to school in Radomsko and in 1957 she passed her 'matura' school leaving exam. She went to study at the University of Łódź where, after passing her entrance examinations, she became a student of geography at the Biology and Earth Sciences Department. After three years of general study she chose to specialize in economic geography and wrote her MA thesis under the supervision of Prof. Ludwik Straszewicz *Population Development in the Town of Radomsko: 1945-60*. She sat her MA exam in 1962, receiving a degree in economic geography.

After graduation, Prof. Straszewicz offered her a position as research assistant and teacher at the Department of Economic Geography. In 1965 she was given a 'technical-research' position which, among other activities, made her responsible for international cooperation in the department, as well as collecting and editing materials for *The Atlas of Łódź Województwo* (1965), work which was noted and appreciated by its editor, Prof. Ludwik Straszewicz, in the preface.

In 1970-3 she completed her doctoral studies in economic geography under the supervision of Prof. Stanisław Zych (it was the first time they were being organized at the University of Łódź), after which she resumed work at the department as 'senior assistant'. Her doctoral thesis, *The Socio-Economic Diversity of the Countryside from the Perspective of Administrative Train-*

*ing* (Łódź Województwo), was supervised by Prof. Straszewicz and based on meticulous research conducted over several months all over the *Województwo*. She defended her work in 1976 at the Institute of Geography and her reviewers were Prof. Jan Ernst and Dr Stefan Witkowski. In the same year she was promoted to the position of associate professor (*adiunkt*) at the Department of Economic Geography.

An important event in her academic career was a four-month research 'internship' in France in 1977/78 where she studied at the *Institut de Geographie* of Aix-Marseille University II, under the supervision of Prof. Bernard Barbier, who at that time was involved in the Geography of Tourism and Recreation Working Group, and then its Committee, of the IGU – International Geographical Union. During her stay in France she became familiar with the work of French geographers in the field of anthropogeography, including tourism geography. The contacts she made at that time proved fruitful in her further academic career and were very helpful in stimulating academic and teaching collaboration between the Łódź centre and those in France.

In 1981, as a result of reorganization at the University of Łódź, the Institute of Economic Geography and Spatial Planning was founded consisting of three departments and Dr Dziegieć started work as an associate professor (*adiunkt*) at the Urban Geography and Tourism Department.

She received her 'habilitation' degree in 1996 at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, on the basis of her academic work and her thesis *The Tourist Urbanization of Rural Areas in Poland*. Her academic and teaching activity was evaluated so highly that on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999 she was nominated a professor (*profesor nadzwyczajny*) at the University of Łódź.

In January 1992 the Urban Geography and Tourism Department was upgraded to the rank of an independent faculty, and in 1998 sub-divided into four, including a Tourism Geography Department which was organized and led by Prof. Dziegieć until her death. Since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007 it has been a part of the Institute of Urban Geography and Tourism, University of Łódź.

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## 2. RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Elżbieta Dziegieć's interests changed over time, which is natural for somebody involved in research for a long period. During the initial period of her work at the department, she was involved in research which was conducted in *Opolszczyzna* (the Opole region) on the function, significance and range of local 'central places'. It was a time when all staff, including the professor, took part on student field trips, actively participating in creating a research hypothesis, and interpreting the collected data. Prof. Dziegieć's first publications were on the town of Głubczyce (a collective work), its trade serving as a criterion for delimiting the influence of a 'central place', a chapter in a further book on Kluczbork and some others. Her first field trip raised her interest in the smallest 'central places' in Poland – *gmina* villages which became the leading theme in her research and resulted in her doctoral thesis, parts of which were printed in *Zeszyty Naukowe* at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and *Dokumentacja Geograficzna* in Warsaw. In her PhD thesis, *The Socio-Economic Diversity of the Countryside from the Perspective of Administrative Training* the author demonstrated empirically that there is a relation between the time taken to perform administrative functions in a 'central place' of the lowest rank (a village), and its position within the national settlement system.

Another field of interest in tourism geography must have resulted from her studies in France with her first work being on the territorial expansion of the recreation settlements around Łódź, the recreation zones around large cities, and the holidays taken by the inhabitants of Łódź and other cities. In the late 1980's she became interested in a new issue: the influence of the development of tourism and recreation on changes to rural settlements. She started her research by reviewing and analysing the literature on methods as well as the results of theoretical and empirical studies conducted in different countries. Following this, for several years, she undertook research into changes in selected villages in different regions of Poland (fishing villages, villages in lake districts, lowland, upland and mountain villages), publishing the results in both Polish and foreign journals (mainly French). The conclusions and general theoretical remarks were included in her 'habilitation' thesis: *The Tourist Urbanization of Rural Areas in Poland*. The whole study and its final results are certainly her greatest research achievement, and the description of the 'colonization' and 'urbanization' of rural areas, as induced by tourism, has become a permanent part of the tourism geography literature.

Discussing her publications, we cannot ignore her contribution to the clarification of terms which are commonly used in the tourism literature. Together with Prof. Bachvarov, she prepared and published valuable works concerning the relation between 'recreation' and 'tourism', making references to French, British and other literature.

Prof. Dziegieć attached a lot of weight to following the most recent research publications and wrote reviews of nine books (six of which were from foreign languages). The reviews were not limited to a mere description of the content as she got into debate with the authors. Her participation in numerous conferences abroad and in Poland resulted not only in papers, presentations or presiding over sessions, but also in detailed reports from those events, adding to the knowledge of those who could not participate (six reports).

A large number of her publications concerned education for tourism purposes including suggestions for general and individual subject syllabuses, or the evaluation of student fieldwork.

Her publications include over 60 works (see the attached list) demonstrating the variety of her research interests, as well as of academic, teaching and organizational activities.

## 3. TEACHING ACTIVITIES – EDUCATING FOR THE PROFESSION

Having observed Elżbieta Dziegieć's professional activity for many years, I can say that her real passion was the work of a university teacher which could be seen in the immense amount of time and effort she put into teaching students. She treated these duties very seriously, carefully preparing course and individual lectures (she had several) for full-time, part-time and post-graduate students. She was also genuinely devoted to running MA seminars, demanding full involvement from her students.

She was dedicated especially to teaching the geography of Poland (socio-economic and tourist) and France. She treated her lectures on Poland as a 'patriotic' mission, believing that a student of geography or tourism should not only know his or her own country in detail, but also understand the historical and contemporary processes which have determined, and are still determining, present living conditions, as well as the position of Poland in Europe and the world. The lectures on France were treated very emotionally, because she knew that country from experience, and understood and loved it.

By her death she had supervised 151 MA's in geography, and in tourism and recreation, and

a further 30 students working on their MA theses were participating in her seminar in the 2008/9 academic year. She had also been the supervisor of 51 diploma theses on the Postgraduate Tourism Studies course at the University of Łódź. We must also remember her involvement in teaching foreign students. In 1975-89 she took care of several students from France and Georgia who were preparing their MA theses at the department (later the Institute).

Prof. Elżbieta Dziegieć educated young research students as well and in recent years she successfully supervised four doctoral students while another two had completed their theses, but which they defended after her death. Here are their names and titles revealing her research interests:

1. *The Tourist Facilities of Light Industrial Factories of Łódź in terms of the Political Transformation*, 2001, Krzysztof Grzelak.
2. *Biographical Museums in Poland: their importance and attractiveness*, 2001, Małgorzata Rodacka.
3. *The Diversification of the Tourist-Recreational Space of Roztocze*, 2002, Małgorzata Karolczak.
4. *The Tourist Image of Poland in European Union Countries*, 2006, Monika Prylińska.
5. *The Development of Tourism Space in Kołobrzeg*, 2009, Mariusz Miedziński.
6. *Urbanization Processes in the Tourist-Recreational Areas of the Urban Fringe Zone of Łódź*, 2009, Marzena Makowska-Iskierka.

As a recognized specialist on settlement and tourism, Prof. Dziegieć was also invited to review doctoral theses (eight) from different Polish universities and one post-doctoral 'habilitation' thesis from Warsaw University. She also reviewed many articles, books and textbooks.

Lectures given at foreign universities were an important element of her career. She lectured in Tbilisi (1977), Paris-Nanterre (1982), Aix-en-Provence (1986), Sophia (1986), Angers (several times, first in 1991), and the Universities of Lyon II and Lyon III.

#### 4. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

Training in France enabled Elżbieta Dziegieć to be actively involved in different forms of international collaboration. In 1980 she became a corresponding member of the Geography of Tourism and Leisure Committee at the IGU and took part in a number of the international conferences of this committee (e.g. in France and Berlin). In 1983 in Łódź and Sulejów<sup>4</sup> she organized an IGU conference, entitled 'Tourism around Large Cities', hosting dozens of geographers from several countries.

She participated in two IGU Congresses in Paris

(1984) and The Hague (1996) while taking part in training courses at the Universities of Bratislava and Tbilisi and at EXPO 2000 in Germany.

However, the most important part of her international activity was her collaboration with the geographers from two French universities: Aix-en-Provence and Angers. At different periods she represented the Rector of the University of Łódź in all matters concerning this. As part of the cooperation with Aix-Marseille II University (formerly Aix-en-Provence), she initiated and co-organized seminars, alternately in Aix and Łódź. In 1988 and 1992 they were held in Poland and in 1989 and 1994 in the south of France. During those conferences geographers discussed many issues that were being worked on at that time at both centres.

Even more significant was Prof. Dziegieć's involvement in organizing a permanent connection with the University of Angers and the agreements signed guaranteed student exchange for fieldwork and joint teaching seminars. The exchange was organized between the Urban Geography and Tourism Department, University of Łódź and the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management Studies, University of Angers in 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990. Groups from Angers (eight students and two lecturers) stayed in Łódź, taking part in fieldwork alongside Łódź students. Afterwards, there was always a trip organized for them around a chosen region of Poland. In the same way students from Poland participated in the student fieldwork in France in 1985, 1987, 1989 and 1991 (all in all 32 students and eight lecturers). Two seminars were also organized during which the participants discussed university education curricula: the first in Łódź (1987) and the other in Angers (1991).

It is impossible to overestimate the didactic and academic effects of these contacts, as regards the academic development of those working and studying at the Urban Geography and Tourism Department. The contacts also bore fruit in the form of ordinary friendships. We met many outstanding French geographers, to mention those closest to Prof. Dziegieć: Bernard Barbier, Lise Coulet, Andre de Reparaz, Claudine Durbiano (from Aix and Marseilles), Michel Bonneau and his wife Philippe Violier, Daniel Clary and Francois Houdebine (from Angers). All of them visited us and we visited them in France.

#### 5. ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY

Throughout her mature career, Elżbieta Dziegieć involved herself in the organization of different projects, treating them always as contributing to the

development of a team, department or university. Let us quote just a few examples.

In 1981 she became the head of Post-graduate Tourism Studies at the University of Łódź, which she made into an important centre educating Polish tourism specialists. By 1992, when the department was dissolved, it had educated several hundred students (and she had been supervisor of 51 diploma theses).

Another very important activity was her contribution to creating and publishing *Turyzm*, a journal of high academic standard of which she was secretary from 1985 and a co-editor from 2000.

Prof. Dziegieć was also one of the initiators, and from 1997 the organiser, of annual meetings of tourism geographers. Since 1983 they have been organized by the Urban Geography and Tourism Department (presently the Institute) and, known as *Research Workshops on the Geography of Tourism*, have been organized according to her ideas for ten years.

She has been active also outside the Geography centre. In 1996–9 she was vice-chair of the Disciplinary Commission for Students of the University, and from 1996 to 2008 a member of the University Editorial Council. From 2001–8 she was a member of the Awards Commission at the Institute of Geographical Sciences at the University, and of the Planning Council of the University of Łódź Field Centre, in Suszek.

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Her academic, didactic and organisational achievements, as well as her social activity, was widely known in her circles and highly appreciated. She received many medals and awards, such as the Gold Medal of the University of Łódź (*Złota Odznaka*) (1982), the University of Łódź Medal for Service to

Society and Learning (1990), a University of Łódź 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal (1997), a Gold Cross for Service (*Złoty Krzyż Zasługi*) (2004) and, which she valued the most, the National Education Commission Medal (1998). The Rector of the University of Łódź awarded her individual prizes for didactic and organizational achievements in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1989 and 1990. She was also awarded the Gold Medal of the Polish Teachers' Union (1997).

This beautiful, unusually active life, full of meetings, conferences and creative work, ended suddenly, unexpectedly. She left without saying good bye, without saying what was to be done next. She left behind all that can be left by a longstanding academic teacher: her research work, MAs and PhDs, and plans for the future which she unfortunately will not be able to realize. She has left her Tourism Geography Department, her colleagues, and the whole Institute of Urban Geography and Tourism, of which she was a part of for many years. She has left a team of people who she had treated as her close family. They will always remember Professor Elżbieta Dziegieć, not only as a teacher, 'boss' and colleague, but first of all as a good, dedicated friend.

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