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KWARTALNIK HISTORYCZNY (THE HISTORICAL QUARTERLY).
A PORTRAIT SKETCH

I

The essay does not aspire to give a detailed account of the long and complex history of *Kwartalnik Historyczny* (the *Historical Quarterly*). It is an essay which aims to present it against the background of the complex ways Polish historiography has come from the nineteenth century to the present day. The author has never been either a member of the journal's editorial board or a regular contributor. Thus, this contribution offers the perspective of an outsider, which can be as much a strength as it can be a weakness.¹

¹ Unfortunately, the history of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* has not so far become the object of a full-length monograph. Among the works concerning the journal one needs to mention in the first place a recently published study by Ukrainian scholar Lidiia M. Lazurko, *Chasopys 'Kwartalnik Historyczny' i rozvytok pol's'koï istoriografii ostann'oi chverti XIX — pershoi polovyny XX stolittia*, Drohobych, 2010; Oksana V. Ruda, 'Ukraïns'ka tema na storinkakh l'vivs'koho chasopysu "Kwartalnik Historyczny" ("Istorychnyi kvartal'nyk") v 1887–1914 rr.', *Mizhnarodni zv'iazki Ukraïny: naukovi poshuky i znakhidky*, 2004, 13: *Mizhvidomchyi zbirnyk naukovykh prac' prysviachenyi pam'iaty doktora istorychnykh nauk, profesora I. M. Kulynycha*, pp. 308–21; Vitalii Tel'vak, 'Ukraïns'ka istorychna nauka na storinkakh chasopysu „Kwartalnik Historyczny” (do 1914 r.)', in *Wielokulturowe środowisko historyczne Lwowa w XIX i XX w.*, 5 vols, Rzeszów–L'viv, 2004–2007, vol. 3, ed. Jerzy Maternicki, Leonid Zaszkiłniak, 2005, pp. 245–56 and the following papers: Krystyna Śreniowska, 'Uwagi o nauce historycznej polskiej w latach 1887–1900 w świetle "Kwartalnika Historycznego"', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, ser. I, 15, Łódź 1960, pp. 153–63; Jerzy Maternicki, 'Miejsce i rola "Kwartalnika Historycznego" w dziejach historiografii polskiej', in idem, *Historia jako dialog. Studia i szkice historiograficzne*, Rzeszów, 1996, pp. 273–90; Wojciech Kriegseisen, "'Kwartalnik Historyczny" — zarys dziejów czasopisma naukowego, KH, 102, 2005, 2, pp. 5–27; Zbigniew Pilarczyk, 'Problematyka historyczno-wojskowa na łamach "Kwartalnika Historycznego" w latach 1887–2000', *Studia z Dziejów Polskiej Historio-*

In what follows I shall focus on three main issues. First, I wish to take a closer look at the journal's general conception of itself and the way in which it has evolved during its long existence. Second, I would like to pay closer attention to those moments in the journal's history in which it played an especially important role in stimulating and inspiring the development of Polish historiography. Third, my aim is to consider the journal's role today, as well as the role it is likely to play in the future, especially in the face of deep changes in the meaning that contemporary people are willing to attribute to historical knowledge.

II

The founding of the journal is closely connected with Lwów (now L'viv), the city which, along with Kraków, established itself as a leading centre of Polish historical studies during the period of partitions. On the initiative of Fryderyk Papée, warmly welcomed by Ksawery Liske, the doyen of Lwów's historians, the Historical Association (*Towarzystwo Historyczne*) was established in the city in 1886. It was under the aegis of this newly established organization that the first issue of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* appeared in the following year. A historian of the modern era, an enthusiastic organizer of scholarly life, and a professor at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, Liske became the journal's first editor-in-chief.

grafii Wojskowej, 6, 2002, pp. 9–34; Frank Hadler has offered a juxtaposition of three journals: 'Századok — Kwartalnik Historyczny — Český časopis historický. Drei Konstanten ostmitteleuropäischer Historiographiegeschichte', in *Historische Zeitschriften im internationalen Vergleich*, ed. Mattias Middell, Leipzig, 1999, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtskultur im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerald Diesener et al., vol. 2, pp. 145–59. Some information concerning the journal can be found in works devoted to the Polish Historical Association: *Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne 1886–1986. Zbiór studiów i materiałów*, ed. Stefan Kuczyński, Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków, 1990; Tadeusz Kondracki, *Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne w latach 1918–1939*, Toruń, 2006; Tadeusz Paweł Rutkowski, *Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne w latach 1945–1958. Zarys dziejów*, Toruń, 2009; Fryderyk Papée, 'Towarzystwo Historyczne 1886–1900', *KH*, 51, 1937, pp. 1–18; Eugeniusz Barwiński, 'Towarzystwo Historyczne 1901–1914', *KH*, 51, 1937, pp. 19–40; Teofil Emil Modelski, 'Towarzystwo Historyczne 1914–1924', *KH*, 51, 1937, pp. 41–88; Kazimierz Tyszkowski, 'Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne 1925–1936', *KH*, 51, 1937, pp. 89–137. Worthy of mention are also some accounts of the periodical's accomplishments. See, for example, Teofil Emil Modelski, 'Ze wspomnień i zapisek Redaktora', *KH*, 60, 1963, 3, pp. 599–606; Stanisław Kętrzyński, 'Memoriał w sprawie "Kwartalnika Historycznego"', *KH*, 60, 1963, 3, pp. 607–21; Bogusław Leśnodorski, 'Nasze pragnienia — nasze troski', *KH*, 60, 1963, 3, pp. 637–43; Tadeusz Łepkowski, 'Nowa seria "Kwartalnika Historycznego" (1953–1962) w świetle liczb', *KH*, 60, 1963, 3, pp. 623–36; Tadeusz Jędruszczak, '"Kwartalnik Historyczny" — problemy aktualne i zamierzenia', *KH*, 74, 1977, 3, pp. 391–96.

One may suggest that the journal was founded as a response to the growing professionalization of historical studies. In 1864, August Bielowski published the first volume of *Acta Poloniae Historica*, a series based on the renowned *Acta Germaniae Historica*. In 1869, Józef Szujski was appointed to the first chair of Polish History established at the Jagiellonian University, while, in 1872, the Historical Commission that grouped Polish scholars from the whole of partitioned Poland was formed within the Polish Academy of Learning (Polska Akademia Umiejętności) in Kraków. There was also an expansion of what is usually referred to as a critical method of studying history which came to Poland from Germany, and the increase in the number of historians who were beginning to form something of a professional guild came to be accompanied by the establishment of the first historical seminars.

This process was seen right across Europe. *Historische Zeitschrift*, which is universally acknowledged to have been the first scholarly journal in the field of history, became the model for that published in Lwów.² It is no accident that the founding of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* roughly coincided in time with the appearance of historical journals in other European countries. The Hungarian *Századok* first appeared in 1867, the French *Revue historique* began to be published in 1876, and 1886 saw the publication of the first issue of the *English Historical Review*. Others were not long in coming — *Istoricheskoe obozrenie* came into being in 1891 and *Český časopis historický* was established in 1895.

III

In a timespan of more than 120 years, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* has evolved, moved its headquarters, and been headed by different editors whose personalities, scholarly interests, and positions occupied in the academic world left a profound mark upon the journal's shape.³ Until 1939 the journal's office was in Lwów. After the Second World War it was for a short time published in Kraków, before the operation was moved to Warsaw in 1950. Until 1952, it appeared under the aegis of the Polish Historical Association (earlier the Historical Association).

² It is worth remembering that K. Liske for many years served as a regular contributor to the *Historische Zeitschrift* where he reviewed historical studies published by Polish scholars.

³ I set aside here the problem of how the individuality of subsequent editors-in-chief affected the shape of particular issues of the journal. Aleksander Semkowicz, a superb editor, can serve here as an example. He ran the journal alone in 1895–1897, 1899–1904, 1906–1914 1920–1922 — that is, for twenty years.

However, in 1953, following the Stalinization of Polish historiography, the editorship of the journal was taken over by the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk — IH PAN), which was formed in January 1953. In the same year, there appeared the first issue of the *Kwartalnik* in its new form.⁴ That the journal deviated then from its tradition was symbolized by the removal of the name of its founding-father, Liske, from its title page. Today, with Liske's name restored, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* is published under the joint aegis of the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Historical Association.

The first issue of the journal from 1887 was printed by the Władysław Łoziński Printing House in Lwów. Its pages, more than 700 in number, are now yellowed with age. The first section contains papers written by the leading figures in Polish historiography of the era when Poland was still partitioned between Russia, Austria and Germany: Ferdynand Bostel, Tadeusz Korzon, Władysław Łoziński, Antoni Małnecki, Władysław Smoleński. Appended to the first issue is *Sprawozdanie z Czynności Wydziału Towarzystwa Historycznego we Lwowie [...] za rok 1886/87* (A Report of the Proceedings of the Historical Association in Lwów in [...] 1886/87). The report offers the following explanation of the journal's purposes: 'It aims to become an organ uniting all forces involved in the study of the past and to present a clear-cut picture of Polish historiography by providing information about all publications devoted to Polish history, by presenting their most important findings, and by discussing their strengths and weaknesses'.⁵

At first, it was agreed that the journal should above all serve as a forum for exchanging scholarly information and for reviewing historical works. Undoubtedly, it was the journal's first editor — Liske — who played a crucial role in making it assume such a form. The *Kwartalnik Historyczny* was then supposed to register and discuss the whole of 'historical production' — or at least that part which deserved to be assembled under the rubric of academic historiography. The editorial staff's focus was on monographs, collections of articles, editions of pri-

⁴ For more on the problem see Rafał Stobiecki, *Historia pod nadzorem. Spory o nowy model historii w Polsce druga połowa lat czterdziestych — początek lat pięćdziesiątych*, Łódź, 1993, pp. 101–10; Tadeusz Paweł Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce 1944–1970. Zagadnienia polityczne i organizacyjne*, Warsaw, 2007, pp. 161–62; idem, *Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne*, pp. 73–76.

⁵ *Sprawozdanie z Czynności Wydziału Towarzystwa Historycznego we Lwowie tudzież Komitetu Redakcyjnego Kwartalnika Historycznego za rok 1886/87 od 14 października 1886 do 1 października 1887*, 1, 1887, p. 5.

mary sources, and, to a lesser degree, historical syntheses. The journal was divided into the following sections: 'Historical Studies', 'Materials on the History of Poland and Russia', 'List of More Important Reviews Published in Other Periodicals', 'Bibliography of the Most Important Works by Foreign Historians', 'Reports of the Proceedings of the Historical Association'. In the first year's issue, it was the review section that was most extensive, with a total of 264 reviews. The subsequent years did not differ in this regard. The second issue included as many as 203 reviews. 154 reviews appeared in the journal's third issue. In the mid-1890s the number of reviews remained at the level of 200 per year, but fell to about 100 at the end of the century.⁶ The vast majority of the reviews dealt with works on Polish history written by both Polish and foreign authors, mainly Germans and Russians.

From the very outset, the editorial board, committed to positivist ideals, attempted to publish papers that discussed problems beyond the realm of political history. The appreciation of the importance of 'domestic history' resulted in the appearance of reviews concerning the history of education, art, economy, law and mores. Texts addressing geography, ethnography or archeology were also published. The journal also devoted some space to reviews of works important in terms of the historian's craft, those lying in the field of the so-called auxiliary sciences of history, such as numismatics, diplomacy, or sphragistics.

It was in stages, and rather inconsistently, that the editors tried to change the journal's traditional emphasis, and it is justifiable to say that their efforts did not result in a new and clear-cut conception of the journal. However, as early as the inter-war period, the journal's centre of gravity had begun to shift in favour of papers and articles. This tendency found its specific continuation during the period of the Polish People's Republic. In compliance with the principles imposed by the Communist authorities, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* was supposed to play a leading role in effecting a methodological — in fact, an ideological — transformation of Polish historiography inspired by the Stalinist form of Marxism. From the turn of 1940s and 1950s, there began to appear propagandistic texts proclaiming the embrace of the new methodology. A paper by Kazimierz Piwarski, who then served as editor-in-chief of the journal, was one of the first of this kind. Published in the 1949 issue, it bore the title 'The Crisis of Bourgeois Historiography and Historical Materialism'.⁷ The first half of the 1950s also saw the brief appearance of a new section entitled 'In the

⁶ I quote from Papée, 'Towarzystwo Historyczne', p. 11.

⁷ *KH*, 46, 1949, 1, pp. 3–42.

Struggle Against Hostile Ideology' which served to 'condemn pseudoscientific works of bourgeois historians'. Most of the essays that were then printed in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* clearly did not meet most historians' ideas of scholarly standards. The most telling example in this context is the paper written by several authors published in 1953 and entitled 'The Significance of Josef Stalin's Works for the Development of Polish Historiography'.⁸

After the 'October Thaw' of 1956 the journal regained its scholarly character. As Wojciech Kriegseisen has rightly remarked: 'it soon turned out that the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* simply was not able to inform [its readers] about all scholarly initiatives undertaken in Poland'.⁹ In these circumstances, it was found that the most important task with which the journal ought to be entrusted was to publish original papers based on neglected primary sources. The editorial board attempted to organize scholarly debates and also to invite contributions from other scholars, such as economists, sociologists and literary critics.

However, looking at the journal's history, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the controversies that surrounded its publication usually had as their leitmotif complaints concerning shortcomings found in the review section, and its failure to provide thorough scholarly information. As early as the 1920s, points were often raised about the diminishing number of reviews which themselves were regarded as addressing too narrow a spectrum of topics.¹⁰ Successive editorial boards attempted to respond to this criticism. However, one needs to say that this response was not always satisfactory.¹¹

The question of whether the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* should serve in the first place as a vehicle for providing scholarly information was also debated after 1945. However, given the changes historiography was undergoing at that time, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the journal to remain concerned mainly with the dissemination of scholarly information. Suffice it to say that the 1986 issue contained about 100 reviews and review arti-

⁸ The authors of the paper were a team from Instytut Kształcenia Kadr Naukowych przy KC PZPR (The Training Institute for Scientific Cadres affiliated with the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party). The group included the following persons: Stanisław Arnold, Tadeusz Daniszewski, Leon Grosfeld, Józef Kowalski, Żanna Kormanowa, Witold Kula and Bogusław Leśnodorski (the latter then served as the journal's editor-in-chief).

⁹ Kriegseisen, "Kwartalnik Historyczny", p. 24.

¹⁰ For example, issues published in the years 1923–24 included about 50 reviews. Kondracki, *Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne*, p. 152.

¹¹ From the 1920s the number of reviews steadily grew. In the 1930s the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* published about 100 reviews annually.

cles. Considering the fact that by this time the volume of the journal had grown twice as large as that issued in the inter-war period, and that there was a considerable increase in the number of books published, a total of 100 reviews is hardly an impressive or significant figure.¹² Much space within the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, especially in the issues published after 1945, was taken up by information included in the section called 'Chronicle'. This section was added in 1898, and after the Second World War it was filled mainly with accounts of various scholarly conferences, or reports of the proceedings of a variety of committees and research teams. Given frequent delays in printing the journal, this information was usually out of date at the moment of its publication. However, it was not until towards the end of the twentieth century that the decision was made to remove this section from the journal.

To conclude this section, it is worth taking a look at volume 118, published in 2011, which contains the usual four issues. Today's *Kwartalnik Historyczny* has a similar number of sections as its very first nineteenth century issue. These are: 'Articles', 'Reviews — Polemics — Propositions', 'Review Articles and Reviews', 'In Memoriam', 'Communications', 'Letters to the Editors'. However, not all of the sections are found in every issue. It is the first and third sections that are of key importance. Out of a total of 75 texts published in 2011, including obituaries, communications, and letters to the editors, there are 53 review articles, reviews, and polemics. It is easy to see then, that apart from some modifications, the editorial board decided to give the journal the form which characterized it in the nineteenth century. Was this a good choice? I shall return to the question later.

IV

For all the commitment to the idea of a journal primarily concerned with illustrating changes in Polish historiography, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* has rarely initiated important discussions that could be given credit for articulating the state of the profession and determining its future course. Looking from a long perspective, one is able to indicate only a few moments when articles that appeared in the pages of the journal played an essential role in stimulating the development of Polish historiography.

The 1870s, 1880s and 1890s bore witness to a very heated debate that swept over Polish historiography. It concerned the interpretation of the

¹² Maternicki, 'Miejsce i rola', p. 278.

causes of the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century. During the debate the so-called Kraków school of history clashed with its Warsaw opponent. The first gave rise to a vision of Polish history which has ever since been referred to as 'pessimistic'. Focusing on the internal problems of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it held the Poles themselves responsible for the collapse of their state, putting forward the so-called theory of the self-inflicted downfall. The Warsaw school, for its part, paying special attention to the reformist movement that engulfed the Polish-Lithuanian state in the second half of the eighteenth century, laid the emphasis on external factors (the aggressive tendencies of the neighbouring powers) and their role in bringing about the partitions. The Warsaw school has ever since been referred to as 'optimistic'. Papers that appeared in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* at the turn of the 1880s and 1890s constituted part of this historiographical contest. Among the historians who took part in the discussion were Kazimierz Waliszewski and Oswald Balzer. Waliszewski was the first to criticize the theory of the self-inflicted fall.¹³ In a paper written in reaction to the opinions articulated by the Russian historian, Nikolai Kareev, who fully supported the interpretation advanced by Michał Bobrzyński in *An Outline of the History of Poland* (Bobrzyński was one of the leading representatives of the Kraków school), Waliszewski attacked both the political and historical presuppositions that underlay the Kraków school's vision of Polish history. According to Waliszewski, this vision was deeply pessimistic, depriving the Poles of any hope they may have (had) left. Moreover, its proponents tried to copy the German model of practising history, placing the state at the centre of their interests. Starting from such premises, they bolstered the case made by both Russian and German historians who portrayed the Poles as prone to anarchy and inherently incapable of building their own state.

Waliszewski's views elicited a critical response from Balzer which was published in the same issue.¹⁴ Balzer argued that there was no rea-

¹³ Kazimierz Waliszewski, 'Historiografia polska przed krytyką rosyjską', *KH*, 2, 1888, pp. 555-70. The work was written in connection with a small monograph by N. Kareev, *Najnowszy zwrot w historiografii polskiej, 1861-1886*, Warsaw and St Petersburg, 1888. See also other texts by Waliszewski, *Potoccy i Czartoryscy. Walka stronnictw politycznych przed upadkiem Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków, 1887; idem, *Polska i Europa w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku. Wstęp do historii ruchu politycznego w tej epoce*, Kraków, 1890. For more on the debate between Waliszewski and the Kraków school see: Andrzej F. Grabski, "'Podpalacze" przeciw "lidze brandmajstrów". Z dziejów walki z krakowską szkołą historyczną', in idem, *Perspektywy przeszłości. Studia i szkice historiograficzne*, Lublin, 1983, pp. 341-412.

¹⁴ Oswald Balzer rev. Kazimierz Waliszewski, 'Polityczne i społeczne obyczaje XVIII wieku', *KH*, 2, 1888, pp. 677-79.

son to assume that this ‘pessimistic historiosophy’ was likely to have a harmful and demoralizing effect upon Polish society. On the contrary, the admission of one’s own guilt was an expression of ‘optimism’ as it gave one a chance to rectify one’s errors and ‘build a better future’.¹⁵ This debate saw its continuation in a famous paper by one of the leaders of the Warsaw school, Tadeusz Korzon, delivered two years later to the Second Congress of Polish Historians held in Lwów.¹⁶

Controversies over Polish history were again reflected in the pages of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* at the end of the First World War. Following its outbreak, Polish historiography grew increasingly ‘optimistic’ about the national past. This optimism arose over the need to justify Polish rights to independence, with historical arguments being turned into a weapon used in this struggle. This optimistic tendency was carried to extremes in a pamphlet by Antoni Chołoniewski published in 1917 and titled *The Spirit of Polish History*. It contained an apologetic exposition of Polish history, bordering on national megalomania and stating that throughout their history the Poles far outstripped all other nations (religious toleration, nobiliary democracy), and that the fall of their state was the result of collusion by predatory neighbours. One of the texts that emerged as a response to Chołoniewski’s pamphlet was published in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* in 1918. It bore the title ‘Ideologia ustrojowa’ (Constitutional Ideology).¹⁷ Its author, Stanisław Zakrzewski, positioned himself as a defender of positivist historiography that ‘places the head before the heart’ and tends to draw a clear demarcation line between scholarly thinking and ‘cheap journalism’. He chastised the apologists of the national past for allowing themselves to be swayed by present-day interests and for looking at the history of their own country through the prism of the development of systems of government. Calling for a critical approach to the national past, he displayed a commitment to the idea

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 679.

¹⁶ Reprinted in *Historycy o historii*, ed. Marian Henryk Serejski, 2 vols, Warsaw, 1963–66, vol. 1.

¹⁷ *KH*, 32, 1918, pp. 1–41. In fact, S. Zakrzewski also criticized the works by Oswald Balzer, Stanisław Kutrzeba and Waclaw Tokarz. For more on the problem see Andrzej Wierzbicki, ‘Wokół Ducha dziejów Polski. Spory o ocenę dziejów narodowych w historiografii polskiej 1917–1919’, *KH*, 68, 1971, 4, pp. 840–56. About changes in Polish historiography and *Kwartalnik Historyczny* see Lidiia Lazurko, ‘Problemy stanovlennia pol’s’koï istorychnoï nauky mizhvoiennoho periodu na storinkakh “Istorychnoho kvartal’nyka”’, in *Wielokulturowe środowisko historyczne Lwowa w XIX i XX w.*, vol. 4, ed. Leonid Zaszkilniak and Jerzy Maternicki, 2006, pp. 396–409.

of independent scholarship, convinced that historical studies should not become embroiled in ideological squabbles.¹⁸

Finally, worthy of mention is also the role of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* in the de-Stalinization of Polish historiography in the years 1956–58. All the key elements of the Stalinist model of history and historiography were criticized strongly in the pages of the journal, including organizational structures of ‘Polish *Clio*’, its theoretico-methodological foundations, and the vision of Polish history promoted in the first half of the 1950s.¹⁹ It should be remembered that this criticism was still constrained by the censorship that had not ended with the Stalinist era. Two powerful texts with a significant symbolic meaning were then published in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. Characteristically, they were written by historians representing opposing worldviews.

Witold Kula was the author of the first of these papers.²⁰ It was entitled ‘On Our Scientific Policy’. His criticism of Stalinism derived from the experience of a disappointed Marxist, in whose opinion the rebuilding of Polish historiography inspired by the Communist authorities had ended in failure, or, at best, in only qualified success. Adopting the perspective of a Marxist historian, Kula declared himself in favour of continuing the work of rebuilding the methodological foundations of Polish historiography. He stressed, however, that this process should no longer be subjected to interference by the state.²¹

The second of the papers to appear in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* regarding the de-Stalinization of Polish historiography was written by Henryk Wereszycki. Persecuted by the Communist authorities, Wereszycki held views which had little to do with official Marxism. In his article ‘Pesymizm błędnych tez’²² (The Pessimism of Erroneous Theses),

¹⁸ The publication of the paper exacerbated the already tense relations between historians from Lwów and Kraków. It was not until the 1920s that this animosity began to subside. Earlier, in January 1918, Zakrzewski was forced by historians from Kraków to resign as the journal’s editor-in-chief. See: Kriegseisen, “‘Kwartalnik Historyczny’”, pp. 13–14.

¹⁹ For more on the problem see Andrzej Czyżewski, ‘Historycy polscy wobec destalinizacji — próba analizy postaw’, in *Klio polska. Studia i materiały z dziejów historiografii polskiej po II wojnie światowej*, ed. Andrzej Wierzbicki, Warsaw, 2004–, vol. 3, 2008, pp. 192–210; Rafał Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani mądra ani piękna... ale skomplikowana. Studia i szkice*, Warsaw, 2007.

²⁰ *KH*, 53, 1956, 3, pp. 151–66.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166. Kula’s paper was brought up for discussion during a special meeting held in the Institute of History of Polish Academy of Sciences on 26 June 1956. See: ‘Dyskusja nad obecnym stanem i możliwościami rozwojowymi naszej nauki historycznej’, *KH*, 53, 1956, pp. 72–87.

²² *KH*, 54, 1957, 3–4, pp. 13–30. The text was initially presented in the spring of

Wereszycki referred mainly to the Stalinist vision of Polish history. In his opinion, Stalinist historiography was to blame for projecting ideological argumentation into the past in such a way as to justify the political, social, and territorial shape of the Polish People's Republic, which not only violated the fundamental principles every historian was called upon to respect and follow, but also made it impossible for historiography to serve the purpose of cultivating national culture.²³ Wereszycki's paper sparked off a heated debate which was also published in the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*.²⁴

The examples given above show that throughout its long history the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* served as a mirror reflecting, often with some delay, phenomena occurring within Polish historiography, rather than as a leading protagonist advocating a ground-breaking approach to the study of the past. With the exception of the Stalinist period, successive editorial boards tried to dissociate themselves from the political circumstances in which they operated, always following scholarly criteria in the choice of the papers published in the journal. Even under the Communist dictatorship, they tried to remain faithful to the formula the publication assumed in the nineteenth century. Characteristically enough, the journal's editors also did not decide to prepare a special issue that could in some way encapsulate the experience of the post-war period. The 1987 anniversary issue was very different from the one published in 1937. The latter attempted to offer an assessment of the accomplishments of Polish historiography as seen through the prism of the fifty years of publishing the leading Polish historical periodical.

V

What future lies ahead of this noble journal at the beginning of the twenty-first century? What role, according to the present editorial board, should it play in Polish historiography? Or, to put it another way, what kind of *Kwartalnik Historyczny* does Polish historiography need? It seems that for many reasons there can be no return to the shape in which it was founded

1957 during the meeting of the Kraków Branch of the Polish Historical Association. The text was Wereszycki's polemic against the second volume of the so-called mock-up edition of 'A History of Poland' prepared by IH PAN. The discussion devoted to the volume was also held during the conference organized by IH PAN in Sulejówek near Warsaw (14–17 April 1957). Materials from the conference were later published in the pages of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 54, 1957.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

by Liske and his associates. What then appears to be the best line for the editorial board to take?

First, in the face of a strong competition among historical journals (there are more 100 historical journals published in Poland), of an increasing specialization of historical studies and the resulting pluralization of methods, and of a great increase in 'historical production' generally, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* should distinguish itself from other journals through a coherent programme, the high academic standard of the papers published in it, and by having the courage to include new areas of research. When judged from that angle, recent issues of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* seem to be lacking in interviews with historians, in papers presenting new trends in historical studies, or in manifesto-like texts promoting the exploration of subjects that lie at the intersection of different humanistic disciplines.²⁵ Such texts mirror an interdisciplinary character of historical studies in the world of today.

Second, in the era of the internet, it seems urgent to bring the process of digitalizing the back issues to a successful completion.²⁶ A historical journal must also be equipped with an attractive web page to draw young people. In my opinion, this condition is only partly met by the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*'s present web page, part of the website of the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. A history of the journal, the portraits of its editors and links referring to other information about Polish historiography are all absent from the web page in question.

Third, the present *Kwartalnik Historyczny* also only in part exercises the function of a nationwide journal. Despite changes in the editorial board and the efforts undertaken to draw scholars from other centres of historical studies in Poland, the journal is generally associated with Warsaw and considered to be dominated by Warsaw historians. To become a periodical of nationwide representation, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* needs to register the most interesting phenomena occurring in Polish historiography and to promote books and editions of primary sources published outside of Warsaw.

²⁵ In the present version of the journal, the section *Reviews – Polemics – Propositions* includes nothing but idiographic contributions that usually amount to a polemical exchange between authors.

²⁶ The issues from the years 1887–1939 are presently available on the webpage of Śląska Biblioteka Cyfrowa (Silesian Digital Library): <<http://www.sbc.org.pl/publication/8429>>; issues from the years 1939–52 – Kujawsko-Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa (Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library): <<http://kpbc.umk.pl/publication/46203>>; issues from the years 1953–2013 – Repozytorium Cyfrowe Instytutów Naukowych (RCIN) (Digital Repository of Scientific Institutes): <<http://rcin.org.pl/publication/35143>>.

The editorial board appears to be aware of the challenges that are facing it. One may note with some satisfaction that the editors decided to open the journal to contemporary history that had usually been seen as less important than that of other periods. This new approach can be seen in every section of the journal. Thus, those who are now in charge of *Kwartalnik Historyczny* managed to avoid the mistake committed by the editors of *Teki Historyczne* (Historical Papers – the journal published in London by Polish scholars who after the Second World War decided to stay in exile. Its first issue appeared in 1947) who clung to the view that historical evidence had or has to be aged for at least fifty magical years before it could be dealt with. The attempt to publish discussions on some historical books also needs to be regarded as an interesting initiative. The review section presents itself quite well. The editors try to single out important publications, representing different historical disciplines and periods.

Of course, it is easier to advise than to act. However, one should wish that the editors succeed in turning this noble journal's long tradition into an important argument in a discussion on both the role of the journal itself, and the development of Polish historiography in years to come.

(Translated by Artur MękarSKI)