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BIOGRAPHIES OF POLISH CHEMISTS

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## FOREWORD

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF POLISH CHEMISTS

Following is the translation of biographies of Polish chemists, all unsigned, in Przemysl Chemiczny (The Chemical Industry), No 8, Warsaw, August 1960, pages 519-520.

### Alicja Dorabialska

Professor Doctor Alicja Dorabialska was this year elected President of the Polish Chemical Society. The history of every scientific organization is to a great extent the history of people whose individuality leaves a permanent trace on the development of its activity. Alicja Dorabialska occupies one of the prominent places in the history of the Polish Chemical Society.

She began her activity in this Society while still a young assistant in 1923, fulfilling the duties of secretary to the Governing Body for a period of ten years and furthermore from 1928 performing the responsible function of secretary of  Roczniki Chemii (Chemistry Annuals).

Her participation in the works of the Society coincides with her own scientific development. The initial period of her work is indissolubly linked with the person of Professor Swietoslowski. Her first scientific interests were directed toward thermo-chemical studies and she published a series of research works in this field first in collaboration with him and later independently.

In 1925-1926 and in 1929 she worked for a time in the Radium Institute in Paris and Charles University in Prague.

In the Radium Institute Doctor Dorabialska worked directly under Marie Sklodowska-Curie. This fact undoubtedly influenced all of her later research, arousing deep interest in problems connected with the structure of the atom and radioactivity. Dr. Dorabialska did not, however, renounce her former interests and managed to combine research on the atomic energy states and radioactivity with thermochemical research. Her collaboration in Prague with

Professor Sterba-Bohm concerned the interpretation of the phenomenon of abnormal thermal effects, discovered by Dorabialska, of certain radioactive minerals.

In 1934 Dr. Dorabialska became the head of the Department of Physical Chemistry at the Lvov Politechnic Institute, where she was appointed dean of the School of Chemistry. In the same period she was first Vice-president and later President of the Lvov branch of the Polish Chemical Society while continuing to collaborate with the Editorial Committee of Roczniki Chemii.

From 1945 Professor Dorabialska took an active part in the rebirth of Polish institutions of higher learning, collaborated in the organization of the School of Chemistry then forming in the newly established Lodz Politechnic Institute and accepted the duties of dean which she fulfilled with one year's interruption until 1948.

Her devoted and absorbing work of organizing academic life did not, however, interfere with Prof. Dorabialska's didactic and scientific activity. As an active member of the Lodz Scientific Society and the former Warsaw Scientific Society until 1949, editor of Roczniki Chemii and later editor of Scientific Journals of the School of Chemistry at Lodz Politechnic Institute, she published a series of research works, textbooks and monographs. The educational activity of Prof. Dorabialska was outstanding in the training of young scientific workers.

The nature of Prof. Dorabialska's scientific activity requires the distinction between several basic fields of research. In the field of thermochemistry, Prof. Dorabialska has greatly contributed toward formulating and developing the techniques and apparatus for microcalorimetric measurements. The adiabatic microcalorimeter of W. Swietoslawski and A. Dorabialska is an instrument which has been approved in laboratories all over the world for research on minor effects of heat.

Apart from purely methodical works, thermochemical research on heat effects of radioactive and allotropic changes and of surface phenomena such as corrosion, absorption, etc., deserve mention.

Prof. Dorabialska has devoted most of her attention to research on radioactive phenomena. The small natural neutron radioactivity, being the main object of her interest, is a formerly unknown phenomenon of importance to the science of the structure of matter. This research produced many interesting results and became the subject of numerous publications.

Among works pertaining to other fields, Prof. Dorabialska's recent research on carcinogen properties of cigar-

ette smoke deserves mention. This research, carried out in collaboration with medical circles, established the presence of the radioactive carbon isotope in cigarette smoke and is an example of the use of physico-chemical methods in biological research and of scientific collaboration among specialists of different fields.

As to textbooks and monographs, the textbooks of problems in physical chemistry edited by A. Dorabialska are being translated into several foreign languages and Promieniotworczosc naturalna pierwiastkow chemicznych (The Natural radioactivity of Chemical Elements) is the only book of its kind in Polish scientific literature.

In her work in Lodz she successively carries out the functions of Vice-president and President of the Lodz branch of the Polish Chemical Society, being at the same time a member of the Editorial Committee of Wiadomosci Chemiczne (Chemistry News).

#### Stanislaw Bretsznajder

Stanislaw Bretsznajder, long standing member of our Editorial Committee, has been elected President of the Committee of Chemical Sciences of the PAN (Polska Akademia Nauk -- Polish Academy of Sciences). Born in 1907, he graduated from the Warsaw Politechnic School of Chemistry in 1930 where, following public defense of his thesis, he was appointed Assistant Professor in 1936.

In 1945 he was appointed scientific advisor to the Oswiecim Chemical Works and during the same year -- professor of the Silesian Politechnic Institute (Department of Inorganic Chemistry Industry) and in the 1948-1949 academic year he was appointed Dean of the School of Chemistry of this same Politechnic Institute.

Since 1949 Prof. Dr. Bretsznajder has taken over the Department of Technological Planning in the School of Chemistry of Warsaw Politechnic Institute. Between 1949-1952 he was scientific director of the Main Institute of Industrial Chemistry and between 1950-1952 -- dean of the School of Chemistry of Warsaw Politechnic Institute.

In 1954 he became a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. At present he is director of the Establishment of Physico-chemical Bases of Technology of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the PAN, director of the Special Workshop of the IChO (Instytut Chemii Ogolnej -- Institute of General Chemistry), member of the Economic Council in the Bureau of the Council of Ministers, member of the Scientific-technical Council in the Ministry of Chemical Industry and member of scientific councils in

the institutes of General Chemistry and Binding Materials.

Prof. Dr. Bretsznajder is the author of 22 copy-righted works, 75 published scientific works, 8 reports, one book, 12 publications in collected works, two translations of books and 13 various publications.

#### Osman Achmatowicz

The merits of the outstanding Polish chemist, Prof. Dr. Osman Achmatowicz, won for the benefit of Polish science and the country were recognized by the Lodz Polytechnic Institute which awarded him an honorary doctor's degree in March 1960.

Prof. Dr. O. Achmatowicz, born in 1899, graduated from Vilna University, obtaining a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1925, and later, still in Vilna, a doctorate in chemistry (1928). Between 1928-1930 he specialized in the field of organic chemistry at Oxford University, receiving a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1931 at that same university. He defended his thesis in the field of organic chemistry at Vilna in 1933.

In 1934 he was appointed special professor of Warsaw University (Department of Pharmaceutical and Toxicological Chemistry), and he remained in that institution until the outbreak of war in 1939. In the meantime, between 1936-1938, he was dean of the School of Pharmacy of Warsaw University.

During the occupation he remained in the Vilna area working on the land, and from 1943 to 1945 he engaged in secret university teaching in Warsaw and Czestochowa. Directly following this he was appointed Professor of the Lodz Polytechnic Institute (Department of Organic Chemistry) where between 1945-1952 he also held the offices of Vice-chancellor and Chancellor of this important scientific institution. In 1952 Prof. Dr. Achmatowicz returned to Warsaw University where up to the present he has directed the Department of Organic Chemistry, simultaneously (from 1953) fulfilling the duties of Under-secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education.

Prof. Dr. Achmatowicz is the author of numerous scientific works. Of these works approximately fifty were published, among them four works in the field of terpene chemistry, 24 in the field of alkaloids and other physiologically active bonds of plant origin, 11 from the field of cyanide carbonyl chemistry, 10 from the field of preparative organic chemistry and others.

Prof. Dr. Achmatowicz has not only taught many chemists (among his pupils are already two professors,

two assistant professors and ten doctors), he also actively participates in the works of many scientific associations and institutions. He is a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1951) and formerly a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Knowledge (1945) and member of the Warsaw Scientific Society (1945). Between 1949-1952 he held the office of chairman of the Scientific Council of the Main Textile Institute and of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Dyes and By-products, and between 1952-1956 he directed the work of the Establishment of Organic Synthesis of the PAN. During his work in Lodz he carried out the functions of Chairman of the National Unity Front of the District of Lodz.

An active member of the Polish Chemical Society and Vice-president of its Governing Body between 1937-1939, Prof. Dr. Achmatowicz is also a member of the Chemical Societies of Great Britain, the United States and Switzerland and a member of the Scientific Council of the international chemical journal, Tetrahedron.

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