

Włodzimierz Winclawski

**Jan Turowski (1917–2006)
An Outstanding Polish Rural Sociologist**

Professor Jan Turowski died in Lublin at the age of 89 on 14 February 2006. He belonged – alongside Dyzma Gałaj (1916–2000), Zbigniew T. Wierzbicki (born in 1919), Bogusław Gałęski (born in 1921) and others, to the second generation of Polish rural sociologists at work during the Polish People's Republic (1944–1989). They acquired their sociological qualifications in the tradition of Polish rural sociology prior to 1939: Florian Znaniecki's Poznań school, mainly Józef Chałasiński's works, (primarily *Młode pokolenie chłopów* – The Young Peasant Generation), monographic rural studies by Franciszek Bujak and Władysław Grabski's scientific concepts. After 1956 they also referred to current achievements in American and West European rural sociology. The credit of that generation was the revival of Polish rural sociology after it had been prohibited (1949–1956), its return to the peak of international standards and re-established contact with world science after being interrupted between 1939 and 1956.

He was born on 29 October 1917 in the village of Nasutów in the eastern ethnic region of Poland, a neglected agricultural area. His father was a village blacksmith who ran a small farm with his wife. After primary school in the local village he went to secondary school in nearby Lublin and in 1936 started studying Law at the Catholic University in Lublin (KUL). The outbreak of war interrupted his studies which he continued in late 1944 and graduated in Law in 1945. During his studies he became interested in sociology.

In autumn 1944 while still a student he worked as a volunteer in the Faculty of Law and Socio-Economics (KUL) and after graduation became an assistant. In 1947 he joined the new Sociology department. In 1949 following the communist ideological offensive the social sciences (including sociology) department was closed. The university authorities tried to save

as much as they could by moving a few departments to the department of Christian Philosophy where under the protective umbrella of ecclesiastical studies a specialist field called practical philosophy came into being. That was where sociologists survived the darkest Stalinist years. Dr Turowski lectured in the history of sociological thought and ran a seminar on the development of radical social thought in 19th century Poland. He prepared *Utopia społeczna Ludwika Królikowskiego* (Ludwik Królikowski's Social Utopia) which led to his promotion to the post of Reader in 1957. In 1968 he was appointed associate professor and 3 years later became a professor.

In 1961 the Lublin Section of the Polish Sociological Association (PTS) came into being and he was its first chairman for 15 years. He was active in the Sociological Studies Committee and other committees in the Polish Academy of Science. He was a member of various international sociological associations, including the European Society for Rural Sociology. From 1970 he made presentations at sociological congresses in Europe and U.S.A.

The revival of sociology, including rural sociology, in Poland after 1956, took place very fast. It developed particularly in Warsaw, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań and Lublin. Lublin sociology grew in importance in Poland, mainly due to Jan Turowski and his team's publications. He was one of the 15 most frequently quoted authors in leading Polish sociological reviews between 1957 and 1995.

He did not complete his oeuvre. The idea of creating integral sociology enabled him to deal with both rural and urban sociology although he did not manage to find a theoretical condition for joint cognitive analysis.

