

## Jubilee reflections

Three years ago as a birthday present from my friends, I got a volume of articles — memoirs devoted to myself. *The Memoirs Book of Friendship* is full of touching reflections, it still reminds me of events from the calendar of my life. In the book among other texts there is a paper by Alfred Jahn, entitled *Greenland bound us together*. I often come back and read this text. It is also of special meaning to me as there are only the two of us left out of the Greenland expedition group of 1937.

It has been almost sixty years, marked with mutual affection, friendship, work and common experience of exploring the world.

I have always been impressed by Alfred's way of life, unusually industrious and filled with scientific research. Not long ago, in Austria, we shared opinions on some interesting geological phenomena. I did not expect at that time that I would receive soon a copy of an article from *Bulletin of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Earth Sciences* (1994, no. 2) reporting on the subject of our chats.

Still, it was not Alfred's scientific activity alone that contributed to our affectionate friendship. I can now recall a very beautiful sentence which my father used: *The treasures of human knowledge are great, but the treasures of a human heart are still more dear.*

Since our very first meeting, we have shared the urge to explore the world. In order to meet the face of the Earth, Alfred set off Kleparów (Lvov) while I started from Krowodrze (Cracow). We met in Greenland, we worked together in Spitsbergen, and after the war — in northern Norway on the Varanger Peninsula. The joys and troubles of the expeditions brought us together. We both appreciated each other's passion for the polar world. I have not met in my life many people who, like Alfred, could understand and support the idea of building a Polish scientific station far in the north and who would support the scientific research in this so fascinating area.

We experienced similar trials and tribulations when our activities were brutally hindered. Once, I can remember Alfred's passport was invalidated just a few days before an expedition, which prevented him from taking part in it. It may have been the Fate, because he stayed in the country and had the opportunity to defend students rights as the President of the Wrocław University. The eventful Polish March 1968 was coming.

The thing which is of particular personal importance to me, is the constitution of the Polar Club, initiated by Alfred. My visits to Poland were marked with subsequent meetings of this spontaneously arranged organisation. When with time, those who had been close to me were passing away. I could always find sympathy and atmosphere of some special friendship among the members of the Club. I am very happy that it was Alfred who integrated polar scientific researchers from all over Poland.

It is now difficult to arrange times and facts. Meetings, discussions, letters, times when we worked together. What really matters in all these, is a dear feeling I have been keeping for You through all these years. I will thus repeat Your words *Greenland bound us together and...* the passion for exploring the world — let this passion stay with You for long, at all times.

Stanisław SIEDLECKI

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Stanisław Siedlecki (left) and Alfred Jahn (right) going to Greenland (1937).



**Professors Alfred Jahn (left) and Stanisław Siedlecki (right).**

**Bludenz, Switzerland, 1990**

*Photo by A. Siedlecki*