

Pochwała samouctwa
In praise of self-instruction

SUMMARY

The author has written the text in the hope that it may help people who are in need of requalifying professionally or academically. The author was able to cover four grades of the junior and senior secondary school on her own during the Second World War, when post-primary education for Poles was banned, and she passed her clandestine school-leaving examination in 1942. She then completed a year of studies at the underground University of Western Lands in Warsaw in the year 1943-1944, and received her M.A. in sociology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow after completing two years of studies condensed to the period of March 1945 to April 1946. The year of studies in Warsaw was very important for the author's academic development, because of the direct contacts she had had with the lecturers. Unfortunately, almost all of the participants of the clandestine university classes were detained on January 5, 1944 and later executed by the Gestapo. Only four members of the course managed to stay alive.

After graduating, the author was an assistant researcher at the University of Wrocław, where, in July 1950, she obtained a Ph.D. degree after writing a dissertation on the development of contemporary Wrocław, under the supervision of Professor Paweł Rybicki. The author describes that period as one in which she was most independent in her work in the whole of her life. Until the authorities closed down the studies in sociology summer of 1951, a dozen or so students had been able to graduate in that specialty. The author describes how she was twice dismissed from work. She found a job at the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław, where she worked for three years, and later she was able to get a position at the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences, known since 1990 as the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology. The author thus had to re-qualify as a historian of Polish and European textile industry and clothing. She originally chose that field because of its non-political nature, but it absorbed her for the rest of her professional life. She wrote her *Habilitationsschrift* in 1961 and gradually became a full professor (in 1983). In the article the author describes the subject-matter of her nineteen books and other publications, as well as the ways in which obtained materials abroad. She mentions her lectures in Łódź and Poznań, as well as in Scandinavia, France and Spain. The author also describes the bureaucracy at the Polish Academy of Sciences and at the same the inadequate scrutiny of its researchers' work. She stresses that anybody willing to work was in a position to overcome certain obstacles. Since 1996, the author has continued to work in her retirement, and has sadly noted a decline in Polish scholarship in the humanities in recent years.