



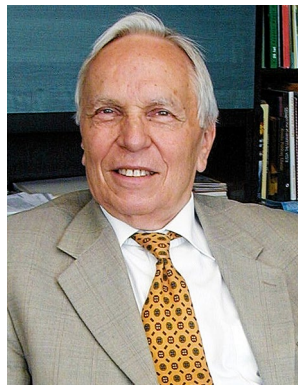
Dr. Jacek Libicki 1934–2021

Rafael Fernández-Rubio¹

Published online: 21 September 2021

© Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature 2021

Dr. Jacek Libicki



Dr. Jacek Libicki, one of the founders of the International Mine Water Association (IMWA), passed away on 22 February 2021 in Warsaw, Poland. He was a very active member of IMWA's Executive Council from its very beginnings until 1992 and left us with very pleasant memories of his positivism, empathy, and excellent know-how. He was born on 28 September 1934 in Kraków, Poland, the son of Janusz Libicki, a professor of Economy at the Poznań University, who was murdered in Katyn (1940), and Wanda, née Strzałko, an advocate. Jacek married Maria née Mazanek (1937–2006), a lawyer, and together they had a son, Dominik Libicki (born 1963), and two grandchildren, Janusz (born 1996) a dancer in Los Angeles and Justyna (born 1998), a student of art history in Italy and the United Kingdom.

Jacek received his master's degree in geology at the University of Wrocław (1952–1957). Years later (1978), he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences (Hydrogeology and Groundwater Protection) by the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy at the Cracow University of Science and Technology. During the years 1957–1958, he served as a geologist at the Mineral Raw Materials Cooperative.

From 1958 to 1990, he worked as a designer at the Lower Silesian Mining Design Office in Wrocław, which changed its name to COBPGO Poltegor in 1972. While there, Jacek played many roles. He served as the principal and then general designer of projects carried out in Poland for the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency in the field of opencast lignite mining and power generation from 1974 to 1986. During 1981–1989, he was the general designer for the modernization of opencast coal mines in China and India, and from 1981 to 1990, he served as general designer of the Lignite Development Programs and the Hai Zhou and Huo Linho mines in China. In 1990, he became the director of the design office Poltegor-Projekt, and after its privatization (1992–2006), he served as the President of the Management Board of Poltegor-Projekt sp. z o.o. (Poltegor-Engineering Ltd. in the international market), reorganizing the company and adjusting it for market competition.

Among the many activities he carried out at Poltegor, the following professional achievements should be highlighted:

- Introduction of new hydrogeological calculation methods and modern ways to dewater opencast mines (1st degree team award from the Minister of Mining and Energy, 1985).
- Authorship of a monograph on the use of impermeable screens in opencast mining and a textbook entitled Technology of Deep Drainage in Opencast Mines.
- Extensive and beneficial cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which enabled Poltegor to achieve 10 contracts with them.
- Study of modernization of the Hai Zhou mine in China.
- Leading the teams drawing up lignite industry development programs.
- Management of three topics developed within the framework of the Expert Group on Extractive Mining of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.
- Patent for protection against dust and rainwater seepage into landfill sites during their operation in 1989.

✉ Rafael Fernández-Rubio
rfrubio@gmail.com

¹ Madrid Polytechnic University, Luna 45, 28120 Ciudad Santo Domingo, Madrid, Spain

In parallel, he organized four international conferences in Poland, USA and China on surface mining and environmental protection and taught at the Wrocław University of Technology and Wrocław University in the years 1959–1963, 1967–1968, and 1978–1979.

In 1981, he participated in the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, followed by a UNDP internship in Canada in 1984, where he gained expertise in geology and environmental protection. In 1993 and 1994, he completed Ministry of Industry and Trade courses for members of supervisory boards and for receivers and liquidators. He also helped found and was president of the Wrocław Rotary Club.

Between 1990 and 1999, Jacek served as a member of the Council of the Lower Silesian Chamber of Commerce (of which he was vice-president). He was also vice-president of the Lignite Producers' Association and between the years 1994–2004, Jacek was Honorary Consul of France in Wrocław, receiving the Ordre Nationale de Merite de la République Française (2002). In addition, from 1991 to 2006 he was vice-chairman of the Association of Lignite Producers in Poland, and from 1998 to 2006, a member of the Board of Euracoal (EU, Brussels). Although he retired in 2006, he remained a major shareholder of Poltegor-Projekt sp. z o.o. and vice-chairman of its Supervisory Board.

Jacek received the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (Ordre of the Rebirth of Poland) conferred on both military and civilians for outstanding achievements in the fields of education, science, sport, culture, art, economics, national defense, social work, and civil service. But possibly one of the best awards Jacek received was the friendship of so many IMWA colleagues that he met during those pre-congresses in Granada and Denver and then at the many meetings he attended afterwards in different parts of the world.

Personally, I enjoyed his friendship very much. He always welcomed me in Poland with warm, personal attention, and I had the pleasure of accompanying him on some of his short but intense trips through different regions of Spain, visiting historic unique places. Years later, his son Dominik would come to spend a summer, accepting the hospitality of my house and my family in Madrid.

Jacek, Rest in peace! Soon, we will have to re-found IMWA together in the next world, with the same spirit with which it was born in Spain. I will be the last to arrive ... sorry to keep you all waiting, but friends forever!

Publications

Jacek published many articles in specialized journals (Poland, USA, China, Japan, Yugoslavia, England, Spain, Australia, Greece and Hungary), mainly between 1968 and 1989, on water issues and environmental protection in opencast mining. He also published “75 years of the Katyn

massacre. 25 years of the Lower Silesian Katyn Family” (Wrocław 2015).

Publications in IMWA Journals and Proceedings

Godlewski Z, Libicki J, Seweryn L, Wojtkowiak B (1991) Water Protection in the Region of Belchatów Surface Mine of Lignite Against Salt Diapir Impact. Proceedings, 4th Intern Mine Water Assoc Congr 2:269–280

Godlewski Z, Libicki J, Seweryn L, Wojtkowiak B (1997) Power Plant Wastes Disposal in Surface Mines. Proceedings, 6th Intern Mine Water Assoc Congr, Bled, Slovenia 2:307–315

Libicki J (1982) Changes in the Groundwater due to Surface Mining. Int J Mine Water 1(1):25–30

Libicki J (1985) Planning and design of coal waste disposals in view of groundwater protection. Proceedings, 2nd Intern Mine Water Assoc Congr 2:723–735

Libicki J (1985) Proposal of Criteria for Selection of Dewatering Methods in Surface Mining. Proceedings, 2nd Intern Mine Water Assoc Congr 1:105–112

Libicki J (1987) Hydrogeological Conditions of Lignite Basins in Poland and their Changes caused by Dewatering of Open Pits. Hydrogeology of Coal Basins. Wydawnictwo Akademii Górniczo-Hutniczej, Kraków, p 525–535

Libicki J (1988) Water Management and Water Protection in Coal/Lignite Surface Mining Regions in Europe. Proceedings, 3rd Intern Mine Water Congr, Melbourne:861–871

Libicki J (1993) Planning and Design of Industrial Water Disposals in View of Groundwater Protection. Paper presented at the First African Symposium on Mine Drainage and Environment Protection from Mine Waste Water Disposal, Chililabombwe:297–312.

Libicki J (1993) Proposal of Criteria for Selection of Dewatering Methods in Surface Mining. Paper presented at the First African Symposium on Mine Drainage and Environment Protection from Mine Waste Water Disposal, Chililabombwe:159–167.

Libicki J, Wilk Z (1987) Hydrogeological Criteria of Lignite Basins Development in Poland. Hydrogeology of Coal Basins. Wydawnictwo Akademii Górniczo-Hutniczej, Kraków, p 319–327

Libicki JS (1979) The Design of Mine Dewatering Systems in Poland. In: Argall GO, Brawner CO (eds) Mine Drainage—Proc of the First Intern Mine Drainage Symp. Freeman, San Francisco, p 304–323

Libicki JS (1982) Influence of large coal waste disposal on the ground water quality and control methods. Proceedings, 1st Intern Mine Water Congr, Budapest, Hungary C:65–79

Szczepinski J, Libicki J (1999) Modelling of the Belchatów Open-Pit Impact on the Groundwater Environment. In: Fernández Rubio R (ed) Mine, Water & Environment. vol I. Intern Mine Water Assoc, Sevilla, p 69–77

Acknowledgements I thank Dr. Jacek Szczepiński (Libicki's direct collaborator at Poltegor for many years and an active member of IMWA), Prof. Andrzej Witkowski (past-president of IMWA), and Dominik Libicki (son of Jacek) for their valuable contributions.