



**Dr. Karol Jakubowicz
(1941–2013)**

It is not easy to find the words to describe the admiration and respect that we have for Dr. Karol Jakubowicz; a true public servant, a leading advocate of freedom of speech and one of the most recognized Polish media and communication scholars in Europe and beyond.

Much can be said about his professional achievements and obituaries, although mapping all of them is not our main task here. He was Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO Information for All Programme and Chairman of the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services at the Council of Europe, and he served as an expert on the media in Poland, as well as the European Union, European Broadcasting Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. He has published widely, both in Poland and internationally. Above all, he was one of the most successful thinkers who managed to connect his academic knowledge with practice, in order to make a difference and support media policy reforms over the last few decades.

We first met Dr. Karol Jakubowicz in 2007, when the Polish Communication Association was created. We remember his support and valued suggestions he gave us on future directions for the development of a young scientific association. We remember his inspirational comments and ideas when he further joined the Editorial Board of "The Central European Journal of Communication." We also remember his honest smile lecture when being awarded honorary membership of the Polish Communication Association in 2011. By recalling all these moments we feel that we have lost not only a great intellect, a brilliant scholar, an innovative thinker and international media expert, but also a reliable friend and colleague who supported and inspired us for all of these years.

We have learnt a lot from Dr. Jakubowicz's excellence, intelligence, independence and honest arguments. Above all we feel privileged that we had the chance to know him. Although Dr. Karol Jakubowicz is no longer with us, we feel that his impact still plays (and will do so in the future) an important role in our activities.

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Michał Głowiński
Editors

"*The Central European Journal of Communication*"
Polish Communication Association

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Gaunt, weakened by a series of medical problems with which he continued to valiantly struggle when I last saw him in Warsaw in September 2012, Dr. Karol Jakubowicz spoke to me about continuing his work on yet another new book, this one a broad appraisal of media and democracy in East and Central Europe. His passing on 28 April 2013 deprives us forever of benefitting from his wisdom, as we have often been privileged to do on many media related subjects thanks to his rich and varied scholarly contributions and those he so brilliantly made to media policy-making in Europe as part of his

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assignments in UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Broadcasting Union, and other national institutions in his native Poland.

I first met Karol in the second half of the 1980s at an East-West Colloquium organized, in what today is Slovenia, by one of our colleagues from the University of Ljubljana. His presentation, then and on countless occasions thereafter, as well as his writings, made it clear that he was a man who possessed the kind of analytical clarity and acumen, extensive knowledge and understanding of the subjects he addressed that made him *primus inter pares* in our world-wide community of media scholars. Karol's highly honed intelligence and his deep appreciation of the rights of citizens to freedom of expression, media freedoms and responsibilities, nurtured in and made most urgent by his life under Communism, were enhanced by an unwavering common sense, integrity, honesty, and courage.

As an individual, Karol was always a considered and willing collaborator. His ability to inspire was derived from the inquisitiveness he always displayed, his need to grasp the ultimate meaning of the topics he examined and the issues he dealt with, and the critical thinking that he brought to every subject he tackled. He had little patience with ideologues and those whose perspectives were limited by a refusal to learn from history.

In the Forward of a 603-page collection of Karol's papers and speeches he presented at various Council of Europe and international events, published by the Council of Europe in 2011 (*Media Revolution in Europe: Ahead of the Curve*), the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, gives us a sense of his enormous contributions and also signals the loss to Europe and world-wide media scholarship that his passing now represents:

You have helped us to identify both the challenges and the opportunities emerging in a rapidly evolving environment. At a time when citizens all over Europe feel more and more disconnected from democratic processes, the debate you are launching about a right to public expression is particularly important. I hope it can be used as an opportunity to further empower citizens and advance DEMOCRACY, so that this keyword continues to matter.

As a community of scholars, we mourn Karol Jakubowicz's passing and feel his absence at a time when the world still needs his wisdom and experience. His work remains an inspiration and a guide. I mourn him deeply but am left with the joyous memory of having had the pleasure and honor to know he was my friend.

Peter Gross
University of Tennessee Knoxville, USA

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I got acquainted with Dr. Karol Jakubowicz in early 1990s in Strasbourg at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Transfrontier Television. It was a time of deep transformations in post-communist societies and great enthusiasm about democracy we

were going to build. It was impossible to not notice Karol with his imposing stature and intellectual eye-brow. His figure looked rather solemn but kindness sparkled behind the black rimmed eyeglasses. We, young media experts from new democratic countries, listened attentively and respectfully to his proposals placing our countries in a completely new framework of equal relationships and dialogue. During the break I approached him, introduced myself and expressed my respect for his contribution to the debate. Trusting him as a colleague I shared my plans to start working on a doctoral dissertation in media law. “What is your background?” Karol asked me and on learning that I had been trained as a lawyer said that it would be interesting to analyze the media from its prism, then he mentioned that he had recently completed his dissertation treating the media from a sociological perspective. “Sociologist,” I thought but he had such vast knowledge in different fields and especially in international and human rights law.

When I began my master’s and doctoral studies at Central European University in Budapest I expected Karol to come for a lecture or a teaching module because I heard that he had been there as a guest lecturer but it did not happen. In fact we never met at an academic institution or event. I had already defended my thesis and we met again in Rome at a CDMM meeting. “Come” a colleague from Turkey hastily took me to a group of delegates, “Karol Jakubowicz has just nominated you to be elected as a member of the Bureau. She can make a very good contribution to our work as she has the knowledge and skills for that — he said. It is a great compliment for you!” After I was elected Karol came up to me and smilingly said “So now you are one of the ‘Dinosaurs’ here!”

Our cooperation in the CDMC and within the Bureau while Karol was the CDMC chair was very productive. We considered him a genius but also a fine chap and a kind person who was always ready to support you.

*Bissera Zankova
Media expert from Bulgaria
Member of the Bureau of the Steering Committee on the Media and Information Society (CDMSI) at the Council of Europe*

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The EBU Digital Strategy Group (1999–2002) was set up to “investigate the need for shared EBU/Member perspectives on the digital revolution — and international media — developments...” Those of us who were members of the group were all bureaucrats and/or technocrats from the EBU rank and file, or from EBU headquarters in Geneva. We were clearly “the usual suspects” from the Public Service Broadcasting constituency of the faithful believers.

There was, however, one unusual participant. Few had met him before — a tall, square man sitting calmly as a rock at the corner of the meeting table without saying anything for a very long time. It was as if he was analysing the confusion around the table to do with the aims of the group and where to begin.

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Then, with a deep and calm voice, he set the scene. He placed the challenges of the new digital technologies in a broader cultural-political context of media in the service of democratic Europe. This gave our work the necessary perspective. Time and time again Karol kept us on the route by listening, analysing and giving us a sense of direction.

In the following years until he fell ill I frequently contacted Karol for advice. I met him at many different media-related forums, research seminars, conferences and “groups of specialists.” Unlike most specialists, Karol’s “speciality” and his most important contribution both during meetings and in his writings was the breadth of his knowledge and the depth of his insight.

This may be the reason why his initial optimistic perception of the future of Public Service Media and their potential for changing society in post-communist Europe gradually became more pessimistic. Beneath that calm, analytical exterior one could sense frustrations and emotions bordering on anger, often elegantly cloaked in ironical statements verging on sarcasm.

All of us in the Public Service Media community have lost a great friend, a relentless defender of free speech and an eminent advocate of media institutions in the service of society and accountable to its citizens.

*Christian S. Nissen
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark*

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Karol was not only a dear colleague; he was a very kind, attentive, and caring mentor. I will always remember his silent and thoughtful gaze while he politely and attentively observed and listened to the world around him. The peace and harmony that accompanied his presence has always brought thoughts of calmness, retreat, contemplation and privacy — feelings so seldom discovered in times of uncertainty, urgency, sensationalism, self-exposure, attention-seeking.

Karol dearly loved the idea of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) — and this affectionate relationship noticeably appeared in his writings. Being critical and just while talking about the CEE imperfections, he also expressed unlimited confidence in change.

He was a true optimist and idealist. Although, at certain times, melancholic motions found place and were preserved in his writings — these only disclosed his feelings and sympathies, and showed his genuine concern, his preoccupation with matters of urgent and vital significance.

He is and will be greatly missed.

*Auksė Balčytienė
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