

Summary

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Pressje Quarterly brings together young thinkers and artists from various intellectual circles to provide a forum for open intellectual debate across social, cultural, legal and philosophical issues that matter to Poland in the twenty-first century. In the spirit of tolerant debate Pressje asks the questions which are often discriminated, downplayed or neglected elsewhere; it highlights the issues which would otherwise never receive sufficient attention in the politically correct universe. Working within the broad framework of ideas popularly described as conservatism Pressje tries to transgress modern and postmodern discourses while preserving some of their noble tenets and deconstructing the ones that might be harmful to the vitality of Western civilization.

Current issue of Pressje is a plea for restoring intellectual balance in Poland. This could happen if we manage to assimilate the heritage of "Polish London" – a current of emigration that fled to Great Britain after the outbreak of Second World War and refused to return after the hostile communist regime fell upon Poland. We believe understanding these people is a prerequisite for creating a healthy state structure in our country today.

When Nazis were busy with burning Europe, Polish London was listened to. Almost a half of confidential information from Europe during the war obtained by the British intelligence was supplied by the Poles. A radio broadcast starting with the words "It's London speaking" was announcing a message from the Polish independent authorities in exile. However, after Roosevelt and Churchill put Poland into Stalin's hands and a puppet government was installed in the country – London was not listened to anymore. It did not stop to speak, though. It remained in existence till 1989, when Poland regained independence from communism.

Now we must rethink Polish London. Arkady Rzegocki thinks this city may be seen as "a forgotten capitol of Poland": although we remember mi-

litary efforts of our wartime heroes, we forget the post-war diplomatic and cultural sacrifice of the emigration. Whereas we allow the heritage of the Polish emigration in France to shape our culture, we forget the heritage of the emigration in Britain. It is high time to change this. Pumping the colours of Polish London into our collective memory creates an opportunity to bridge the traditions of the Second (1919–1939) and Third Republic (since 1989) in order to make them arch over the intellectual ambiguity of communism (1945–1989).

Jan Maciejewski and Krzysztof Mazur compare the pragmatic Polish emigration in Paris with the idealist emigration in London. The first wanted to reshape communism in a conciliatory mood, whereas the other was ethically inflexible and thus preferred to wait for the collapse of communism before taking action. Both traditions did not avoid errors: the former lacked broader vision, the latter did not take historical responsibility. The authors conclude that although we may have needed Paris during transformation from communism to democracy, we need more of London today.

Jakub Moroz suggests we need to shake off the dust from the books written by the Polish Londoners and be inspired by the ways of remembering advocated by W.G. Sebald – a German writer. In turn Paweł Chojnacki suggests we should dwell upon the daily life of Polish Londoners to analyze their psychological dilemmas.

A separate section elaborates a few ideas by the emigrants. Paweł Rójek recalls the idea of a political federalism advocated by Polish government in exile. The doctrine, which inspired Henri Spaak, one of the founding fathers of the EU, was developed by Kazimierz Smogorzewski. It assumed a federation of states between Germany and Russia would ensure geopolitical stability and could be a basis for further European integration. Unfortunately, the tragic death of prime minister Sikorski in the air crash put this idea to the grave. Grzegorz Lewicki recalls a similar idea by Oskar Halecki, who introduced the term “Central-Eastern Europe” to historiography and argued that Jagiellonian federationism was an effective means against double imperialism coming regularly from Russia and Germany. Paweł Chojnacki tries to reconstruct the thought of Bogdan Wielkopolski, Tadeusz Dzieduszycki and Zygmunt Nałęcz. In turn Remigiusz Okraska recalls Adam Ciotkisz, a patriotic socialist, who flirted with Róża Luksemburg.

Our next sections are a man’s search for meaning of emigration. We analyze the existential choices of Stanisław Cat Mackiewicz, who was at first a prime minister of the Polish government in exile, but later decided to return to Poland and even establish regular contacts with communist intelligence. Why did he do this? He may have wanted credit and public recognition in Poland – something that our next authors have not earned while living in exile. Zygmunt Nowakowski, Ryszard Wraga and Zygmunt Czarnecki – they all struggled with the choice to emigrate; in this issue of “Pressje” we publish their writings for the first time in Poland. Posthumously.

It seems that in order to feel the spirit of Polish London we must summon spirits. Our traditional big interview is with Zygmunt Nowakowski, an actor and writer that died as an emigrant. He must have been impressed by our idea to resurrect Polish London, as he decided to tell us his story in a very emotional and engaging way. To impress him a bit more we add a set of maps which enlist and describe places related to Polish cultural and intellectual life in London. If you're not a Londoner, time has come to book a cheap flight and see all of these places in person. Should you do so, you might also want to visit some outstanding Polish Londoners: Wojciech Falkowski, Alicja Moskal, Stanisław Portalski and Halina Taborska who tell us their stories to complete the main topic of this issue. Let Vistula and Thames conflux.

We do not forget about regular section such as poetry, literary criticism, short story, reviews and polemics – in fact, there's quite a few of them. We give floor to critical reviewers of our issues on post-Europe, leftist thought, Polish spirit and messianism. Occasional misunderstandings of our intellectual proposals made Paweł Rojek, the chief editor, prepare a separate article entitled "What is Pressje", especially useful should you happen to read our magazine for the first time.