

TIME IN CONTEXT – THE POLISH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PADEREWSKI POLISH HOSPITAL IN EDINBURGH 1941 TO 1949

W.A. Wojcik, supported by the Myre Sim Bursary

The Polish Medical School (PMS) and Paderewski hospital were institutions in exile which existed in Edinburgh during the war-torn Forties, by the generosity and hospitality of the University of Edinburgh, the British government and other parties. Much has already been written on the creation of these institutions, by people who were a party to those proceedings: namely Professor Rostowski, who was Dean from 1946 to 1949 and Dr Tomaszewski especially, who published amongst other things a brief history of the PMS and more thorough memoirs.¹ I have drawn much from the latter in the summary that follows.

PAST TENSE

Following the invasion of Poland by Germany on 1 September 1939, which lasted a month and saw much bloodshed, the defeated Polish forces fled Poland mainly through south eastern border posts that had not yet been sealed by the Soviets, into Romania and Hungary. A new army was formed in France under General Sikorski and many soldiers then travelled to France to fight on the Western Front. Once France fell in mid-June 1940, they moved on to England then Scotland; however, many soldiers supposedly stayed in France, to where their families had emigrated: 'German policy in the West was to be incomparably more lenient than in the East,'² wrote the historian Norman Davies. Within the troops that found themselves in Scotland, a large number of officers and medical personnel found that their skills were almost redundant: effectively a surplus.

It should be pointed out at this stage that soldiers in the Polish forces attained rank by experience: academic qualifications did not automatically promote one individual over another. So, not all doctors and physicians had a great deal of responsibility. Dr Tomaszewski, formerly Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy in Poznan University, remembers having to peel potatoes for dinner at the canteen.³

Realising that the medical personnel could afford time for continuing education, Colonel Irvin Fortescue (Medical Liaison Officer with the Polish Army) worked with Colonel Kurtz (the Chief Medical Officer of the Polish Army in Scotland), to arrange attachments for the exiled medical officers so they might become acquainted with British medical procedures and practice, and remain alert and active. Subsequently, in the three months from September 1940, over 300 Polish doctors visited Scottish hospitals in groups of about 20. It became apparent, however, that this generous idea was being undermined by the Polish doctors' often limited knowledge of English (or perhaps Scots), which often did not allow for full exploitation of the opportunity offered them.⁴

One Scottish medical institution so visited was the Military Hospital at Edinburgh Castle, where Lieutenant Colonel F.A.E. Crew was Commanding Officer. This brilliant man was in peacetime a professor of genetics at the Medical Faculty of the University of Edinburgh, and therefore involved in education. He is credited with many

discoveries in the field of genetics and medicine but also with instigating a scheme whereby senior Polish Medical Officers (MOs) – professors and the like – would run the attachments and lecture junior MOs. So Polish medical personnel were detailed to the Military Hospital where they gained clinical experience under the auspices of their more knowledgeable compatriots and attended lectures. These were overseen by the University of Edinburgh.⁵

This project proved far more effective and was subsequently broadened to include students whose finals were interrupted by the calamity of war, so that they might complete their basic training. From this another problem developed: these young doctors-to-be needed some recognition of the experience they gained under the auspices of this scheme: in other words, some form of examination and subsequent recognition was required.

Enough had been done; the adventure might have developed no further and remained a well-spirited and generous scheme. Here again, the energetic Lieutenant Colonel Crew stepped in with a proposal to introduce examinations and hence create a Polish School of Medicine (as clinical teaching and lectures were already taking place).⁶ The University responded warmly to the idea and the resourceful professor/lieutenant colonel then communicated this possibility to Colonel Kurtz, starting a chain of letters, meetings and negotiations that led to the first students being admitted to the School just five months later, on 4 March 1940.^{7,8}

The very next day, on 10 October, Kurtz wrote to his superior General M. Kukiel, Commander of Polish Forces in Scotland, outlining the proposal and stressing the unique opportunity so presented and the whole-heartedness of the offer. At this embryonic stage, the aims of the said School were to be:

- to give Polish scientists an opportunity to work within their specialist field;
- to give Polish medical students who had not finished their degrees in Poland an education resulting in the granting of degrees upon completion of the relevant examinations; and
- to offer existing Polish doctors further education and experience.⁹

On 11 October, Lieutenant General Kukiel then forwarded Lieutenant Colonel Kurtz's report to the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, adding his strong approval and authorising him to take part in proposed discussions on 15 October. Kurtz then wrote a report of his discussions with Professor Sydney Smith, then Dean of the Medical Faculty at the University. Received by the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief on 17 October, it described the suggestions of the Dean and the proposal of the Commanding officer of the Medical Corps of the Polish Army to assign the relevant Polish medical

specialists and academics to the Military Hospital in readiness for the expected School.¹⁰

This was reported to the Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister General Sikorski, who welcomed the prospect of a Polish academic institution abroad and passed it on to the Minister of the Interior, Professor S. Kot. He in turn moved it through the Cabinet and on 22 October authorised Professor Jurasz, previously of Surgery at Poznan University, to continue negotiations with the University. It was also established that:

- the Army would co-operate fully by relieving medical personnel of their duties as necessary;
- the Polish Treasury would meet maintenance costs; and
- an Organising Committee should be formed to establish a programme of studies, staff list and fulfil other administrative functions as required.¹¹

Professor Jurasz met with the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir Thomas Holland, Professor Sydney Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Crew on 25 October for preliminary discussions, whereupon he discovered that proceedings were already well advanced. A list of suitably qualified Polish academics, drawn up by Lieutenant Colonel Kurtz, was presented to satisfy the University's concern that enough staff could be found for this venture to go ahead. The proposal was duly passed forward to the Senatus Academicus on 1 November and, with an assurance that it would be successful, Professor Jurasz reported back to London. On 13 November the Senatus added their seal of approval and the Organising Committee saw the time as fit to move up to Edinburgh.¹²

The Secretary of the University, W. Fleming, and General Sikorski exchanged letters of a cordial nature and final arrangements were implemented. The old Anatomy Department was to be provided by the University for teaching core subjects like anatomy, biology and physiology, and access was arranged to hospitals – such as the Royal Infirmary – for teaching to be carried out there.¹³ A staff list numbering 22 in total was drawn up and assigned to the Military Hospital to await the School's opening (more joined later), while the Committee selected 46 hopeful students from the Forces and 30 civilians (including 20 women).¹⁴ Overall, the University agreed to provide facilities and accommodation, the Polish Government being responsible for all other expenditures and expenses incurred. The concept of the school had developed further: the PMS was now seen as a nucleus of Polish medical education to be nurtured before transfer to a free Poland had become a chief aim of the project.¹⁵ Later, Polish schools of architecture, law and veterinary medicine came into being around the UK, but these worked on a smaller scale and will not be discussed here.

On 24 February 1941, after much exchange of documents, time and preparation, an Agreement between the Polish Government and the University of Edinburgh was signed, to which the Constitution of the Polish School of Medicine was attached. On the same day a Decree was published by President Raczkiewicz legitimising the School. The Council of the PMS met for the first time on 4 March, elected Professor Jurasz as Dean (he held the position until 1945) and the first students were formally admitted. The official inauguration was performed on 22 March, with Vice-Chancellor Sir Thomas Holland,

President Raczkiewicz and many others present. The President was awarded an honorary law degree and various speeches were made: the Scottish speeches were gracious, the Polish detailed the history of Polish–Scottish relations and the tragedy that had befallen Poland.¹⁶

In conjunction with the above, facilities were to be made available to the Poles for the treatment of patients. A proposal was drawn up in which the Department of Health was to allocate up to 150 beds under the Emergency Hospitals Scheme for Polish patients to be treated by Polish doctors and nurses. A letter detailing this was sent to the Public Health Committee of Edinburgh Town Council on 13 March 1941, which resolved on 18 March to recommend general approval subject to fuller details of the arrangements being reported;¹⁷ it was also made quite clear that this would not affect corporate beds. The fuller details of this agreement were as follows: a former children's convalescent home in the grounds of the Western General Hospital was selected to house the Polish Unit. Furthermore, surgical beds were made available in the main hospital as well as access to radiography and to an operating theatre. Also, the Polish beds would be vacated in the event of a serious emergency.

The opening ceremony took place on 17 October 1941: the day of inauguration of the second year at the PMS. There were approximately 300 people present, including General Sikorski, Ambassador Raczynski, Minister Mikolajczyk and the Lord Provost.¹⁸ Dr Tomaszewski wrote:

Gossip was going round at the time about rivalry between General Sikorski and President Raczkiewicz, who was present at the inauguration of the PMS. It seems that the General was keen to be at an opening himself, and Professor Jurasz was only too happy to oblige, thus gaining another prominent patron.¹⁹

Speaking at the opening, Professor Jurasz stressed the importance of such projects: 'The University of Edinburgh which in such great measure had contributed to the organisation of the Polish Medical Faculty on foreign soil was dealing a blow to which the Germans were no less sensitive than to the flying fortress.'²⁰ He also presented a letter which had been written by a famous Polish surgeon and clandestinely brought out of a Russian concentration camp to travel to Edinburgh and convey congratulations to those involved.²¹

Staffed by Polish doctors from the PMS and Scottish nurses, 80 beds were available at the opening, although this increased to 130 over the next year, peaking at 150.²² By 1946 the annual number of cases treated was approaching 40,000.²³ Teaching of PMS students at the Royal Infirmary continued, Dr Tomaszewski declining a post at the Polish hospital because of 'daily commitments at the Royal'. The new hospital was, however, a hub of activity for Poles. Polish doctors came up from London to work there and some graduates of the PMS were accepted in what became a very busy hospital.²⁴

Many charitable contributions were made: the Pope sent £5,000, as did the 'Refugees of England', an Anglo-American charity. The most generous benefactor was by far, however, the Paderewski Testimonial Fund. Supporting a variety of charitable causes, it was named after Ignacy Paderewski – a remarkable man who, not content with being a concert pianist and accomplished composer, was at various times the Polish Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, signatory

of the Treaty of Versailles and the Polish delegate for the UN. Sadly he died in June 1941, before the hospital was opened, but his Foundation contributed a large amount of money towards equipment: Lady Abingdon, Chairman of the 'Refugees of England' Committee, wrote shortly afterwards mentioning the sum of \$33,000.²⁵ In return, the hospital was to be called the Paderewski Polish Hospital in Edinburgh.

Donations continued to come in once the hospital was opened; Dr Tomaszewski wrote that the Rockefeller Foundation later donated \$75,000.²⁶ This does not appear to have been correct; the grant was withheld because 'the Foundation was convinced that British and American agencies were providing sufficient support'.²⁷ These generous extramural sources of funding provided much equipment, so much so that Scottish nurses used it as an important part of their training at the Western General.²⁸

The first year at the Polish Medical School was hard-going – a full, unabridged year's curriculum being taught in the six months between March and September. The 70 students who enrolled commenced their studies fully aware of the importance of making a good first impression. That the School succeeded is testament to the determination and drive of all involved.

Of course teething problems occurred. Some Czech soldiers applied, a few even began to attend lectures, which must have added further to the international spirit of the place; sadly, their Government decided against their enrolment and they had to withdraw. Also, the relationship between academic and army duties had not been fully clarified and led to some small conflicts of interest. These were based around students being ordered to carry out military duties at times that clashed with commitments at the school – administrative changes helped resolve the problem. Clinical teaching was almost exclusively in the Royal Infirmary, paediatrics at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, and psychiatry at the Larbert Hospital in Carstairs (Lanarkshire) being the only exceptions.²⁹

In subsequent years the school took on more students, its most active year being the 1944/5 session, which was attended by 220 students. In 1942/3 prisoners released from Russian concentration camps arrived in Edinburgh, either to teach or study,³⁰ and following the end of the European war in 1944, more soldiers and released prisoners duly travelled to Edinburgh to study medicine. All admissions made were with agreement of the University Medical Faculty and although the Faculty did refuse some applicants, this never caused any friction or dispute.³¹

In 1945, following the end of the war, University admission lists were about to swell beyond the intake during the war years, and teaching and clinical resources would have to be pushed – the future of the PMS looked uncertain. It was decided that no more admissions to the PMS were to be accepted, being as it was a wartime venture.³² The medical faculty felt the repatriation of the PMS 'should be carried through at the earliest possible date'.³³ By 1946, it became clear that those measures were not enough – the Royal Infirmary was overcrowded with students. In the end, serious discussion resolved the problem by abolishing the lowest remaining year, the third year, leaving only fourth and fifth. Letters were written by Deans of the Medical Faculty and the PMS to universities around Britain, detailing the difficult situation in which these students had found themselves, in an attempt to help them

continue their studies elsewhere. The response was generous: of the third year students, ten went to Edinburgh; others were relocated at various universities around Scotland and England – Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Dundee, Leeds and Newcastle – all without taking matriculation exams.³⁴

In the meantime, 30 more students had arrived to study at the PMS. Clearly, this was not possible, but the School was unable to turn them away, especially as they were mostly survivors of concentration camps. Professor Jurasz *et al.* set up an unofficial Polish Medical School at the Paderewski Hospital (known as the Studium Lekarskie or Teaching Department), with the knowledge of the Scottish authorities. Only fourth and fifth year students could be admitted, these receiving lectures and clinical experience according to the same programme as the PMS. On completion of the course and examinations, however, a makeshift diploma signed by Professor Jurasz was all that could be awarded. Although recognised in Poland, the University of Edinburgh was adamant that to sit official exams students must have attended the approved medical course first.³⁵ Later negotiations with the English Conjoint Board allowed students holding those diplomas to sit British examinations for medicine.³⁶

Professor Jurasz, now spending much of his time in New York trying to chart the future course of the hospital, owned largely by the Paderewski Fund, relinquished his position as Dean in 1945, although he still taught. Professor Rogalski filled this post for a year only: he returned to Poland in 1946. Professor Rostowski then took the position until the School's closure in March 1949; this followed a slow liquidation as the staff list decreased over three years. On 15 November of that year, a grey and rainy day saw a commemorative tablet (the size limited by financial considerations), unveiled in the quadrangle of the New Buildings of the Medical School. By then, an Act, passed in the House of Commons in 1948, recognised PMS degrees, allowing graduates to register in Britain. Over the eight years there had been over 330 students of whom 227 became MB ChB graduates. Less than 10% returned home, half the remainder settling in the UK, the others finding posts around the world.³⁷

As for the hospital, it remained a very active institution throughout its six-year life. Professor Jurasz, invited by the Paderewski Testimonial Fund, travelled to the US in 1942, where he toured for three months, speaking at approximately 50 functions. Always an energetic man, he helped maintain support and win new donations. One of his aims was to organise help for Poland to recover after the war: he wished to set up a mobile hospital that could tour Poland. In this he was quite successful – the first mobile X-ray machine in the UK, housed inside a vehicle with its own generator, arrived in 1943; more equipment arrived in 1944/5. By the end of the war enough equipment for a 400-bed hospital was available; this was transported to Poland following the end of the war.³⁸

In 1946 the Paderewski Fund decided to close the Hospital (as it owned the equipment), following Professor Jurasz's visit to Poland. There was a slow closure during the spring and summer of 1947; some beds were set aside in Ballochmyle Hospital in Mauchlin near Glasgow, staffed by several doctors mostly from the PMS. A move to Poland looked increasingly unlikely due to the political situation there and incidents of Stalinist terror. A series of

unsuccessful attempts to relocate it were made, the equipment lying in storage for some time before eventually being sold off, the money returning to the Fund.³⁹

PAST HISTORIC

The creation of the PMS and Paderewski Polish Hospital may be an unprecedented act of co-operation, but certainly not an unprecedented contact between the peoples of those two nations. The most notable exchange took place in the late sixteenth century: this was at the peak of a fruitful 'golden age' for Poland and a time of healthy trade with Scotland, to the extent that dock workers in Leith were called 'Polanders'. A Pact of Confederation was passed in 1573,⁴⁰ which was tolerant of various religions, creating a liberal atmosphere which attracted those fleeing persecution of their faith under the Reformation. The historian J. Fletcher wrote: 'When almost all the rest of Europe was deluged with the blood of contending sectaries . . . Poland opened an asylum for the persecuted of all religions and allowed every man to worship God in his own way.'⁴¹ Similar praise is found in the Cambridge History of Poland: 'In the sixteenth century Poland had been in many respects the most liberal and tolerant country in Europe.'⁴² Around 30,000 Scots fled the Reformation to Poland as a result, including many merchants, tradesmen, peddlers and mercenaries.

Over the centuries, Polish students received stipends to study in Edinburgh. One such fund was the 'mortification' established by Robert Brown who died in 1714, having spent much of his life as a merchant in the Polish town of Zamosc. In his bequest, Mr Brown left the sum of six thousand Scottish pounds for this purpose which were to be administered by the Town Council. The interest each year was to allow one student of the name Brown and one Polish Protestant student to study in Edinburgh.⁴³ The Fund was managed well and continued to provide sixty pounds *per annum* well into this century, outlasting the PMS (although by then local students were the beneficiaries).⁴⁴ The earlier influx of Scots into Poland left a legacy: some of the Polish students in Edinburgh carried distinctly un-Polish surnames such as Kirkettle and St Clair.⁴⁵

A more tenuous but intriguing Polish link with Scotland was F.L. De La Fontaine. Born in 1756 in Biberach, he studied medicine at Strasbourg and Vienna, served in the Austrian army, then settled in Cracow where he became a famous surgeon, achieving such fame that in 1787 he was appointed house physician to the King of Poland. Later, having become the head surgeon to the Polish army, he founded in co-operation with the physician Michael Bergonzoni, the first Military Medical School in Poland. De la Fontaine's great-grandson went by the name of Louis Alexander of Battenberg. The latter's own grandson is no less than the present Duke of Edinburgh; the city where, over 150 years later, the first Polish medical school in exile, staffed mostly by Polish military personnel, was to be established.⁴⁶

Another common factor that links the PMS with the past is the motif of invasion and exile that is woven extensively into the rich tapestry of the Polish past historic. Tragically for the Poles, their country is located in the natural buffer zone between Eastern and Western Europe. Over the centuries, the Germans from the West, Russians from the East, Turks from the South and even the Swedes invaded and attacked Poland. The German and Russian invasion of

1939 was therefore another tragic chapter of a long, and often painful, drama.

This turbulent history, wiping Poland off the map in 1795 after three successive partitions, not to be restored until the end of World War I did, however, instil a strong and valiant sense of patriotism which held the Poles together – they resisted the combined force of the Red Army and the German Wehrmacht for longer than France and, supported by the Allies, held out against Germany alone.

In many cases this patriotism was accompanied by an intense anti-German sentiment: Professor Jurasz being a vocal example.⁴⁷ A brief note on his life before the PMS is perhaps relevant. He was born in Heidelberg in 1882, and studied medicine there, specialising in surgery at a hospital in London. He travelled to South America, Africa and Asia over several months which he spent as a ship's doctor, then worked as an assistant at a surgical clinic in Krolewicz/Konigsberg. He took part in a German Red Cross expedition to Turkey in 1912/3. From 1919 to 1929 he was head of St Mary's Hospital in Frankfurt-on-the-Main and performed the duties of Chief Surgeon in the Fifth German Army Corps. Following the end of World War II and the recreation of Poland's boundaries, he moved to Poznan where he took on the Chair of Surgery and became head of the Surgery Clinic there. At the outbreak of World War II he took on the role of Chief Surgeon at a fortress and a general's HQ until it fell, whereupon he fled to France, and in 1940 from there to the UK. His contribution to medicine was important and considerable – he wrote much, and even pioneered an operation on pancreatic cysts that was later named after him.⁴⁸

Clearly he was well qualified for his work in Edinburgh: a man of the world, fluent in English with much experience of similar responsibilities already behind him. The many years he spent in Germany are of interest: he could have built up a feeling of sympathy and understanding with the Germans, in which case one would have expected any criticism of the Germans to focus on the Nazis. Records of his public speeches expose his resentment and general dislike of the Germans: his service for the German Army in World War I would therefore have been very difficult to reconcile with his views.

But what of medicine in Poland? The turbulent past had not provided the most fertile soil in which to sow the seeds of medical endeavour, but this had been overcome. A particularly interesting example was during the second half of the nineteenth century, when the only Polish academic centres existed in the Austrian partition, most of the rest of Poland being deprived almost completely of the conditions necessary for scientific activity. In response to these conditions, the provincial hospitals that existed nurtured scientific research in the clinical field. This research, like a shoot growing in the dark, reached out in the direction of the light most accessible to it: philosophy and medical theory. The best minds in Polish medicine directed their energies at nurturing a large number of scientific works dealing with subjects such as the theory of medical diagnosis, problems of medical ethics and deontology, and the role of the physician was faced with increasing industrialisation and social reform. This philosophical heritage has had a lasting effect on Polish medicine, with more emphasis placed on the humanistic aspect of medicine than in British medical schools.⁴⁹

Following the end of World War I, when Poland regained

independence, there were five active medical schools hoping to meet the national demand for doctors of medicine. German invasion marked an end to that, as the new regime was aimed at the decimation of intellectual life in Poland. A tragic demonstration of this intent took place in Cracow University, the oldest and most prestigious in Poland: University staff were invited to a lecture at which a German representative would explain the new arrangements. Hundreds turned up, including senior professors, only to be arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg concentration camp, where many died, a considerable number as a result of torture.⁵⁰

POST SCRIPT

One particularly interesting aspect of the PMS is the duality in its concept: the symbol of hope and co-operation, participating in creating a united front against Germany, simultaneously fulfilling a very real and practical role. Press involvement and the possible political role which the school and hospital played are therefore interesting areas of study.

From the outset, the PMS was taken as more than a charitable act, but interpreted by some – especially the Poles involved – as a retaliation against the totalitarian regime that had swooped down on Poland, deprived so many of freedom and targeted organised centres of culture and academia.

Professor Jurasz, speaking at the inauguration of the PMS, said: ‘In an unprecedented totalitarian war we have to mobilise all spiritual and moral forces and bring them into the front line of a struggle which is being carried on for the defence and maintenance of human community, collaboration and freedom.’⁵¹ This way they felt involved in the struggle against the aggressor rather than assuming a passive refugee role. In general, the Polish community in exile was a very vocal one, giving rise to one British MP saying ‘where you find a Pole, you find a newspaper’.⁵² Polish newspapers such as *Nowy Swiat* (New World) and *Dziennik Zolnierza* (The Soldier’s Diary) were in common circulation and offered reports and propaganda. Medicine was a natural platform for speeches, as it represented the epitome of human learning, compassion and collaboration, its practitioners sworn by the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm.

As for the origins of the hospital, the great benefaction of the Paderewski Testimonial Fund was clearly a sign of how the project caught the public imagination. However, six years later financial dependence gave the fund the power to close it down, against the wishes of the committee that was set up to administer it. Ironically, a few years later an American politician in London falsely claimed that the British Government and its anti-social policy of nationalising hospital services had forced the closure.⁵³

Although the press did not quite make the PMS front page news, the project did receive good coverage and there were no dissenting or adverse opinions printed.⁵⁴ Instead, the Poles’ enthusiasm for learning was noted,⁵⁵ as was the story of Jadwiga Mickiewicz, whose route to graduation was remarkable. In her final year at the University of Warsaw when the war broke out in 1939, Miss Mickiewicz had been working on a Polish liner, the *Chorobry* and found herself in Pernambuco at the outbreak of hostilities. The ship reached England, and she disembarked to become a refugee. Accepting an offer of hospitality at a country house, she learned English, then took on a string of jobs: a

chambermaid, a voluntary nurse and a bus conductor. Accepted at University College, Dundee, she passed her class exams with distinction, then travelled to Edinburgh to sit her finals when the PMS opened.⁵⁶

In September 1941, a two-day Polish-Czech medical conference was held at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Giving a speech, Professor Jurasz began by stressing the political significance of the conference as well as its medical value, then continued to offer his insights on the German psyche:

The cruelty of the Nazis was probably to be explained by their inferiority complex. They had no culture of their own and had therefore developed a camouflaged culture which had no ultimate goal and which they were using as a means of realising their destructive instincts. In the development of the freedom of nations and individuals all other nations had outdistanced Germany, and as she could not find a place for her conception of life among the more advanced nations, Hitler was using all the organising power of Germany, its youth and future, in attempting to destroy the world in which he could not find his ‘lebensraum’.⁵⁷

A small discrepancy exists in the reports of this speech: in the English language press, Professor Jurasz was clearly referring to the Nazis, whereas the Polish paper *Nowy Swiat* reported him speaking of ‘the cruelty of the Germans’. The English language press was certainly more diplomatic, but the Poles had much painful, tragic experience on which to base a more discriminatory view of their Western neighbours. This polarised view was expressed clearly by another speaker at the conference: Professor Stronksi, Polish Minister of Information, talked of the shock from which the world was suffering: ‘If a diagnosis and a localisation of a disease were preliminary to any treatment, then Czechoslovaks and Poles could help the world, as they had known it for over a thousand years: its name was Germany.’ Continuing to say that as a solution, ‘what should be cut off must be cut off, what should be burnt out must be burnt out,’ the views expressed were certainly not uncommon at the time and quite understandable. Nonetheless, it seems strange that using medicine as a metaphor to express intentions of destruction and revenge – the same subject that is meant to represent the finest human virtues – was seen as acceptable by the Professor. This conflicting juxtaposition reveals a schism which perhaps characterises the condition of war: feelings of hatred which need to be balanced by generosity and goodwill.

Two years later, Professor Jurasz gave a press conference upon his return from a three-month tour of the US: ‘I found tremendous propaganda for Germany. They are putting it out very skilfully that it is only the Nazis who are bad and that the main mass of the Germans are really decent people.’⁵⁸ To counter this propaganda, he told Americans that a country like Poland with its 35 million inhabitants had not submitted under the worst conditions to the Nazis, whereas Germany, with its 80 million, had. This tour was quite extensive, one of the more prominent figures he had the pleasure of meeting being J.E. Hoover who expressed to him his belief that winning the peace would be much harder than winning the war.⁵⁹ It is not clear whether the good Professor fully comprehended the meaning of the ex-president’s words, as the opinions of the former would serve only to alienate once the war had finished.

Post-war reports showed a new emerging view of the Poles in Scotland. A Transport and General Worker's Union Conference in 1946 had 53 resolutions on the agenda, of which 17 related to Polish troops in Scotland, including one that urged the return of Poles to Poland. It was passed, an Edinburgh delegate noting that 'it is no argument that they don't like the present government in Poland. For years I didn't like the Government in this country, but I had to stay here.'⁶⁰ These opinions may not have been the majority, but certainly a vocal minority. Dr Tomaszewski wrote in his memoirs of seeing Dean Bridge vandalised with a large inscription reading 'Poles go home.'

FUTURE IMPERFECT

Peacetime post-World War II found the PMS isolated and increasingly vulnerable. Established in extraordinary circumstances, a return to peacetime and 'normality' left the PMS out of context. It was expected to return to Poland, but most of its staff and students felt they could not return while their country was in the grip of Stalinist oppression. Few felt certain about the future.⁶¹

The Allies had effectively allowed the Soviet Union to keep Poland, despite it being one of the aggressors who invaded her at the start of the war. Atrocities such as the Katyn graves, where thousands of officers had been executed by the Russians, and a common belief that the Red Army had intentionally kept a distance during the Warsaw Uprising which left Warsaw a derelict, empty city, meant that the Allied resolution could only bring dismay to many Poles. Reports of decorated war heroes being sentenced to prison on their return did not encourage thoughts of repatriation.⁶²

In Edinburgh, however sympathetic some people were,⁶³ peacetime meant a shift in demand of resources, manpower and facilities. It was easy for people to be critical of the Poles: they competed for local jobs, they used local hospital and teaching facilities. It was also expressed, to some degree, at a higher level – G.B. McAlpine in an official Whitehall letter to the Vice-Chancellor of the University dated 6 June 1946 wrote: 'It would be helpful even from a negative point of view, if particular colleges or faculties could state definitely that they would not have room for any Poles. In this connection the Home Office are considering the advisability of limiting the number of Poles who may study at universities by means of a quota.'⁶⁴

Many could also be excused for not being in full comprehension of the political resolution for Poland and what it meant for her people. In essence, it is easy to understand why organisations like the PMS and Paderewski hospital could no longer be accommodated indefinitely.

In the meantime, despite these difficulties, the University found solutions to problems and made it possible for the school to keep going and be wound up gradually rather than abruptly, a telling sign of the healthy relationship between the Polish and Scottish academics. Hopes were also maintained of a dissipation of pressure (whether perceived or real) in the political atmosphere in Poland enabling a return. With time, however, enquiries about the validity of PMS degrees in Britain were made, first on a personal basis, then on behalf of an organised group of PMS students who clearly were not expecting to return to Poland in the near future.⁶⁵

Sensing that the School could not return to Poland, yet simultaneously was no longer a feasible and continuing concern in Edinburgh, Professor Jurasz made it his quest

to find a new home for the ageing nucleus he had helped establish. To begin with, the possibility of moving to Allied-occupied Germany was seriously discussed: a wonderfully ironic idea. A letter to the Foreign Office merited a reply explaining that the Office was already working under a lot of pressure and could not consider any new projects.⁶⁶ This act of retribution destined to remain unfulfilled, Professor Jurasz travelled to New York, where he was in touch with the Paderewski Fund to try and realise an alternative plan for the transplantation of the school and hospital. At this time, his colleagues fairly lost track of him, and his continued absence meant he had to resign from his position as Dean. He apparently tried in vain to arrange for a suitable location in the region of New York, but this having failed, Costa Rica, the West Indies and Puerto Rico were sounded out.

In a telegram dated 26 April 1948, Professor Jurasz wrote to Sir Sydney Smith asking for support of his efforts to move the school and hospital to Puerto Rico:

WISH INFORM YOU CONFIDENTIALLY THAT PADEREWSKI COMMITTEE AND I INVITED TO ORGANISE MED FAC SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO EMPLOYING POLISH PROFS READERS LECTURERS AND LOCAL SPECIALISTS. JUST RETURNED PUERTO RICO AND WASHINGTON. HAVE FULLEST SUPPORT PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT. LEGISLATURE UNIVERSITY STATE DEPARTMENT AND INTERIOR WASHINGTON WHICH INTRODUCES SPECIAL BILL TO CONGRESS FOR THIS PURPOSE. ONLY OPPOSITION LOCAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION WHICH GOVERNMENT PROMISED STRAIGHTENED OUT. IN PRESENT FINAL NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TAKEN LIBERTY GIVING YOUR NAME FOR POSSIBLE ENQUIRIES. ASKING YOU GREAT FAVOUR IF APPROACHED TO GIVE PERSONALLY BEST RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ME AND WHOLE FORMER STAFF MENTIONING THAT PAD HOSPITAL HAD DURING TWO LAST YEARS TEACHING DEPARTMENT DOCTOR CLARK AND GODLOWSKI CAN GIVE NECESSARY INFO. THIS OUR ONLY GREAT CHANCE AND RESULT OF MONTHS LONG STRENUOUS EFFORTS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.⁶⁷

The Professor was clearly expending a great deal of energy in trying to find a possible new site for the hospital. The special Bill in Congress, if fact, is an impressive achievement.⁶⁸ A little later, letters were received by the University, from the President of the Puerto Rico Medical Association (the above-mentioned local opposition) as well as a senior figure at the Mayo Clinic enquiring about Professor Jurasz's credentials and the qualifications of the staff at the Paderewski hospital. Manuel Astor, of the Puerto Rican association, was keen to know why Professor Jurasz relinquished his post as Dean, assuring discretion in the handling of the reply. The replies were positive, expressing no unfavourable elements on the staff, but history shows that nothing more substantial came of these efforts: perhaps the local medical association could not be straightened out after all.

Mrs Schelling, Vice-Chairman of the Paderewski Fund, corresponded with the Colonial Office in London in November 1948 about the possibility of donating the hospital's equipment to proposed new University Colleges that were to be set up in Jamaica, East and West Africa on the condition that the staff be employed also. This is mentioned in a subsequent letter from A.M. Wilson-Rae at the Colonial Office to Sir Sydney Smith, asking for his

opinion of medical staff. Mr Wilson-Rae also wrote that Mrs Schelling had travelled to Costa Rica where there had been considerable enthusiasm for the project, although a 'hitch' had occurred, the exact nature of which she was reticent to disclose. Unfortunately, these hitches were encountered along every possible route, and subsequently the search was fruitless.

What of medicine in Poland? During the war, medical teaching did not die, but survived underground. More than 2,500 students read medicine in Warsaw during the war, organised in clandestine schools set up to defy the Germans. These were staffed by professors from the University of Warsaw and the University of Poznan, some of whom were fabled to not have seen the light of day for the majority of the war's duration: their minds and their lives were too precious to risk. Such efforts ensured that the dying embers of Polish medical teaching were still glowing when the war finished, ready to be stoked and blaze anew.

The Polish People's Republic was considerably smaller than its pre-war predecessor in both territory (it lost a fifth) and population (a third). Despite losing some traditional university cities (namely Wilno and Lwow), no time was lost in establishing new universities and medical schools as well as reopening old ones. By the 1950s, 11 medical departments were in existence, complemented by surgical lyceums and schools, which were closed down once the national deficit in medical personnel had been overcome in the late fifties.⁶⁹

OUT OF TIME

The PMS was originally intended to be a nucleus of Polish medical teaching to be nurtured abroad, later being transplanted to grow in the freshly burned soil of Poland; the PMS in Edinburgh instead dissipated and – like a giant human dandelion – dispersed its seedlings around the world, as freshly qualified doctors continued their exile and moved on to other locations. Its history however, is one of solid commitment and uphill struggle and success.

The creation of an institution, whose purpose was noble, i.e. the education of men and women to heal the sick, is touchingly symbolic of idealism and hope in that terrible time of conflict. However, there are other aspects to this story: the underlying current of politics and public opinion and the changes that a return to peace brought about are intriguing, and a full examination of them is yet to be discussed. To conclude: today, when there is increasing co-operation between academic communities, the success of the PMS and of its graduates over 50 years ago is an enduring and encouraging sign of what is possible in times of solidarity and need.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the Myre Sim Bursary. I would also like to thank my supervisor, Steve Sturdy, at the Science Studies Department, Edinburgh University and Arnott Wilson, Edinburgh University Archivist.

REFERENCES

¹ Dr W. Tomaszewski published his memoirs on the 35th anniversary of the inauguration of the PMS where he worked from beginning to end. They were printed in Polish and to my knowledge have not been translated: Tomaszewski W. *Na Szkockiej Ziemi*. London: White Eagle Press; 1979.

² Davies N. *Europe*. Oxford: OUP; 1996; 1005.

³ 'As we did want to eat dinner, three doctors would work in the kitchen each day, peeling potatoes.' Tomaszewski op. cit. ref. 1, 58.

⁴ Rostowski J. *History of the Polish School of Medicine*. Edinburgh: Gilmour and Dean Ltd; 1955; 2.

⁵ Brodzki J, editor. *Polish School of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh*. London: Oliver and Boyd Ltd; 1942; 2.

⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Crew had made acquaintance with Poles before: Polish assistants worked for him before the war, one of whom was later tragically murdered by the Nazis in Poland.

⁷ Brodzki, op. cit. ref. 5, 2.

⁸ Dr Tomaszewski mentions that a Polish professor, one T. Sokolowski, claimed in his memoirs to have suggested the idea of the PMS to Prof. Crew. There is, however, no other record of this claim and furthermore the school and hospital were a logical progression from the attachments at the military hospital at the Castle: both men may therefore have made the same induction.

⁹ Brodzki, op. cit. ref. 5, 2-3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³ Eastwood M, Jenkinson A. *A History of the Western General Hospital*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd; 1995; 76.

¹⁴ Brodzki, op. cit. ref. 5, 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶ Rostowski, op. cit. ref. 4, 9.

¹⁷ Minutes of Public Health Committee Meeting of March 18th 1941. Edinburgh City Chambers; 159.

¹⁸ *The Scotsman*, 18 October 1941.

¹⁹ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 132.

²⁰ *The Scotsman*, 18 October 1941.

²¹ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 128.

²² Outlining the facilities of the hospital at the time, Professor Jurasz wrote on 13 November 1941 that the hospital had 80 beds, with 60 surgical beds also allocated within the main building of the Western General. Letter held at Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives DRT 95/002.

²³ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 132.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-8.

²⁵ A letter from Lady Abingdon to Sir Thomas Holland, dated 25 November 1941, regarding lists of Edinburgh graduates in the US who could be approached for possible contributions. Held at Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

²⁶ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 130.

²⁷ Communication with Dr D.H. Stapleton, Director of the Rockefeller archives, by electronic mail, dated 26 September 1999.

²⁸ *The Scotsman* 1947; date unknown. Edinburgh City Library Archives; Polish Medical School Press Cuttings. Spokesman for the Western General Hospital mentioned that following the Paderewski Hospital's closure its modern surgical equipment had been used to train their nurses.

²⁹ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 111-4.

³⁰ Eastwood, Jenkinson, op. cit. ref. 13, 73.

³¹ Medical Faculty Minutes 1942. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, Da 43.

³² This decision was reached after much deliberation. A letter dated 6 July 1945 from Sir John Fraser, Principal of the University, to Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office reads: 'If the University has some justification in anticipating that the PMS will be accommodated in Poland within one year from Oct 45, then it could see fit to admit more. On the other hand if there is a possibility of the school remaining for an indefinite period, then no more admissions could be made.' This opinion was backed up by the Interim Treasury Committee for Polish Questions which was set up to administer the affairs of the late Polish Government in London. In a letter dated 15 August

1945 it states it will pay for students who have completed one year or more but for no new admissions. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

³³ The quotation is from a letter dated 6 October 1945, from Sir Sydney Smith to the Secretary of the Old College. Held at Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

³⁴ Rostowski, op. cit. ref. 4, 23.

³⁵ Letter from Sir Sydney Smith to the Secretary of the Committee for the Education of Poles in Great Britain, dated 24 April 1947. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

³⁶ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 133.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131. Accounts of Jurasz's tour of the US were also printed in *The Scotsman*, *Edinburgh Evening News* and other newspapers.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 221. Tomaszewski mentions Polish beds at the Ballochmyle Hospital, naming Dr Kraczeński and Dr Janikiewicz among staff who worked there. Further, he notes discussions as to whether the hospital should move to Poland, later attempts to move it elsewhere and then the sale of the equipment, the money raised being diverted to the Paderewski Fund's other causes.

⁴⁰ Reddaway WF, Penson JH, Halecki O *et al.*, editors. *The Cambridge History of Poland*. Cambridge: CUP; 1950; 346.

⁴¹ Seliga S, Koczy L. *Scotland and Poland: a chapter of forgotten history*. Glasgow: Stanislaw Kostka Matwin; 1969; 19.

⁴² Dyboski, op. cit. ref. 40, 346.

⁴³ Seliga, op. cit. ref. 41, 26.

⁴⁴ 'Three bursaries of £19 *per annum*; restricted to students who require pecuniary aid in obtaining a university education. A preference is given to members of the Church of Scotland.' Records in the University calendar of 1967/8. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives; p. 928. Contacting various people in the financial/grants department of the University, the Faculty of Divinity and the Special Collections Office in the University library did not clarify the exact fate of the bursary – it may have been pooled into a central amalgam.

⁴⁵ Seliga, op. cit. ref. 41, 27.

⁴⁶ *Polish Medical History and Science Bulletin* 1957; **1(2)**.

⁴⁷ I would like to make it clear that I am in no way criticising individuals who held those opinions, simply trying to explore their origins beyond the atrocities inflicted by the Germans during World War II.

⁴⁸ Meissner RK, Hasik JM. *Polski wkład w medycynę światową*. Poznań: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza; 1989; 73.

⁴⁹ Skarzynski B. Philosophy at the turn of the nineteenth century. *The Polish Medical History and Science Bulletin* 1959; **2(6)**:25.

⁵⁰ Wrzosek A. The Development of Medical Schools in Poland. *Polish Medical History and Science Bulletin* 1959; **3(3)**:2.

⁵¹ Rostowski, op. cit. ref. 4, 16.

⁵² *Hansard*; **389**; 1219.

⁵³ *The Scotsman*, 15 February 1950. Letter from Sir George Waters, formerly chairman of the local advisory committee for the Paderewski hospital.

⁵⁴ No wartime references to the PMS or Paderewski Hospital in *The Times* and *The Scotsman* newspapers that spoke ill of them were found.

⁵⁵ *The Scotsman*, 20 February 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *The Scotsman*, 12 December 1941.

⁵⁷ *Edinburgh Evening News*, 12 September 1941.

⁵⁸ *Edinburgh Evening News*, 20 February 1943.

⁵⁹ *The Scotsman*, 20 February 1943.

⁶⁰ *The Scotsman*, 7 September 1999, p. 3.

⁶¹ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 213. Dr Tomaszewski mentions arrest and subsequent demise of a professor and a priest who returned from the UK. Poles felt increasingly uneasy about the

possibility of their fate following a similar course should they return. Sir Sydney Smith, having been visited by a pair of PMS students aspiring to attain British degrees, seemed confident of the future. On 4 December 1945 he wrote: 'I fully expect to receive applications from all or nearly all the Polish graduates for permission to take the examinations for University medical degrees.'

⁶² 'They [the Soviet leaders] denounced the Polish Government-in-Exile, which was the accepted authority on Polish matters in everyone else's eyes and they confined their dealings in Poland to persons and institutions appointed by themselves in their own image. They began by attacking all non-communist Resistance groups, especially those who had assisted the Soviet advance, and by appointing local administrators subservient to themselves, in every town and village throughout Poland. Figures of course, are not available; but the victims must certainly be counted in tens of thousands. Perhaps the saddest scene of the entire Liberation occurred at Majdanek near Lublin in the late summer of 1944, when Soviet authorities made use of the former Nazi extermination camp to house detainees of the Polish Home Army. The culmination of the process came in March 1945 when the remaining leaders of the Resistance were arrested and deported for trial. Sixteen such leaders, including the former Vice-Premier and delegate of the Government-in-Exile, Jan Stanislaw Jankowski and the last Commander of the Home Arm, Gen. L. Okulicki, were sentenced in Moscow in June 1945 as 'saboteurs and subversionist bandits', at the very time their ostensible patrons, the Western Powers, were pressing Poles of all persuasions to settle their differences.' Davies N. *God's Playground*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1981; vol. ii; 471.

⁶³ Tomaszewski, op. cit. ref. 1, 212. Sir Sydney Smith apparently communicated personally with the Home Office on the subject of the PMS so that it may stay open after the war. Dr Tomaszewski writes that this was kept secret, having found out only later by an indirect route.

⁶⁴ 'the Polish army in Italy is being brought to this country . . . decision to disband the Polish army and form the Polish Resettlement Corps . . . to absorb into the civilian population. [On Polish students:] It may be expected that those entering their third year in October will not keep our own ex-servicemen out of places, but this may not be so true for those who will enter their second year in Oct. It would be helpful if some expression of opinion could be given whether or not particular groups of Poles or individuals should be allowed to continue their studies.' This document is to be found in the correspondence of the PMS held at Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

⁶⁵ Two PMS students consulted the Principal on these matters in November 1945, then again as representatives of an Association of Graduates of the PMS in May 1946. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

⁶⁶ Letter dated 15 June 1945, from the Foreign Office to Sir John Fraser, Principal of the University. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

⁶⁷ Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Division: Edinburgh University Archives, DRT 95/002.

⁶⁸ So far I have been unable to ascertain if there was indeed a bill in Congress relating to the PMS. A disinterested employee of the American Embassy in London did not find anything, other attempts enjoying similar success.

⁶⁹ Wrzosek A. The Development of Medical Schools in Poland. *The Polish Medical History and Science Bulletin* 1959; **3(3)**:2.