

Institute of National Remembrance

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We are telling the world about Poland. The President of the Institute of National Remembrance on why Poland has managed to survive so many difficulties.

The New Media Institute, the originator of the project, has once again asked the Institute of National Remembrance to participate in this valuable initiative. In the latest edition of the project, in his article "Uncompromising spirit of Poland", Jarosław Szarek Ph.D., writes about Poland regaining its independence and finding its rightful place on the map of Europe.

Spécial Pologne

SELECTION DE - L'OPINION - DATE DE LA 177 NOVEMBRE 2020 - LE PETIT ÉTRE VENDU SÉPARÉMENT

De l'inlassable esprit polonais

Prievs d'Etat au XIX^e siècle, nous aurons si non seulement leur culture, science et économie nationales, mais aussi leur un état d'esprit permettant aux générations qui ne sont nées qu'après l'événement d'une Nation enfin libre.

En novembre 1918, une dépêche radiée en provenance de Varsovie fut le son de la cloche, annonçant le renouveau de la Pologne et l'instauration d'un gouvernement qui « mettra à son tour au régime de la violence pesant depuis cent cinquante ans sur le destin national ». En d'autres termes, le retour du pays sur les cartes de l'Europe dont il fut rayé par l'Action combinée de ses voisins.

Autriche, la Prusse et la Russie - vers la fin du XVIII^e siècle. Symbole fier de cette renaissance, la dépêche fut envoyée depuis la citadelle de Varsovie, construite par l'occupant russe après la débâcle de l'insurrection de novembre (1830-1831), où périrent ou furent faits prisonniers de nombreux combattants pour l'indépendance, le commandant en chef des armées Józef Piłsudski.

L'événement de 1918 est le couronnement de l'action nationale menée par cinq générations de Polonais déterminés à voir leur patrie-chaire ressembler à ses combes. En combat impossible et trop souvent malheureux, se heurtant à l'impérialisme, l'indifférence, la trahison même. Finalement, la fin de la Pologne en tant que nation semblait proche. Et pourtant, dès 1919, en Italie, dans les rangs des soldats émigrés qui furent les premiers à constituer au sein des légions polonaises formées aux côtés de l'empire et de la France, fut né un chant porteur d'espoir et qui devint le plus grand hymne national : « La Pologne n'est pas encore morte puisque nous vivons... ». Les gardes, autour d'elle de leur armée qui se redressait par des insurrections nationales. Les plus importantes d'entre elles : en novembre 1918 et en janvier 1919 - furent dirigées contre la Russie, bien évidemment préparées pour les occuper dans le sang. Participant à

des répressions, des déportations par milliers en Sibirie, des confisications de biens, des liquidations d'intellectuels et une russification des plus brutales.

Pourtant, la polonité se maintenait dans les familles, les mères apprenant à leurs enfants à prier, leur parlant de héros et de moments de gloire nationale, invoquant la Vierge et se rendant au pèlerinage à Częstochowa, « Włostu ou Gierosławski ». L'Église recouvrait les esprits et les pères étaient toujours là à partager le sort de la nation, ouvrir des écoles, s'occuper dans les rangs, ouvrir des écoles pour les autres jusqu'à l'exil en Sibirie ou à la potence. Les des répressions et des défaits militaires à répétition, les Polonais trouvaient des moyens d'action efficaces dans l'économie, la science et l'éducation. On en peut encore des traces sur les cartes du monde et dans des publications scientifiques. Trois hommes en Sibirie portèrent toujours les noms d'insurgés polonais exilés après l'insurrection de 1831 : l'ingénieur et homme d'État Ignace Domeyko, qui fut honoré de quitter la partie après la débâcle de l'insurrection de novembre.

Ministre. Pendant ce temps, au pays, grâce à l'action de nombreux vétérans, se développa un mouvement associatif et coopératif. Bagnoni, sociétés agricoles, bibliothèques, écoles scientifiques progressistes et primaires, malgré les répressions, de surveiller la propriété polonaise des terres et contrôler des institutions propres. Il existait pas rare, non plus, de voir des Polonais au service des oppresseurs travailler pour le bien de la communauté nationale.

Ainsi, les générations successives continuaient non seulement à se souvenir de la patrie, mais se souvenaient aussi de la culture. Ils s'occupaient donc que ce soit de cette manière que dans les plus importantes œuvres de la culture polonaise. C'est le cas notamment de nos grands poètes romantiques, eux aussi exilés : Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki et Zygmunt Krasiński. Leurs poèmes, imprimés sous le pseudonyme d'étrangers, ont participé à



La Grand place de Cracow est le lieu d'importants événements de l'histoire polonaise, et l'un des endroits les plus romantiques d'Europe.

l'élaboration d'un sentiment patriotique. Tout comme les polonais et les musiciens du compositeur et pianiste Frédéric Chopin, remplis de la nostalgie du pays, la musique continue toujours à toucher des millions d'adhésions à travers le monde. La Pologne ne figurait pas sur les cartes d'Europe quand Marie Curie-Skłodowska, première Polonaise et première femme Prix Nobel, baptisa

à leur partition dans la lecture de ses mains où il dépeint magnifiquement les guerres que la Pologne du XVIII^e siècle dut mener contre les Turcs, les Suédois et les Cosaques. Lorsqu'elle fut la Première Guerre mondiale, de nombreux jeunes gens qui s'engageaient dans les rangs des légions de Piłsudski ou dans l'armée de volontaires formée aux États-Unis, emportèrent dans leurs sacs des des

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« polonité ». Ils étaient convaincus qu'elle serait de décevoir. Deux ans plus tard, en 1905, le Prix Nobel de littérature fut attribué à l'auteur de Quo vadis ? Henryk Sienkiewicz, l'écrivain le plus lu de Pologne, de la Russie jusqu'aux États-Unis. À la remise du prix, Sienkiewicz prononça ces mots mémorables : « On la traitait pour morte, mais voici une preuve, parmi des milliers d'autres, qu'elle est vivante. On l'a nommé le plus grand écrivain de son époque, mais voici une nouvelle preuve qu'elle n'est pas morte ». Toute une armée de Polonais s'inspira de l'oppression lituanienne et pol-

onaise. Ils étaient prêts à se battre et mourir pour la Pologne, un pays qui vivait plus lorsque leurs grands-pères venaient au monde.

Tableau monumental. La Pologne n'est également maintenue grâce aux tableaux représentant les grands personnages et événements de l'histoire nationale. L'un des peintres les plus originaux, Jacek Malczewski, lorsqu'il apprit ses homologues : « Peindre de sorte que la Pologne ressuscite ! ». Un an après la mort du plus populaire d'entre eux, Jan

Matyko, une exposition de ses œuvres fut organisée à Lwów. On célébra alors le centenaire anniversaire de la bataille de Racławice de 1794, durant laquelle l'armée de Tadeusz Kościuszko, héros de la guerre d'indépendance autrichienne, vainquit les troupes russes, soutenues par des régiments de paysans, l'emporta sur les Russes. Dans une seconde cérémonie consacrée à cette occasion, on exposa un tableau monumental de Jan Styka et Wojciech Kosciuszko, long de cent mètres, illustrant cette victoire nationale.

Des films inoubliables se présentent alors pour admirer le chef d'armée. Combien de ces jeunes gens, emportés du fin fond du pays et parcourant parfois des centaines de kilomètres pour assister à l'événement, sont alors devenus des Polonais conscients, prêts à former une nation moderne, une nation sans État, certes, mais riche de sa culture et de ses coutumes ? C'est grâce à eux que se maintient la polonité, mais aussi que deviennent Polonais ceux dont les ancêtres étaient venus germaniser et russifier la Pologne, se faisant oublier par cet « inlassable esprit ». C'est cet esprit qui anima l'Action du 11 novembre 1918, rendant aux Polonais leur patrie enfin souveraine.

Jarosław Szarek

As part of the 'We are telling the world about Poland' project several dozen of the most renowned international newspapers and portals present articles on Poland, written by scholars, historians and politicians from around the globe. A text written by the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Jarosław Szarek Ph.D., entitled "Uncompromising spirit of Poland" is to appear in the weekend edition of the daily "L'Opinion" of 6 November 2020, as part of the Dossier Pologne. For over a century, there were many people ready to engage into the struggle to resurrect an independent Poland" - wrote Jarosław Szarek.

The article has been published in the 24th issue of the "Wszytko co najważniejsze" monthly and on the www.wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl website. It has been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Ukrainian.

Texts by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on the Polish fight for historical truth, Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk on the era of public diplomacy, and Jan Rokita on the repercussions of the Great War, have also been published as part of the project.

The New Media Institute, the publisher of the "Wszytko co Najważniejsze" monthly is active in promoting Polish history through the 'We are telling the Word about Poland' campaign. The Institute

of National Remembrance is one of the partners of this initiative.

Previous texts authored by the IPN's President presented the the Battle of Warsaw of 1920 and the figure of Captain Witold Pilecki.

“Uncompromising spirit of Poland”

Deprived of our legitimate state, in the nineteenth century we succeeded in constructing not merely a national culture, science and economy but also in creating a state of mind that instilled the thoughts about independent Poland in minds of several generations born in captivity.

In November 1918, a radio telegram announcing the rebirth of the Republic of Poland was disseminated globally reaching many capital cities all over the world from Washington to Tokyo. The announcement notified that the Polish government “will displace the domination of violence that Poland had been doomed to for one hundred forty years.” This indicated the return of independent Republic on the map of Europe, from which it had been moved away at the end of the eighteenth century following the agreement the neighbouring states Austria, Prussia and Russia entered into. It developed into the symbol itself that the radio telegram on the independent state revival arrived from a place standing for a symbol of a foreign ruling authority - from the Warsaw Citadel erected by Russians in the 1830s following the defeat of the November Uprising where Poles were imprisoned and executed for their disobedience to slavery. One of them, the Commander in Chief, Józef Piłsudski, was imprisoned in the far-famed 10th Pavilion of the Citadel.

"Restoration of Poland's independence and sovereignty" was possible due to the fact that Poles, at this turning point, demonstrated readiness for foundation of independent state structures and had the strength to defend it effectively in the following years. They were striving for this moment for five generations (starting from 1795) taking steps to bring the independent state into existence. For over a century, there were many people ready to engage into the struggle to resurrect an independent homeland. Hardly often was this banner carried by many, and they had to face not only invaders, but also compatriots who almost lost the faith in victory, choosing either to remain indifferent or to seek for high treason. How many times during the captivity had they to overcome the bitterness of defeat, when all the circumstances proved that the words "finis Poloniae" were fulfilled?

As early as in 1797 when a hope-sparkling song was composed among the soldiers-emigrants in Italy, who were first to fight in the Polish Legions formed alongside Napoleon and France. The lyrics “Poland has not yet died, so long as we still live...” - became our today national anthem which further lyrics “What the foreign power has seized from us, we shall recapture with a sabre...” provided guidance on armed struggle undertaken in national uprisings. The largest ones, against Russia in November 1830

and January 1863, resulted in bloody repressions, thousands of participants exiled to Siberia, property confiscation, many institutions and laws loss, and the imposition of atrocious Russification.

However, the Polish spirit continued in families, at homes where mothers taught prayers and talked about past, proud history and heroes, praying "Oh Holy Maid, who Czestochowa's shrine Dost guard and on the Pointed Gateway shine", making pilgrimages to the holy places of Jasna Góra, Vilnius or Gietrzwałd... The Church maintained the spirit alive and there were always priests sharing the fate of the nation, setting up schools, covering distances to visit insurgents, and finally to Siberia or gallows.

Military defeats and repressions made Poles engaged out of military activity. Opportunities to act in the economic, scientific and educational spheres were sought and victories were achieved. We can find their traces on maps and in scientific publications. The mountains Czerski, Dybowski and Czekanowski were named in honor of the exiled people to Siberia for taking part in the January Uprising. Other example can be found in remote Chile where we can almost everywhere come across the memory mark of Ignacy Domeyko who was an emigrant forced to leave his homeland after the collapse of the November Uprising.

Meanwhile, economic associations, banks, agricultural companies, libraries, and scientific associations were founded in the country, often by former insurgents. Despite repressions, this activity proved the effectiveness in preserving Polish land ownership and the network of their own institutions. There were a lot of people who, although acting on behalf of the partitioning sides, indeed served their homeland.

Despite the fact that the next generations did not live in their own state, they still felt Poles, and were ready to sacrifice for their homeland. Memory and culture persisted due to which a nation deprived of independence expressed. The most outstanding works created during the partition captivity still form the national canon. These include works by great Romantic poets in exile: Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Zygmunt Krasiński. Smuggled across borders and banned by censorship, they aroused successive generations of Poles, as did the arch-Polish works by the composer and pianist Fryderyk Chopin, growing out of longing for the country. His music still touches millions of people around the world.

Poland could not be found on the map of Europe when Maria Curie-Skłodowska, as the first Polish woman and the first woman who was awarded the Nobel Prize, called the element she had discovered "polonium" and went the "Polish" presence down into the history of the periodic table system. Two years later in 1905, the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Henryk Sienkiewicz, the author of "Quo vadis?", who back then was the most widely recognized writer from Russia to the United States. Asked about his homeland, during the Nobel Prize Gala he spoke in the following words: „It was preached dead, and here is one of the thousandth proofs that it is alive. It was proclaimed conquered,

and here is a new proof that it knows how to win." A whole host of Poles grew up reading his "Trilogy". This is a set of novels describing the seventeenth century wars of the Republic of Poland with Turkey, Sweden and the Cossacks, against which the invaders had to fight many times. After the outbreak of World War young people enlisted to join Piłsudski's Legions or the army formed from among Polish emigrants in the USA. Many of them carried Sienkiewicz's books in their backpacks. They were willing to fight and die for Poland although even their grandparents had been born when the state had not existed. Poland was also commemorated in the paintings of historical painters. Jacek Malczewski, one of the most unique painters, called: "Paint so that Poland may rise again." An exhibition of Jan Matejko's works, one of the most popular of them, was organized in Lviv on the first anniversary the painter had passed away. On the same year, the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Raclawice in 1794 was celebrated. The army which was commanded by Tadeusz Kościuszko, who had earlier fought for the independence of the United States, supported by peasant troops succeeded and defeated the Russians. The victorious battle over the Russians was depicted by Jan Styka and Wojciech Kossak on a monumental (over one hundred meters long) painting which was shown in a specially built rotunda. There were countless groups of Poles flocking through hundreds of kilometers to admire the painting. They would whisper in admiration: "It's not a painting, it's a deed indeed". It is impossible to count how many out of thousands of young people, often from remote villages, became Poles as they jointly created a modern nation, a nation without its own legitimate state, but abounding in culture and customs. They were the ones who not only contributed to Polishness that was able endure, but also they were able instil the same spirit into those whose grandfathers had come from neighbouring countries to Germanize and Russify our country - the country which drawn them into being Poles with its "uncompromising spirit." It was the spirit that sparkled the deed of the 11th of November, 1918 which brought Poland independence.

Jarosław Szarek, Ph.D., President of the Institute of National Remembrance

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