

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN ÉMIGRÉ RESPONSE
TO MAY '68 EVENTS IN PARIS**

By

Kanevs'ka Ganna

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Supervisor: Professor Balázs Trencsényi
Second Reader: Professor Karl Hall

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Abstract

This thesis investigates into public activity of Central European émigré communities in Paris. The study is focused on exiles' response to events of May '68 in French capital. The analysis of their account of the biggest strike in history demonstrates specific features of their political and intellectual agenda.

The study is undertaken in the field of exile studies, within the framework of generational approach and belongs to the genre of intellectual history. It deals with the problem of establishing connection between immediate émigré responses on burning events and their political activity and relevant intellectual representations. A case-study on Piotr Rawicz's book 'The Notebook of Counter—revolutionary or the Hangover' allows connecting individual émigré's trajectory to a collective one.

The novelty of the thesis lies in the fact that it proposes synthesized picture of political and intellectual activity of the emigrants, diversifies existing large-scale image of their associative life, treats rare émigré printed editions and introduces new perspective into the picture of exiles'-French dialogue within the larger 'Cold war' framework.

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis deals with Polish, Czech and Hungarian émigré in Paris. Research is focused on exile political activity, their relevant intellectual representations, public activity and dialogue with French hosts.

It is commonly summoned that this dialogue failed due to peculiarities of transitional state of exile and because of hardshell emigrant anti-communist position, while French were fascinated with the leftist ideologies presenting alternative possibilities for their country development. In scientific literature the picture of exile-host relations is often reduced to “East-West”, ‘anticommunist-leftist’ debate¹ in a stiff ‘Cold War failure of communication’ framework. Emigrant communities are treated as homogenous wholes stiffly united by their anti-communist agenda. Diversification of this large-scale image will be the main goal of this thesis.

In order to perform this task, an intersect perspective should be introduced. The reaction of Central-European exile communities on May'68 events in Paris is rather fruitful in this respect as ‘the événements’ were so significant and of such a range that even emigrant press, usually to a highest degree pre-occupied with state of affairs in far away Motherland, had to pay attention to what takes place in the streets of French cities and explicitly give to the world opinion about it. My claim is that, never completely integrated into French society, émigrés used the events of May as an opportunity to develop theoretically their detached from the

¹ Tony Judt, *Past imperfect. French intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1992)

field of empirical implementation political and intellectual agenda without getting involved into present French realities.

Issues, underlying May strikes, were of primary importance for both French and Central-European intellectuals. Michel Winock emphasizes following referential points in French intellectual generation of 1968: leftist ideologies, militantism, liberalization of morals, underground counter-culture, activization of social aspects of individual's activity². This list is enlarged by Pascal Ory and Jean-Francois Sirinelli. They add here the rupture in educational process, revolt against the 'Father' and the death of the 'humanist project'³.

Each point, except, probably, for the last one was also important for exile. But here we should one more time appeal to the difference between French and emigrant intellectuals' status. French type of intellectual engagement, especially under influence of Marxist idea of direct action, presupposes straightforward participation in social and political activity and, therefore, demands formulization of more or less specific accounts.

Exiles, on the other hand, are deprived of sure footing and stay in peculiar enforced ideological vacuum. By virtue of historical tradition, Central European exiles are vested with the title of 'nations consciousness'⁴, but in the situation of the nation's remoteness are doomed to switch to pronouncing incorporeal maxims of universal kind.

Bibliography dedicated to certain aspects of exile community life is rather extensive. But the lack of synthesized monographs on the question is keenly felt.

² Michel Winock, "Les générations intellectuelles," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 22 (1989) : 17-39

³ Pascal Ory, Jean-Francois Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France de l'Affaire Dreyfus a nos jours* (Paris : A. Colin, 2002), 216

⁴ András Bozoki, *Intellectuals and politics in Central Europe* (Budapest : CEU Press, 1992), 2

The only exclusion would be Stephane Dufoix's *Politique d'exil*⁵ making a large scale investigation into political activity of emigration with devoting much attention to its political structure.

Antoine Marès chapter *Exilés d'Europe centrale de 1945 à 1967* in Marès' and Milza's *Les Paris des étrangers depuis 1945*⁶ provides statistical data and information about associative émigré activities without paying tribute to interrelation between political structure of exile and international relationships. Compendium of John Neubauer and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török⁷ regards individual trajectories of the most prominent representatives of exile and their most famous projects, leaving less noticeable achievements out of limelight.

A group of articles is dedicated to isolated subjects from emigrant life such as exile memories of the first-time experience in France⁸, their participation in informational war against communism⁹ and their activity in realm of introducing Central European literature to the pan-European canon by translating and commenting it¹⁰.

Exile studies have recently become popular in national historiographies as is shown in introduction by Istvan Déak, Igor Lukes, and Piotr Wandycz *Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak Political Emigration and the Origins of the Cold War*¹¹. The common disadvantage of these entries is their inclination to

⁵ Stephane Dufoix, *Politique d'exil*. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002)

⁶ Antoine Marès, "Exilés d'Europe centrale de 1945 à 1967," in *Le Paris des étrangers depuis 1945*, edited by Antoine Marès and Pierre Milza (Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994), 129-69

⁷ John Neubauer, Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, eds. *The exile and return of writers from East-Central Europe : a compendium* (New York : Walter de Gruyter, 2009)

⁸ Antoine Marès, "Témoignages d'exilés et de réfugiés politiques d'Europe Centrale en France après 1945," *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 44 (1996) : 48-54

⁹ Grazyna Pomian, "Le rôle politique de l'émigration polonaise en France depuis 1945," *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 61 (2001) : 62-68

¹⁰ Ioana Popa, "Dépasser l'exil. Degrés de médiation et stratégies de transfert littéraire chez des exilés de l'Europe de l'Est en France," *Genèses* 38 (2000) : 5-32

¹¹ Istvan Déak, Igor Lukes and Piotr Wandycz, "Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak Political Emigration and the Origins of the Cold War," *The Polish Review* 47 (2002): 317-43

exaggerate emigration achievements in the realm of anti-communist fight and the scope of their political activities¹².

Bigger part of primary sources for this thesis is contained in the funds of Library for Contemporary International Documentation in Nanterre¹³. Those are numerous rare items: vast private archives, memoirs, photographs and periodicals - for instance, 149 titles solely of Polish magazines. Documents created for public use are of primary interest, as individual narrative of the exile will be investigated on the basis of Piotr Rawicz's book *Bloc-notes d'un contre-revolutionnaire ou la gueule de bois*¹⁴.

Funds of Biblioteque will add to the picture of émigré publishing activity which is usually overshadowed and symbolized by two most prominent titles: Polish 'Kultura' and Czech 'Svidectví'.

In order to accomplish the settled tasks thesis will be structured as following:

Theoretical chapter sets up framework for consideration of May '68 events as the field for projection of exile political and intellectual agenda. The term of 'exopolicy'¹⁵ is defined, brief outline of peculiarities of exile state is proposed, terminological dichotomy exile/émigré is commented. A short analysis of the reasons of poor integration of Central European exiles to French society is provided. Generational approach to exile study is explained.

¹² Jerzy Kozłowski, 'Znaczenie emigracji politycznej dla narodu polskiego w dobie zabiorów.' In *Polonia w Europie*, ed. B. Szydłowska-Ceglowska. (Poznań: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1992); Andrzej Friszke, *Zycie polityczne emigracji*. (Warszawa: Biblioteka "Wiezi", 1999)

¹³ <http://www.bdic.fr/pdf/Guide%20sources%20immigration.pdf>

¹⁴ Piotr Rawicz, *Bloc-notes d'un contre-revolutionnaire ou la gueule de bois* (Paris : Gallimard, 1969)

¹⁵ (Dufoix 2002, 6)

In the first thematic chapter I provide short excursion into history of Central European émigrés in France, characterize main political structures of the exile and comment on émigrés' relations to the host society.

In the second chapter I analyze interrelationships of politicians and intellectuals within exile milieu, characterize main groups of émigré printed editions and provide exiles' accounts on May '68 events.

The third chapter is centered on Piotr Rawicz's book *Bloc-notes d'un contre-révolutionnaire*, in which he mocks May '68. Micro-level of studying his work will allow contextualizing most of his ideas. My assertion is that Rawicz's reproaches to May strikes are, for the most part, of existential and not of ideological character – which is a division line between collective émigré discourse and individual narrative.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The events of May'68 in France represent Mount Everest in country's 20th century history. It is impossible to pass round its extreme ends. Soon after this larger-than-life revolt ended, it started to become absorbed by its own a posteriori explanations, representations, individual and collective recollections, and their name is legion. Until the end of 1968, 110 books dedicated to May were published. In 1971 the list grew up to 250 titles¹⁶. As a result, in its written and spoken afterlife May'68 is 'disembodied, increasingly vague in its contours and plural. A set of ideas rather than a political event'¹⁷, as Kristin Ross puts it.

The attempt of inventory of 'evenements' possible underlying reasons, undertaken by Philippe Beneton and Jean Touchard in 1970, reveals following interpretations for May revolt: a) an attempt of coup d'etat; b) the crisis in University system and in educational system as a whole; c) psychodrama, a burst of anger, revolution of rising generation; d) the beginning of spiritual revolution in which all humanity will soon be engaged; e) the crisis of civilization; f) social conflict of a new type; g) social conflict of traditional kind; h) political crisis; i) a Happenstance;¹⁸

An attempt of conceiving 'May' as a totality and finding universal explanation for its occurrence is, therefore, doomed to turn its object into a mere field for projections. That is why it is possible to detach ideological constituent from any given interpretation of May events.

¹⁶ Vladimir Poskonin, *Frantsuzskaya publitzistika i istoriographia 'krasnogo maja' 1968* (Moskva, 1982)

¹⁷ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2004)

¹⁸ Philippe Béneton and Jean Touchard, 'Les interpretations de al crise de mai-juin 1968,' *Revue francaise de science politique* 3 (2002) : 505

I will use this assertion in the thesis in order to provide description and analysis of Central European emigrants' and exiles' political and social agenda at that time. The interpretation will be based on the idea that choice of the set of subjects that was found by émigrés and exiles worthy of reaction during May events is tendentious to the core and is rather eloquent of the behalf of hidden, unvoiced opinions.

The analysis of émigrés' agenda will be performed within the framework of 'exopolicy' – term proposed by Stephane Dufoix and signifying complex of political activities performed by members of exile community¹⁹. Exopolicy is characterized by continuity and disruption at the same time. The former is political imperative for legitimization of exiles' pretension to be real representatives of their country and continue their fight against ruling regime, the latter corresponds to the unavoidable necessity of accepting the fact that the Homeland and its mainstream politics evolve without exiles' participation²⁰. 'Insignificant, sterile, almost always unable to influence power relationships noticeably, exopolicy does not belong neither to the political sphere of exiles' homeland, nor to that of host society'²¹, as Stephane Dufoix put it.

Indeed, exiles obtained right to form their own apprehension of national history and popularize it in the West²². Interpretation of the past plays important role in construction of political groups within emigrant milieu. These references become important arm in the fight against ruling regime as contesting history project is created. The same thing corresponds to émigrés' vision of

¹⁹ (Dufoix 2002, 6)

²⁰ Op.cit, 17

²¹ (Dufoix 2002, 17)

²² Idesbald Goddeeris, 'The Temptation of Legitimacy: Exile Politics from a Comparative Perspective,' *Contemporary European History* 3 (2007): 398

contemporary events in homeland and in host society for it is animated by peculiar, external and independent perspective.

Émigré image of May events may add several touches to overall enormous picture due to vantage point of detached and, therefore, more critical overseeing. But in the frames of this research we will be mostly interested in what the evaluation of uprising tells us about its authors and not about its subjects.

A sensitive comprehension of the specificity of exile's and emigrant's status is needed in order to interpret their agenda. The difference between those two is usually contained in voluntary character of the latter's leaving the country and the possibility of return²³. The former is deprived of such a variant, and while 'the emigrants may share the solitude and estrangement of exiles, they do not suffer under its rigid proscriptions'²⁴, as Edward Said put it.

According to Geneve convention adopted in 1951 and later appropriated by OFPRA (French Office for protection of refugees and apatrides), one is considered to be a refugee if individual 'was forced to leave native country because of the hazard to be persecuted due to individual's race, religion, nationality, belonging to certain social group and political affiliations'²⁵. The term 'refugee', therefore, corresponds to external characterization of individual's status by a host state and organization that takes care of an individual. Meanwhile, an individual him/herself is experiencing his state as an exile.

The rigid dichotomy émigré/exile loses its applicability in the context of this work. Though it is a coarse-grained picture, derived of individual nuances, but the person leaving, even voluntary, native country due to political or mindset reasons

²³ (Neubauer and Török 2009, 10)

²⁴ Edward W Said, *Reflections on exile and other essays* (B: Harvard University Press, 2002)

²⁵ Cited from Janine Ponty, 'Réfugiés, exilés, des catégories problématiques,' *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 44 (1996) : 13

in the condition of Cold War, was deprived of ability to return and, therefore, emigration was made equivalent to exile.

On a language level, in Polish and ‘to a lesser degree’ in Hungarian the term ‘emigration’ surpasses and includes the definition of ‘exile’²⁶. On existential level exile is conferred by a feeling of a ‘transcend homelessness’²⁷, disintegration of traditional identification through belonging to a metaphysical Motherland.

Politically, exile meant suspension between two ideological paradigms caused by negative empirical experience of living in socialist system on one side and inability to accept capitalist society conceptually on another. Especially taking into consideration the fact that themselves being ‘the Others’ in the host society, exiles could not understand French intellectuals’ dalliances with leftist ideologies from which the former already suffered and in which the latter saw ‘Otherness’, the possible alternative solution for the problems of western society. This mutual misunderstanding caused what Robert Williams calls ‘political frustration’²⁸ that compelled Central European exile to searching alternative political ideas that for the most part had never entered the phase of empirical implementation.

The integration of exiles into French society failed short to be full-bodied for a complex set of reasons. First and foremost, from the very beginning it was not an end in itself for many representatives of emigrant communities. They were fostering hopes for quick downfall of communist regimes in their native countries,

²⁶ (Neubauer and Török 2009, 11)

²⁷ Ibidem

²⁸ Robert Williams, “European political emigrations: A lost subject,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (1970) : 143

so they were 'sitting on the suitcases'²⁹ for many years, avoiding initiation of long-term connections.

Second, the cosmopolitan atmosphere of French capital predisposed possibility of self-sufficing existence of national émigré communities without aggressive necessity to homogenize with native population. Moreover, there was no cluster of society that could be regarded as determinant, so exiles would accede to it, as Paris, in Maria Delaperriere's expression, is a 'metaphor for freedom of self-regulation for entrants'³⁰. In this rhizomatic environment, it was possible to sustain community life on the margins. As a result, emigrant communities remained rather reserved.

Third, existing intellectual mainstream was biased towards new-comers from Central Europe, considering those who left the countries under communist rule traitors at best or even fascist hang-bys³¹. Tony Judt labels this attitude as a 'moral bifocalisme'³², as exiles had to defend themselves from reproaches in collaboration with right-wing parties,

Furthermore, due to specifically French snobbism, outsiders were rarely admitted to the inner circles of intellectual establishment. This point could be illustrated by the story of E.M.Cioran. While still being unknown poor Romanian emigrant in Paris, he came each day to café 'Flora' where Sartre and his servitors gathered. Noticed by no one, even though omnipresent, he sat there listening to discussions, but never intervening, fostering bitter feeling of being snubbed and neglected by trouble-free colleagues. He then developed the idea

²⁹ (Marès 1994, 137)

³⁰ (Delaperriere and Marès 1997, 36)

³¹ (Marès 1994, 135)

³² (Judt 1992, 203)

of mastering French language as a way to be perfectly understood and to conquer French society³³.

Cioran eventually gained reputation of grand connoisseur of French language, the achievement that overwhelming majority of emigrants failed to achieve. Language barrier and communicational restraints caused by them could be considered to be objective reason why exiles didn't manage to incorporate into French society. This is also one of the underlying causes of phenomenon of 'desperate exile writing'³⁴, when the author writes in his native language, cutting himself from wider public in a host country, but at the same time without any hope that he will be read in his motherland. 'For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live'³⁵, as Adorno put it.

Emigrant discourse on May uprising is held in heavy dependence of particularly given surrounding, but is, at the same time, conditioned by a larger-scale palette of relevant intellectual representations that is detached from immediate everyday political experience. This division marks difference in interpretation of May events by politicians who took direct participation into exopolicy and intellectuals who commented the events from more universal position. In the thesis this difference will be illustrated by the examples of printed editions associated with certain political forces within émigré milieu on the one side and articles in 'Kultura' and 'Horyzonty' magazines and Piotr Rawicz's book on another.

In order to investigate into these representations that put together emigrants' agenda, we will use generational approach in the wider framework of

³³ Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston, *Searching for Cioran* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2009), 4

³⁴ (Williams 1970, 147)

³⁵ Edward W. Said, *Representations of the intellectual* (New York : Vintage Books, 1996), 58

intellectual history. It is based on the idea that within each generation there is a system of coordinates and references that prioritize one set of notions and experiences and levels down others³⁶. Therefore, even those intellectuals who worship antagonistic worldviews, could be united under the courtesy of shared political and everyday experience which is especially actual when talking about interrelation of representatives of different waves of emigration.

³⁶ (Winock 1989, 20)

CHAPTER II. CENTRAL EUROPEAN EMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN FRANCE.

II.1 History of emigrant communities

Paris, dubbed by historians a ‘cultural capital’³⁷, ‘capital of liberties’³⁸, ‘symbolic capital of Europe’³⁹ had always been an emblematic asylum for castaways and even more so, a certified point of designation for consolidated groups of exiles after the emergence of mass displacement phenomenon in the 19th century. In this thesis I use ‘Paris’ as a metonymy for ‘France’ as, even though Central European émigrés spread through the whole territory of Hexagon, especially industrialized North, the social group I am concerned about, the intellectuals, had chosen to dwell in the French capital, as it was a ‘holy land of Reason’, ‘Mecca of arts’, ‘Babel of modern times’⁴⁰.

‘Emigration represents free Poland. It symbolizes martyrdom and wandering of nation. Polish exile is Polish nation’⁴¹, commented Stephane Dufoix on Polish émigrés identification, though this characteristic may also cover the Czech and Hungarian cases. Each nation had historical predecessors, exemplary exiles to look after and strive to imitate their destiny – Adam Czartoryski and Adam Mickiewicz for Polish, Jan Amos Komenský and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk for Czechs, Francis II Rákóczi and Lajos Kossuth for Hungarian people.

Celina Bobinska and Adam Galos indicate three overlapping waves of Polish migration to France, new cycles beginning in 1830s, 1900s and 1939, with

³⁷ (Delaperriere and Marès 1997)

³⁸ (Marès 1994, 13)

³⁹ Op.cit, p. 15

⁴⁰ Ibidem

⁴¹ (Dufoix 2002, 56)

the first and the last being political emigrations and the second an economical one⁴². Polish émigré community, therefore, digested and organized into homogeneous affiliation newcomers with different social and political backgrounds and motivations.

Marriane Amar and Pierre Milza point, that after each historical turbulence – be it the rebellion of 1831, uprisings of 1848 or 1863 – certain part of insurgents, complying with customary rule, fled to France. ‘French Poland’, from 1830s to nowadays, represents substantial part of Polish culture and identity’, as they put it⁴³.

As long as France was considered to be a land of liberty for Polish rebellious aristocracy, for the Polish lower classes it was a place to escape famine, aftermaths of war and earn more money. Some of them considered France as transitory point to go to America. It became possible to count Polish labor emigration only after 1918, as the country obtained independence and its citizens gained passports, which allowed for distinguishing them from Russians and Germans. In 1921 there were 46000 of them, 3% of foreign population⁴⁴. Five years later the numbers reached 309000 (12,8%), in 1931 there were already half a million Polish people in France⁴⁵. They were mostly working in mines and agricultural sector.

From the 1920s Polish émigrés were reproached by French for their unwillingness to integrate into the host society and assimilate. This conflict remained topical up until 1960s. Nourishing the idea of ‘little Motherland’ outside

⁴² Celina Bobinska, Adam Galos, ‘Pologne, Poland: “Land of mass migration (XIXth and XXth centuries),” in *Les migrations internationales de la fin du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 1980), 468

⁴³ Marianne Amar and Milza Pierre *L’immigration en France au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990),

258

⁴⁴ Ralph Schor, *Histoire de l’immigration en France de la fin du XIXe siècle à nos jours* (Paris : 1996),

112

⁴⁵ (Schor 1996, 112)

of Poland's borders, Polish led active associative life, with large number of cultural, religious, social and political organizations, existing along, but rarely cooperating, with French analogues. In the North, where compactness of the Polish settling was relatively high, they created their own football clubs, even in the villages with the population of less than 500 people⁴⁶.

Though limiting horizontal contacts with the French, the Polish tended to unite vertically, setting up a likeness of a national hierarchical structure within the host society. In 1924, the Union of Catholic Polish societies, with a chain of local missions, was created. In 1934 it merged with the Council of Polish unions and associations in France. After undergoing several more transformations, the Council disintegrated into the Union of Polish Catholic associations and Central Polish committee in 1943⁴⁷. Organizations were preoccupied mostly with questions of cultural conservation and religious celebration. Also, they were coordinating the system of mutual supportiveness, setting up problems with the French administration and protecting émigré workers' rights.

During the Second World War and Occupation, Polish supported forces of Resistance. They were joined by new-coming compatriots who fled the Nazis. After the Allies' victory, most of the Polish were given choice either to repatriate or to stay. Only 220 persons chose the first option⁴⁸.

1945 was the year of emigrant community politicization. The Central Polish Union was set up in Paris on May 27-28 in order to assure London exile government's return to power. Several months after that, France, USA and Great Britain acknowledged a pro-Soviet government in Warsaw. This triggered political schism within émigré milieu. The vast majority of non-communists in the Union

⁴⁶ Yves Lequin, *Histoire des étrangers et de l'immigration en France* (Paris, 2006), 46

⁴⁷ (Dufoix 2002, 60)

⁴⁸ (Dufoix 2002, 78)

perceived this political act as treason of Polish interest. They proclaimed the government in Warsaw to be a 'marionette' one and the communist regime as a whole their irreconcilable enemy⁴⁹.

The Central Polish Union remained main political organ of Polish exile in France until 1980s. It maintained close cooperation with exile government in London and was representing the whole community in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Quai d'Orsay.

Despite determined position of Central Polish Union, most of Polish émigrés did not affiliate themselves with the political process. This can be illustrated by statistical data of population census of year 1963. There were 152,592 Polish persons who considered themselves to be 'emigrants' and 26,489 who took refugee status. In year 1968 these numbers, correspondingly, were 118,552 and 26,632⁵⁰. One can compare it with Czech and Hungarian data. The former case shows correlation – in year 1963 5,381 against 2,469, in year 1968 4,943 against 2,718. The latter – 3,120 against 9,176 in 1963, 3,066 against 8,974 in 1968⁵¹.

Latter numbers confirm Fernando Claudin's thesis about the Hungarian émigré community as the most politicized among all three⁵². 'The most traumatized people in Central Europe'⁵³, in François Fejtő expression, came to France in 5 waves that were never numerous, but could be clearly distinguished, as they were a result of, and closely connected to, dramatic historical events.

Insignificant number of non-political émigrés arrived to Hexagon at the beginning of the 20th century as a transition point to America, Canada and

⁴⁹ Op.cit, 101

⁵⁰ (Marès 1994, 132)

⁵¹ Ibidem

⁵² Fernando Claudin, *L'Opposition dans les pays du "socialisme réel" : Union soviétique, Hongrie, Tchécoslovaquie, Pologne, 1953-1980* (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1983), 14

⁵³ François Fejtő, 'Les exiles hongrois en France' in *L'émigration politique en Europe: aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Actes du colloque* (Rome : Ecole française de Rome Paris, 1991), 485

Australia. Indeed, Hungarians, incompatible with the current regime, usually chose Vienna as a place for exile. Still, hundreds of refugees found asylum in France in 1919, 1938, 1945, 1947-1948 and 1956⁵⁴.

The last two dates mark establishment of 'popular democracy' in Hungary and anti-communist uprising. The former event triggered the departure of individuals who conformed to Nazis (soldiers who served in Wehrmacht and members of Horthy's gendarmerie), bourgeoisie and men of property who were justifiably afraid of communist expropriation, and also peasants and poor town dwellers who were frightened by stories about the Bolsheviks' behavior on 'liberated'/conquered lands. Almost 1 million Hungarians departed to the Western countries at that time which constituted 10% of overall population⁵⁵.

In France, they met compatriots that left the country immediately after Anschluss and during the war. Those were anti-Nazi and non-communist politicians: legitimists, conservatives, agrarians, socialists. Some of them were arrested by Germans and, after being liberated by Allies forces, decided not to come back to Hungary. At the end of the war they put their efforts in order to establish connection between Horthy and the Allies. The émigrés' main concern was preserving frontiers, rectifications obtained by Admiral Horthy for his cooperation with Germans as new borders, argued émigrés were 'ethnically justified'⁵⁶.

Their efforts were in vain, in the same manner as those of the coalition government in Budapest and those of former Republic president Mihály Karolyi, who organized National Hungarian Council in London. The Soviets and Allies decided to restore Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania in the borders fixed

⁵⁴ Op.cit, 486

⁵⁵ Op. cit, 487

⁵⁶ (Fejtő 1991, 488)

by Treaty of Trianone, except for the USSR 's annexation of Bessarabia and sub-Carpathian Ukraine.

In 1956 12,000 insurgents and those who at first supported the communists but lost loyalty to the regime because of October events, arrived to France – such as Tibor Meray, László Meszaros, Palóczy-Horváth and Péter Kende. It is argued by Kende that this wave of emigration, though the most numerous, was much more homogeneous than previous ones. The majority of refugees did not participate in the upheaval. Instead, they used the opportunities granted by opened borders in order to immigrate to more prosperous lands; a lot of students departed searching for more liberal education⁵⁷. The only exile organization that acted noticeably during the insurrection was the Hungarian Popular Christian Movement⁵⁸.

Czechoslovak exile community has a distinctively nationalistic agenda, putting demands of separate Czech and Slovak independent states vindication before any other political claims. The community has been forming since the beginning of the 20th century when the small labor emigration set up the first Czech-speaking coteries in provincial French towns. In 1921 there were 5,580 Czechs and Slovaks in France. In 1926 numbers reached 33,000⁵⁹.

The Munich pact and transformation of the western part of Czechoslovakia into a protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia caused a flux of emigrants from the country. Some of them entered the Czechoslovakian army in exile, which reached 10,000 in number. Part of the army was evacuated at the end of the war to Great Britain, another part to France, where it was demobilized. Czechs and

⁵⁷ Pierre Kende and Krzysztof Pomian, eds. *1956, Varsovie, Budapest : la deuxième révolution d'octobre*. (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1978), 9

⁵⁸ (Dufoix 2002, 154)

⁵⁹ (Amar and Milza 1990, 246)

Slovaks who took part in the Resistance gained an opportunity to stay in the country. Only 70 of them chose to return to their homeland⁶⁰.

Paris was never a conventional destination Czech exile politicians. ‘No grand person of emigration did not install there for a long time. Neither Petr Zenkl, nor Hubert Rupka or Ferdinand Peroutka did not rest in French capital. One of the reasons was a strong presence of communists, both French and Czech’, asserts Marès⁶¹.

The Czechoslovakian communist party never referred to political exiles of 1948 and then, of 1968, as ‘exiles’. Instead, they were considered economical emigrants – the term itself in the Czech language has a slightly deteriorative nuance⁶².

II. 2. Living experience

When talking about post-World War II Central European exiles, the main push factor for them was antagonism with ruling communist regimes. The pull factors, then, were numerous.

First, it was a perspective to ameliorate living conditions, economically and socially, as France was regarded as the land of liberty. This aspect was especially important for students, who nourished the image of Paris as the capital of revolution, intellectual and creative freedom. Second, a long tradition of Francophilia existed among Central European intellectuals. This is how Mathias

⁶⁰ (Marès 1994, 135)

⁶¹ Op.cit, 136

⁶² Op.cit, 131

Morawski, a Polish émigré describes his love affair with the French language and culture:

I arrived in Paris on 3 November 1946. I was 27, a young bachelor. In Poznan, where I come from, we had a vision of Paris as 'Ville Lumiere' and also Napoleonic reminiscences, connected with grand duchy of Warsaw. Polish attachment to Napoleonic France should have made paradoxical impression on French people. My family always propagated the idea of France as the land of liberty, culture and human rights. My father was a great admirer of Jules Romains and Jean Giraudoux's theater. I studied French language in the lyceum and developed huge interest in French literature as my favorite authors were Emile Zola, Gustav Flaubert, Roger Martin du Gard, Marcel Proust. It can well be said that my vision of France was purely bookish⁶³.

Pierre Kende tells: 'I chose France over Switzerland and Germany because French people are more open, more refined, they had better taste in social sciences. This was, so to speak, intellectual auto-selection'⁶⁴.

An anonymous Hungarian exile, who arrived to Paris in 1956 states, that Francophilia in his family of leftist political affiliations was a way to resist German cultural influence⁶⁵. Finally, another anonymous Hungarian confesses that when being seven years old, he fell in love with his French nanny and this feeling heavily influenced his choice of country for departure⁶⁶.

Controlled by sentimental, pragmatic or political motivations, exiles arrived in France and were put in charge of different institutions, such as the French office for refugees and stateless citizens, under the administration of the Foreign Affairs ministry, the Service of help for emigrants, non-governmental organizations sponsored from public funds, as well as national and confessional associations⁶⁷.

⁶³ (cited from Mares 1996, 49)

⁶⁴ Ibidem

⁶⁵ Op.cit, 50

⁶⁶ (Mares 1996, 50)

⁶⁷ Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, *Les immigrés et la politique : cent cinquante ans d'évolution*. (Paris : Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988), 155

As long as exile was seen as provisional and hopefully, short-termed by most of emigrants, they did not strive to build a career in France. The main problem that new-comers faced was the problem of declassification. Three members of the Central Polish Union, Wawszyniec Baran, Piotr Kalinowski and Alexandre Skrodki, entered France between the two World Wars and worked in mines⁶⁸. This was also true for the Polish Congress in France (Kongres Polonii Francuskiej), another influential exile organization. All members of its board en bloc, except for the head Joseph Kudlikowski, were working before Second World War in mines⁶⁹.

At the beginning of 1950 the Committee of Hungarian refugees composed the document listing Hungarian émigrés' former and actual rehabilitations. Among 443 individuals 139 were occupied in their homeland as clerks, 135 as intellectuals and people of liberal professions, 16 as technicians and brigadiers, 7 as small merchants, 81 as students, 59 as functionaries, and 6 as landowners. 55% of the clerks were occupied in France with manual labor, 22% did not have a job at all. For intellectuals this correlation was 31% to 21%⁷⁰.

Dufoix claims that 'in the 1950s and 1960s it was impossible for an exile scientist, writer and researcher to find a job without assistance from already established compatriot'⁷¹. This collective guarantee united the exile community, but at the same time transformed it into a hermetic entity with limited amount of points of contact with French society.

⁶⁸ (Dufoix 2002, 113)

⁶⁹ Ibidem

⁷⁰ (Dufoix 2002, 154)

⁷¹ Ibidem

II. 3. Political structure of exile

Anticommunism was 'raison d'être' for political organizations of Central European exiles and the main factor defining its structure. But even the presence of a common goal did not help the community in avoiding internal collisions. Soon after the war, the mainstream exopolicy was divided among three very powerful organizations: the Union of French Catholic Associations (PZK), the Central Union of Polish People in France (CZP), and the Polish Committee for National Liberation (KPF).

The controversies between the three organizations were of much more procedural than of ideological character. They were all pursuing liquidation of communism as their main target. The members only manifested different approaches towards the way the goal should be achieved. Correspondingly, PZK relied on external help, picturing foreign intervention and the following overthrow of communists' regime. CZP believed in possible evolution of the regime and that is why they acknowledged the necessity of mutual dialogue. The Committee of National liberation, working in close connection with dissidents who remained in Poland, nurtured the plan of internal revolution⁷².

The other point of irreconcilable discordance between the organizations was PZK's wild anti-Semitism that was propagated through the magazine 'Horyzonty' and for which the Union was on numerous occasions criticized by Kazimierz Sabbat and other noticeable members of Polish government in exile (London)⁷³.

⁷² Hana Voisine-Jechová and Hélène Włodarczyk, *Émigration et exil dans les cultures tchèque et polonaise* [actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre de recherches sur les langues et cultures slaves de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris, 5-7 décembre 1985] (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1987), 40

⁷³ (Friszke 1999, 345)

In Hana Voisine-Jechová and H      Wlodarczyk opinion, the main reason for exile political split was the implacability of adherents of the London government in exile and that of Lublin, but this failure was also the personal responsibility of Alexander Kawalkowski, the leader of CZP and ardent follower of Pilsudski's ideas⁷⁴. 'The Polish emigration wants a new, better Poland and not a return of sanation and dictatorship'⁷⁵, reads *Narodowiec*, a newspaper of the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

Each organization tried to establish its own connections with the French ministry of Foreign Affairs, pretending to be the only one plenipotentiary to represent Polish exiles. At the same time, the Ministry preferred to cooperate with the most authoritative individuals from the milieu, often detached from organizational debates, such as Kajetan Morawski⁷⁶.

Each organization had transnational, national and local levels of activities. Only a small portion of exiles were involved in transnational relations, trying to obtain assistance for Poland's liberation at an international level. Indeed, the biggest successes were achieved by organizations on the local level. For instance, CZP had 13 regional bureaus. Smaller associations that belonged to its internal structure – such as the Association of Polish émigrés in France and the federation of Polish workers and employees – developed branch networks of affiliations that worked not only as a system for mutual assistance, but also let Polish émigré participate, directly and indirectly, in discussions concerning the current political agenda⁷⁷.

(Voisine-Jechová and Włodarczyk 1987, 42)
(cited from Voisine-Jechová and Włodarczyk 1987, 42)
(Pomian 2001, 63)
(Dufoix 2002, 163)

Meanwhile, even though politically active members of the exile community tried to boost in such a manner émigrés' involvement in the fight against communism, social life of Polish exile was formed heavily around non-political organizations, such as catholic missions, the ancient Society of Polish history and literature (found in Paris in 1854 and revived after 1945), and the Polish library in the French capital (found in 1833, new building in 1946)⁷⁸.

Since 1956 there existed two principal poles of attraction within the Hungarian exile community. The first was formed around the Hungarian National Council (CNH), the second around the World Federation of Hungarian Veterans (MHBK). The structure of CNH included the Committee for Hungarian refugees, the Hungarian catholic mission, the Association of independent journalists, the Federation of Hungarian scouts, the Hungarian federalist movement, and also the revues *Ahogy Lehet* and *Nyugati Humok*⁷⁹. MHBK included its own catholic mission, the Union of Hungarian veteran volunteers into French army, the Organization for mutual help, the Hungarian Association of Saint-Ladislás, and the Association of Free Hungarians⁸⁰.

The generational factor has essential meaning for this structuring. Stephane Dufoix writes about major discordance and the absence of mutual understanding between two emigrational waves presented by two different political organizations⁸¹. Centrist and leftist intellectuals could not forgive preceding waves of emigration their approval of Hungary Nazification and their failure to save the country from Bolshevik invasion. MHBK was set up in 1946 in order to

⁷⁸ (Marès 1994), 142

⁷⁹ (Dufoix 2002, 183)

⁸⁰ Ibidem

⁸¹ Op.cit, 160

help veterans who were forced out of their countries. Its members included former Nazi collaborators as well as conservatives and liberals.

The refugees of 1956 propagated the idea that the October events showed the possibility of changes in Hungary. The old emigration, in their opinion, was already passé and new organization was needed in order to pursue the goal of the homeland's liberation.

In this respect, the Hungarian Revolutionary Council was set up in 1957 in Strasbourg. Béla Kyráli who led insurgents in Budapest was chosen to be the head of the board including social-democrat Anna Kéthly, Christian-democrat Árpád Raksányi, former Budapest mayor József Kővágó and György Heltai, diplomat and former collaborator of Imre Nagy. The organization immediately created the Institute of the Revolution's history in Brussels and started publishing, first in London, then in Paris *Gazette litteraire* which was prohibited in Budapest⁸².

From the very beginning, the new organizations pretended to gain leadership within exile community. Paul Auer, the most authoritative representative of older emigration, made a point about new emigration during one of his visit to Quai D'Orsay that they are youngsters without experience and that old exiles don't trust them⁸³.

The unity was lacking also within the Czechoslovakian community. Internal troubles within the milieu were caused by rivalry for the heritage of resistance against Germans and by the conflict between adepts of socialism and anti-communists. The latter despised the position of Pavel Tigrid, who claimed that he is fighting 'not against socialism, but against the country that betrayed true

⁸² (Fejtő 1991, 452)

⁸³ (Dufoix 2002, 58)

socialism, the Soviet Union'⁸⁴. The tension between Czechs and Slovaks was also present.

Though, the conflict between the two waves of emigration – that of 1948 and of 1968 – was smoother than in the Hungarian case, both were inspired by the possibility of changes that the Prague Spring demonstrated. The probable perspective of political situation's amelioration constituted common ground for old and new emigration.

Antonine Liehm, who emigrated soon after Soviet tanks entered Czech capital, put it like this: 'History did not stop in 1948. The regime that exists for twenty, thirty years undergoes transformation. This is a good surprise for emigration [...] We do not have any problems with the most interesting personalities of emigration of 1948. I do not have any problem with Tigrid, neither with Peroutka, whom I met in New York. He understood everything that I told him'⁸⁵.

Czech and Slovak exopolicy was formed around the Council of Independent Czechoslovakia and associations that entered its structure – the Association of Veterans, the Movement of Sokol gymnasts, and the Czech catholic mission, with padre Pavelka and then padre Paroled, who were both very influential figures within the exile milieu in 1940-1960s.

⁸⁴ Pavel Tigrid, 'Témoignage sur Témoignage. L'historique d'une revue en exil' <http://www.esprit.presse.fr/archive/review/article.php?code=8439&folder=2> last visited 29.05.2010

⁸⁵ (cited from Dufoix 2002, 172)

II. 4. Contacts with French society

Though essential part of émigrés had chosen to go to France because of its proverbial hospitality, the reality differed. Central European exiles, with their anti-communist agenda, were met with hostility; first, because leftist ideologies were 'coursu' at that time. Second, because those who left the countries of popular democracy were considered to be Nazi collaborators. Polish people who fought in the Italian campaign and continued to wear military uniform as they had no money to buy civil cloth were reproached by passengers for being 'fascists' in the Paris district of Saint-Louis. A Czech journalist recollects being told by the prefect of police that he was a fascist and that the real democrat, Benes, stayed in Prague⁸⁶.

Nevertheless, émigrés differentiate between official and private discourse of that time. 'Yes, on official level we were traitors, enemies and unwanted visitors. But in person most of French people were absolutely kind to us. Not only did they provide practical help, but also gave us lessons in their language and taught some fine points of local etiquette'⁸⁷, recollects an anonymous Hungarian exile.

Meanwhile, even the collective attitude of politicians and intellectuals is more nuanced than unanimous disapproval of exiles. Antoine Mares points out the following organizations groups and individuals who were working on establishing dialogue and firm connection with exile communities: the General

⁸⁶ (Marès 1994, 136)

⁸⁷ (cited from Mares 1996, 47)

Confederation of Labor-Workers Force, the French section of Workers' International, some Trotskyites, members of the Christian democratic Popular Republican Movement, certain catholic intellectuals and Gaullists (Edmond Michelet and Andre Malraux), pro-European movements, liberal intellectuals – Raymond Aron, Clemens Helle and Pierre Emmanuel⁸⁸. The latter cooperated with exiles in the frames of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

CHAPTER III. EMIGRES' RESPONSE TO MAY '68 EVENTS IN PARIS

III. 1. Intellectuals and politics.

Among Central European exiles who left their countries due to political reasons, only a small amount straightforwardly and avowedly engaged into political activity in one of the fields of exopolicy – that affecting émigré community, homeland, host society or international diplomacy⁸⁹. The demarcating line should be put between those professional politicians and émigré intellectuals, states Stephane Dufoix, as intellectuals due to their specific group identification had openly put a question of autonomy from the area of politics⁹⁰.

This detachment from of direct political actions, such as diplomacy or organization of resistance forces, is caused by intellectuals' aspiration to preserve creative freedom and avoid becoming tools for ideological support of any political regime. One of the peculiar features inherent for European intellectuals is their striving to make claims of universal, that is to say, 'panhuman' character, often non-topical or discordant to demands of immediate political situations.

This 'prophetic' feature, though distinctively present in Central European intellectuals' collective discourse, is nevertheless transformed due to the out-of-line situation of forced emigration. According to Edward W. Said, intellectual is always an exile in metaphorical sense that introduces the state of 'never being fully adjusted, always feeling outside the chatty, familiar world inhabited by

⁸⁹ Hans Henning Hahn, "Möglichkeiten und Formen politischen Handelns in der Emigration." *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 23 (1983): 143

⁹⁰ (Dufoix 2002, 170)

natives, so to speak, tending to avoid and even dislike the trappings of accommodation and national well-being [...] restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled and unsettle others'⁹¹.

In this sense, émigré intellectuals experience the condition of double exile. Being forced out of country or having decided to leave due to political non-conformity, an intellectual continues his fight against regime from the new place of inhabiting. In this state he has to cooperate with mainstream political organizations consisting political apparatus of his new small homeland that is an émigré community. This is how Czech Vera, a secretary of Svědectví magazine, characterized an editorial board: 'A very intellectual milieu, forcefully and beyond measure politicized, though, as it is impossible to avoid politics if you are an émigré'⁹².

Intellectuals' mission, though, remains prophetic. 'To represent genuine voice of the Motherland'⁹³ formulated it Konstantin Jelenski, speaking about Polish emigration, though this is also the case for Hungarian and Czech communities. A peculiar connection, therefore, was established between political structures of exile and émigré intellectuals with the latter developing anti-communist discourse of the former, reacting to the switching in political agenda of exopolicy. In this chapter I am going to analyze, in what way intellectuals reacted to the immediate situation of May '68 in Paris as an illustrative example of how they appropriated the political and social aspirations of Central European emigration.

⁹¹ (Said 1996, 53)

⁹² (cited from Popa 2000, 15)

⁹³ Konstantin Jelenski, 'Kultura, le Pologne en exil,' *Le Debat* 9 (1981) : 64

III. 2. *Émigré press.*

Antoine Mares notes vivacity of Central European émigré publishing activity in post-war France with a vast amount of printed units, most of them, nevertheless, rather short-living⁹⁴. Émigré press being analyzed could be divided into three groups.

The first one consists of newspapers published by political organizations with all the resulting consequences such as uncovered political biases, ardent rhetoric and beseeching tonality of appeal to public opinion. The most telling examples are the Czech bulletin *Informační materialy: casopis československých revolučních socialistu*, the Hungarian news-sheet *Szocialista Forradalomért* and Polish *Polska w Europie*, with the first two being socialists' editions and the last one belonging to federalists, propagating the idea of Polish European integration.

The second group includes the most influential magazines such as Polish *Kultura*, Czech *Svědectví* (one may add here Hungarian *Irodalmi Újság*). These were distinctive intellectual locomotives of émigré community, their influence coming not in the last place from their reputation outside of exile circles. The publications here, therefore, are more balanced, as the targeted audience is more diverse and the expectations to journalist's open-mindedness are higher. In this chapter I will use Konstantin Jelenski's account on May events in Paris provided by *Kultura*⁹⁵.

Emigrant cultural, entertaining editions that are deeply involved into mundane affairs of local communities compose the third group. These units (for instance, Polish *Tygodnik polski* and Czech *Le Fouet: mensuel humoristique et satirique tchécoslovaque* do not engage with political analyzes. That is why the

⁹⁴ (Mares 1994, 157)

⁹⁵ Konstantin Jelenski, 'Notatki o majowej rewolucji,' *Kultura* 7 (1968) : 17-32

émigrés' account of May events will be based on the first two groups of sources, with the third one only adding atmospheric touches.

Svědectví and *Kultura* remain the most representative sources for émigré intellectuals' discourse. Main editors, Pavel Tigrid and Jerzy Giedroyc are considered to be two of the most influential exiles, to the degree that French Ministry of Foreign Affairs more often contacted them, than the leaders of political structures of exile.

One can trace the reciprocal influence of exopolicy and intellectuals' discourse presented by *Svědectví* and *Kultura*. For instance, suppression of Hungarian insurrection by Soviet troops and the following stormy reaction of international community deeply affected agenda of Czech exile community. Politicians of exile abandoned idea of their country liberation through exterior military intervention. Instead, they focused more on renewal of dialogue with Czech society in order to 'undermine communism from within with the ideas, persuasion, with the words, at last'⁹⁶.

The idea of such a retargeting was taken on board by Pavel Tigrid who founded *Svědectví* magazine in New York in 1956. 'We did not want an émigré journal'⁹⁷, stated he afterwards. Basing in Paris since 1960, *Svědectví* included the dialogue directionality into its editorial policy. It was aiming to reach Czech public with clandestine circulation and émigré public – with the system of subscription. Pavel Tigrid was also involved into work of Czech unit of Radio Free Europe, so that his ideas (and the ideas of *Svědectví*) could reach the broadest groups of destinees, over the head of emigrant political structures tearing apart by discordances.

⁹⁶ Milan Burda, 'La vie littéraire des exiles tcheques de 1948 a 1968,' in *Litterature et emigration* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1996), 24

⁹⁷ (Cited from Neubauer and Török 2009, 252)

Jerzy Giedroyc's *Kultura* (founded in 1947 in Rome, then rebased to Paris) was also appealing to public while omitting exile political structures and proposing its own, independent vision of exile policy. Włodzimierz Bolecki states that *Kultura*'s activity was based on the conviction that émigré political institutions would gradually lose their significance; the fundamental task of the intellectuals of Diaspora should be to enrich the Polish cultural heritage and to provide readers in Poland, indirectly, with arguments that would mobilize them to resist communism⁹⁸. This view is shared by Pomian Grazyna, who argues that even though Jerzy Giedroyc would support any internal opposition in socialist Poland, independence and liberty for him was associated with Polish people themselves and not with any specific political force⁹⁹.

At the time when exile political structures were mostly preoccupied with the struggle to contest independent Poland, intellectuals from *Kultura* were already preoccupied with the program of country's future after the liberation. One of the magazine's main ideas was characteristically universal claim about insufficiency of national independence without inner liberty. Juliusz Mieroszewski, the leading political journalist of *Kultura*, commented: 'The fact that for the majority of Polish people independence and liberty are synonyms proves that we have neither any tradition, nor any conception of liberty [...] We are not striving for a triumph of nationalism. Instead, the liberty is our guarantee that exterior enemies will be more dangerous than interior ones'¹⁰⁰.

One can speculate that the totality of emigrant press represent symbiosis of political (topical) and intellectual (universal) ideas, enforced by extraordinary

⁹⁸ Włodzimierz Bolecki, 'Kultura's program,' in *The exile and return of writers from East-Central Europe*, edited by John Neubauer and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török (New York : Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 153

⁹⁹ (Pomian 2001, 67)

¹⁰⁰ Op.cit, 66

situation of exile. The peculiarity of it lies in the fact that being united by the presence of common enemy, political structures of exile and intellectuals defending their autonomy failed to produce common platform.

III. 3. The response

May '68 events in Paris became for Central European émigrés a large blank sheet on which they projected their vision of turbulent political situation in their home countries. The same is true for French intellectuals who tended to retrospectively contemplate Prague Spring and anti-communist demonstrations in Warsaw through a prism of May revolt that happened afterwards. In his article *Paris-Prague 1968. Misunderstanding* Pierre Gremion shows that both sides stressed those aspects of foreign events that were especially topical for their domestic cases.¹⁰¹

These biases were especially pronouncing when taking into consideration émigré editions belonging to exile political structures. Hungarian newspaper *Szocialista Forradalomért* ('Socialist Revolution') published by a group of émigrés who arrived in France before Second World War was writing on 21 of May about 'growing and irrepressible wave of political consciousness of French workers who are ready to overthrow Gaullist government in order to take power into their own arms'¹⁰².

French literature on the subject shows, however, that striking workers' demands were almost exclusively of economic character¹⁰³. Patrick Rambaud specifies them as following: decrease of working week up to 40 hours without

¹⁰¹ Gremion Pierre, 'Paris-Prague 1968. Les malentendus,' *Le Debat* 9 (1981) : 19

¹⁰² 'Workers are ready to take power into their arms,' *Szocialista Forradalomért*, 21 May, 1968, editorial

¹⁰³ See Patrick Rambaud, *1968* (Moskwa : Ultra-Kultura, 2004), 170

reduction of salary, minimal salary of 1000 francs, retiring pension for men since 60 years, for women – since 55, additional, compensated 5th week of vacations for young workers, free trade-unions¹⁰⁴. *Szocialista Forradalomért* does not go into these details, claiming instead that French General Confederation of Labor (national organization of trade unions) betrayed workers' interests for their readiness to enter negotiations with the government instead of continuing revolution up to its victorious ending¹⁰⁵. C.G.T's head Georges Seguy's signing of Grenelle agreements with George Pompidou government was later estimated by Hungarian news-sheet as 'the murder of revolution'¹⁰⁶.

Another peculiar feature of 'Szocialista Forradalomért' account on events is that the articles about May events are written in French, unlike all others in the leaflet. In both cases the authors appeal to the solidarity with French workers, invoking them to unite on international basis. These appeals went in vain, as the leaders of C.G.T immediately after Grenelle asked workers to stop striking for the sake of preserving reached agreements.

Sounding board of Czech emigrant socialists, *Informační materialy: casopis československých revolučních socialistu* also concentrated their account on May events on workers' movement. Newspaper compared Paris strikes to that in Prague, laying stress in both cases on workers' movement. Peculiarly, they drew parallels and established connection between those two, predicting that these movements will 'necessarily and unavoidably' lead to united and organized international labor movement¹⁰⁷. When giving account on students' participation

¹⁰⁴ Patrick Rambaud, 1968 (Moskwa : Ultra-Kultura, 2004), 170

¹⁰⁵ 'Workers are ready to take power into their arms,' *Szocialista Forradalomért*, 21 May, 1968, editorial

¹⁰⁶ 'C.G.T betrayed workers,' *Szocialista Forradalomért*, 28 May, 1968,

¹⁰⁷ 'Paris protests,' *Informační materialy: casopis československých revolučních socialistu*, 20 May, 1968, editorial

in the Paris events, the newspaper mentioned their wide use of 'progressive' Marxist rhetoric as a sign of their support for socialist movement without going into details about the nature of this rhetoric¹⁰⁸. It is widely recognized, though, that Marxist theory was recognized by students in the exotic forms of maoism and trotskism and it was less popular than anarchism and situationism.

Polish federalists' bulletin *Polska v Europe* also used events as a favorable opportunity to develop their agenda. Editorial titled *Crisis of civilization of the structural crisis?* explains that May revolt is caused by incoherence between the tempo of technical progress and that of political, social and economic structures development¹⁰⁹.

The account of events itself occupies little space as anonymous author briefly describes students' disturbances and states that they were caused by provocative acts of agents under cover prepared by French Communist Party: 'P.C.F acted with the help of people they hooked in the milieu of so-called 'trotskists', 'guevarists' (from the name of Che Guevara) and 'anarchists'. Agents performed their function and the affair ran amok, but political situation prevented them and their masters from regaining control of situation'¹¹⁰.

But immediate political interests of separate political groups have nothing to do with the 'explosion of industrial civilization'¹¹¹. The crisis, in federalists' opinion, has reasons underlying much deeper, as excessive centralization of the country hampers decision-making of highest priority that would allow successful evolution of political, social and economical structures¹¹². 'Polska v Europe' uses this thesis in order to propagate the idea of federalism stating that 'the passage

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem

¹⁰⁹ 'Crisis of civilization of the structural crisis?', *Polska v Europe* 5-6, May-June, 1968, editorial

¹¹⁰ Ibidem

¹¹¹ Ibidem

¹¹² Ibidem

to federative organization of Europe and then, the whole world, is a question of time'¹¹³. Citing Proudhon, editorial proposes its own recipe for solving May and following crisis basing on the principle of 'subsolidarity'¹¹⁴. The principle presupposes decentralization and setting up of such a social organization that would allow solving essential problems on the level that corresponds to it in scale.

Polska v Europe's editorial is a pronouncing example of development of exiles' political ideology on foreign inappropriate material whilst ignoring obvious clashes of theory with given reality. French federalists editorial refers to¹¹⁵ were mostly preoccupied with ideas of European integration, accepting the fact that France is a unitary, centralized state. Moreover, the easiness with which *Polska v Europe* dismisses possible complexity of May events' underlying causes, while finding one suitable explanation, proves complete disinterestedness in the strike per se, but only as a background for ill-fitted, ideologically biased implications.

Kultura, a 'moral compass of Polish emigration'¹¹⁶, bounded by its international reputation, could not afford such light-minded dismissal of reality. Still, it is possible to trace how certain topical issues of exile intellectuals' agenda influenced objectiveness of Konstantin Jelenski who submitted his impressions about May revolt to the magazine.

Characteristically, whilst socialist newspapers almost completely ignored students' and intellectuals' participation in the events, Jelenski goes to another extreme. He briefly mentions unprecedented workers' movement as the opportunity to criticize P.C.F (French Communist Party) and its leaders for their

¹¹³ Ibidem

¹¹⁴ Ibidem

¹¹⁵ Ibidem

¹¹⁶ Konstantin Jelenski, 'Kultura, le Pologne en exil,' *Le Debat* 9 (1981) : 63

attempt to intervene and control strikes they weren't in charge of¹¹⁷. Jelenski describes backstairs politics of Waldeck Rochet who condemned student demands, publicly opposed de Gaulle, but 'was quick to support him in order to end the revolt he was not able to head'¹¹⁸.

In his account Jelenski concentrated on students' participation in the events, which supports Kristin Ross' thesis that intellectual and ideological constituents superseded economical one from May discourse, leaving 10 million workers' strike on secondary place¹¹⁹. This kind of insensitivity could be explained by the fact that Jelenski as an émigré intellectual is more interested in development of liberal ideas that could be applied to Polish situation, than in the specific socio-economic situation in French host society.

Following high standards of *Kultura* journalism, Jelenski forbears from rendition of categorical judgments. He notes ambiguous impression that revolt gave him: 'I observed May events feeling that two persons are fighting inside of me. One of them was youngsters who reacted with joy on every turmoil of the revolution and was happy to see rejuvenated France. Another was nasty bellied midget who was hoping that de Gaulle will finally impose order over mutineers'¹²⁰.

He depicts an attempt of student revolution as 'youthful, free and liberal from one side and completely detached from reality and derived of any specific program from another'¹²¹, condemning at the same time French youth for inability to value convenience of society that was created for them by adults¹²². This kind

¹¹⁷ Konstantin Jelenski, 'Notatki o majowej rewolucji,' *Kultura* 7 (1968) : 19

¹¹⁸ Ibidem

¹¹⁹ (Ross 2004, 23)

¹²⁰ (Jelenski 1968, 17)

¹²¹ Op.cit, 26

¹²² Op.cit, 23

of reproach was shared by a larger part of exiles who have had living experience in poorer and less comfortable environments. The bitter collective sentiment later led certain group of emigrants to a reduced understanding of youth revolt as a 'son's protest against father, who is too liberal to raise his voice, to pound the table, to chasten ungrateful offspring whatever the latter does'¹²³.

Liberating potential of student revolt is what interests Jelenski the most. He points several issues that could possibly be the sources of social strain in 'one of the most prosperous countries in the world'¹²⁴. Those are 'surveillance constantly induced by omnipresent bureaucracy'¹²⁵ and the whole situation of 'mandarin domination'¹²⁶. Without going into specific details, the journalist determinates this unrevealed, though omnipresent suppression as the main reason for youth upraising. He adds telegraphically that another problems of the country included de Gaulle's government failure to conduct necessary reforms¹²⁷.

Paying that little attention to other than ideological aspects of May events, Jelenski tends to establish parallels between student strikes in Paris and Warsaw. To nail down the comparison he states that 'Daniel Cohn-Bendit is a blood brother to Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski'¹²⁸. The analogy between French and Polish students' leaders is explained by the fact that all three of them were talented organizers, but their program was completely utopian¹²⁹.

Students headed by Cohn-Bendit appear in Jelenski's representation to symbolize conceptual liberal values. Journalist is especially fascinated by the fact of Cohn-Bendit's unauthorized return to Paris after his deportation to

¹²³ Farina Salkazanova, "Inteligenty v shezlongah," *Kontinent*, no. 8 (1975): 405

¹²⁴ Konstantin Jelenski, 'Notatki o majowej rewolucji,' *Kultura* 7 (1968) : 19

¹²⁵ Op.cit, 20

¹²⁶ Op.cit, 27

¹²⁷ Ibidem

¹²⁸ Op.cit, 29

¹²⁹ Ibidem

Germany¹³⁰. This goes in accordance with exiles' dream of free movement between the countries, unobtainable in their position. Jelenski also tries to retouch the importance of Marxist rhetoric in students' discourse, stating that strikers 'refused deterministic-voluntaristic usage of ideology'¹³¹ and that they came after Bakunin and nihilists like Turgenev's Bazarov and not after figures of world Marxism¹³².

Jelenski depicts the atmosphere of brotherhood that ruled those days in Paris as people talked to each in the streets and hugged. Indeed, he doubts the sincerity of one particular popular motto 'We are all German Jews!' which was employed by demonstrators to protest Cohn-Bendit's deportation. 'Considering notorious French anti-semitism, these words chanted by a crowd sounded hypocritical'¹³³. Piotr Rawicz also commented this motto in his book *The Notebook of Counterrevolutionary or the Hangover*: 'Old rabbi heard that students call themselves 'German Jews'. 'Too much honor!', grumbled old man'¹³⁴.

Indeed, the motive of anti-semitism appears in account on May events in another Polish émigré magazine *Horyzonty*. This edition, notorious for its employment of Jewish conspiracy theories (that were the underlying causes for October revolution and Robert Kennedy's murder), interprets May revolt as a planned action of secret Zionist organization and as decisive step on the way to world revolution¹³⁵.

¹³⁰ Op.cit, 29

¹³¹ Op.cit, 32

¹³² Op.cit, 33

¹³³ Op.cit, 27

¹³⁴ Piotr Rawicz, *The Notebook of counterrevolutionary or the Hangover* (Paris : Gallimard, 1969), 33

¹³⁵ Jędrzej Giertych, 'Rozruchy studenckie', *Horyzonty* 15 lipca-15 sierpnia (1968), 38

The author Jędrzej Giertych reminds of Cohn-Bendit's Jewish roots and speculates about his possible employers¹³⁶. He calls him 'a provocator', 'trickster' and 'lying prophet'¹³⁷. Never going into details, he dismisses any rational reasons for students' revolt, explaining it with 'youth's inner unchastity and idleness'¹³⁸, stressing the fact that participants of revolt are to a large extent 'children of rich French bourgeoisie'¹³⁹.

Giertych establishes parallels between Paris revolts and demonstrations in American Berkley University, pointing that in both cases disturbances were caused by 'rich kids that look like beggars'¹⁴⁰. Indeed, in Jelenski's text casual look of Paris students is treated as a sign of their solidarity with the workers¹⁴¹.

The Czech *Bulletin of Associations of Czechoslovaks* indiscriminately criticized participants of May revolt for unreflective appropriation of leftist ideologies, appealing to bitter experience of its implementation in their home-country¹⁴². Anonymous author of the editorial reproached French for their short-sightedness and inability to use foreign experience for their situation.

Tygodnik Polskie placed brief mention of enormous strike between the article about new Brigitte Bardot's film and weather forecast¹⁴³. Among all possible aspects of the events editorial board chose practical one: they warned members of exile community that the deficiency of food and petrol is possible and that the demonstrators knocked down 68 trees¹⁴⁴.

¹³⁶ Op.cit, 36

¹³⁷ Ibidem

¹³⁸ Op.cit, 39

¹³⁹ Ibidem

¹⁴⁰ Op.cit, 40

¹⁴¹ (Jelenski 1968, 32)

¹⁴² 'Without title,' *Bulletin of Associations of Czechoslovaks*, May, 1968, editorial

¹⁴³ 'Without title', *Tygodnik Polskie*, 28 May, 1968, cover

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem

To sum up, only *Tygodnik Polskie* showed involvement into French realities whilst providing account on May strikes. Other editions cited used the events as the opportunity to develop either political or intellectual agenda.

CHAPTER IV. IMMEDIATE WITNESS.

The book 'The Notebook of Counterrevolutionary or the Hangover' by Piotr Rawicz is a chaotic compilation of sketches, aphorisms and opinions voiced by different people and rendered by the author in random order, without a plot. Instead, the story is kept together by unity of time and space – it is May and June 1968, universal turn-out in Paris, 'now an island to a bigger extent than Britain'¹⁴⁵.

Rawicz's artistic method creates impression of author's first-hand witness of the events but, at the same time, his detached, uninvolved, observing position. In the book, writer is represented by a personage named X. Rawicz withholds from taking sides – 'I am neither a counterrevolutionary, nor pro-revolutionary or revolutionary [...] The domain of political activism lies far for my preoccupations'¹⁴⁶, as he put it.

Instead, X. as an author's protagonist performs double function in the story. He a) introduces his personages, providing their appearance by short commentaries (e.g. 'Gaston D. Former deputy of Parliament' or 'Kurt G. Ex-communist, German, took part in Spanish war on republicans' side. Lives in a suburb, but walks each to Sorbonne to see everything 'with his own eyes'); b) expresses philosophical and worldly, often ironical comments saved from specifics.

¹⁴⁵ Piotr Rawicz, *The Notebook of counterrevolutionary or the Hangover* (Paris : Gallimard, 1969), 33

¹⁴⁶ Op. cit, 169

The book voices the utterances of two groups of people. First are 'leftist intellectuals from the left bank [of *Seine*]'¹⁴⁷. Rawicz provides their portrait in this vast passage so eloquent that I quote with little abridgements:

'They are, as a rule, skinny, wear glasses, their hair en brosse. Their Adam's apple is often rather developed and mobile. They are frequenters to cinemateque and they spend their vacations in Yugoslavia on tour organized by 'To see and to know' or other similar organization. At the time of Algerian war they were regular readers of *L'Express*, but at present they look for inspiration in *Nouvel Observateur*. They were members of P.C.F. [*Parti Communiste Français*] at some point, but withdrew, for the most part, after Budapest. They drive bantam cars, even though they can afford more high-powered one. [...] They are enthusiastic about Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes and about new 'nouveau roman'. Discordance between some elements of Marxism and structuralism is a constant source of their confusion [...] But foremost of everything, they *sign*. Stakhanovists of signature, they attribute magical virtues to the act of signing. [...] They saluted 'the revolt of the youth' and workers' strike with enthusiasm and yeasty hopes. They desperately tried to get involved in the Movement'¹⁴⁸.

This stereotypical image, deprived of nuances, singles out number of important issues that emigrant intellectuals were inclined to stress and criticize about their French counterparts. This is foremost conformity, to predefined habitus and to intellectual fashion, the intellectuals' readiness to correspond to stereotypes about themselves. Specific kind of engagement into political activity is also ridiculed in this passage. This feature that is inherent to French intellectual tradition and is one of determinants for the status of an intellectual became major irritant to émigrés who were unwilling and, moreover, unable to develop the same extent of participation in burning social issues.

Life-like, though stereotypical, Rawicz's characterization of French intellectuals cut him rather unpopular figure within French intellectuals' milieu. Helene Cixous called the author 'arrogant' in a review of 'The Notebook'

¹⁴⁷ Op. cit, 170

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem

published in *Le Monde*¹⁴⁹. Philippe Sollers, founder of influential *Tel Quel* magazine, punched Rawicz after television broadcasting during which they discussed May revolt¹⁵⁰. But altogether, in Vladimir Maksimov's words, the destiny of the book developed in the worst way possible – it was ignored¹⁵¹.

Another group of people that Rawicz gave voice to in his book consists of emigrants, 'too marginal to even participate in 'marginality' that is demonstrated boastfully, with loftiness and frivolity, by protagonists of the events'¹⁵². Author considers émigrés to be marginal for sake of their beliefs, their choice and even more – for their objective position in French society.

Rawicz tends to build an opposition out of French and émigrés' intellectuals positions towards the events. He explains emigrant critical approach towards revolt by the down-to-earth argument that émigrés, marked by numerous regimes, preferred 'less evil' to the high-minded ideas that worked poorly in practice. This idea was keenly supported by Cheslaw Milosz in his review of Rawicz's book in 'Kultura'. 'They [*French*] are lucky that they have never seen the real 'revolution', have never experienced real 'socialism', have no idea about implications of real 'socialism', all these notions they turned into fetishes¹⁵³.

The dichotomy of émigrés and French intellectuals' perceptions of May revolt, constructed by Rawicz, is in exact accordance with collective émigré discourse on events. Examination of a separate book will allow more precise understanding of underlying motivation of emigrant intellectuals' May idiosyncrasy. First, because of micro-level of investigation that is more sensitive

149 Helene Cixous, 'Review of Piotr Rawicz's book 'The Notebook of counterrevolutionary or the Hangover,' *Le Monde*, 21 October, 1961, 16

150 Anthony Rudolf, *Engraved in flesh. Piotr Rawicz and his novel Blood from the Sky* (London: Menard Press, 2007), 58

151 Vladimir Maksimov, 'Moj drug Piotr Rawicz,' *Kontinent* 34 (1982) : 325

¹⁵² (Rawicz 1969, 172)

¹⁵³ Cheslaw Milosz, 'Lepsze zabawy,' *Kultura* 10 (1969) : 133

to details. Second, due to eloquence and psychological elaboration that is peculiar to fiction to a bigger extent than to journalism.

Rawicz is rather self-reflective when asserting that his position and that of the most of his personages is caused by their marginal statuses. Being an outsider and critique to the revolt is emigrant conformity, in the same way as political activism is that for French intellectuals'. But within the book that is a mixture of public and private, journalistic sketches and author's dreams it is hardly possible to distinguish between collective émigré discourse and Rawicz's convictions stemming from his individual experience. In order to see to what extent his personal trajectory goes with accordance to group one, I will make an excursion into the author's biography and then proceed on his account of May events.

IV.1. The emigrant's biography

Piotr (Pinchas) Solomonowich Rawicz was born in 1919 in Lvov, then part of Polish Galicia, now Ukraine. He was the youngest child of a lawyer. From the very beginning, due to specific character of his birth place, Rawicz's was raised in a multicultural tradition.

Rawicz's mother-tongue was Polish. His national identity was Jewish, though his family was not religious. Like many children in cultivated and relatively assimilated families in the region, Piotr did not have barmitzwah and gained secular education, first in Polish gymnasium, obtaining his certificate in 1937, then in Ivan Franko Lvov State University¹⁵⁴. He got a degree in Orientalism.

¹⁵⁴ (Rudolf 2007, 53)

Before the age of 20, Piotr saw his multiethnic home town, in the recent past an eastern outpost of Austro-Hungarian Empire, become a capital for deciduous West Ukrainian Republic, a part of Soviet Ukraine and finally surrender to Nazis.

Rawicz avoided national labeling, naming it 'ephemeral leg irons'¹⁵⁵. Though Elie Wiesel recollects that Rawicz promised to forcefully undress Jerzy Kosinski and check whether he is circumcised, if the latter won't stop denying that he was Jewish¹⁵⁶.

Rawicz's complicated relations with the question of citizenship and nationality are easily understood in the perspective of his biography. He witnessed first years of Soviet power in Ukraine after Red Army invasion to the territory in 1939. He became a refugee in 1941 (he was 22) when Nazis invaded Western Ukraine. Together with his wife Anka, Piotr was hiding for a year, concealing his Jewishness. Finally, he was arrested near Polish Zakopane, his wife fled.

Rawicz managed to persuade Gestapo that he was indeed Ukrainian. His perfect Ukrainian language and the absence of distinctive Jewish facial features helped. He provided documents that confirmed that circumcision was done to him due to medical reasons. He even managed to explain away the presence of mezuzah – small Jewish ritual piece of basil – in his jacket. Rawicz said that he bought the cloth in the black market and did not notice the small thing. He was believed, but still put in Auschwitz as a political prisoner¹⁵⁷.

He spent three years in the sinister concentration camp, 'enacting a common if ironic drama of the Holocaust era: trying to survive by denying the

¹⁵⁵ Anna Langfus, 'Rozmowa z Piotrem Rawiczem,' *L'arche* 61 (1962) : 47

¹⁵⁶ Elie Wiesel, 'Three suicides' <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/1299/wiesel/excerpt.html> last visited 11.05.2010

¹⁵⁷ (Rudolf 2007, 65)

self¹⁵⁸. In 1944 he was transported to Leitmeritz, a camp in the vicinity of Theresienstadt.

In “The Notebook of counterrevolutionary’ Rawicz depicts the impossibility to compare his experience as a prisoner to problems that French students are fighting against in such a way: ‘When I was twenty I needed, like them [*the students*] extreme situations, a macabre around me, death as close as possible... I was royally served by history between 1914 and 1945. Not long ago, Michel A. or another twenty year old showed me a manuscript. Revealing the same imperious need, I was ashamed of my ghetto, of my Auschwitz; like a millionaire faced with a beggar, I felt I was inside the skin of a vile capitalist, a vile shareholder of suffering’¹⁵⁹.

Rawicz was freed from captivity at the end of the war by Russians. He returned to Lvov, traveled around Poland, and then received a scholarship to study Oriental languages in Sorbonne.

Piotr arrived in Paris in 1947 already speaking Ukrainian, Russian, German, Yiddish in addition to Polish, his mother-tongue. His first book, semi-autobiographical novel ‘Blood from the Skies’, was written in French, his sixth language. The protagonist Boris depicts his childhood in Lvov, Holocaust, years in the concentration camp and post-war staying in Paris. The book is characterized by Jean Bloch-Michel to be ‘the only novel about Holocaust written in a humorous, though dark, way’¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence Langer, ‘Introduction to Piotr Rawicz’s *The Blood from the Sky*’ in *The blood from the Sky* (New Haven: Yale university Press, 2003), vi

¹⁵⁹ (Rawicz 1968, 44)

¹⁶⁰ Jean Bloch-Michel, ‘Review of the Blood from the Sky,’ *La Gazette de Lausanne*, 9 October, 1961, 12

Later Rawicz studied Sanskrit, Hind, English, Hebrew and, possibly, Spanish and Arabic¹⁶¹. Though polyglot with natural talent for languages), Rawicz as an author encountered numerous problems when trying to express his vivid memories in French. 'For every writer, the language in which he writes is a kind of concentration camp. But when you write in a language not completely your own then it is a kind of prison within the camp, a second degree prison'¹⁶², stated he.

In Lawrence Langer's opinion Rawicz was very well aware of the way words could shape and reshape understanding of the human scene as the verbal manipulations laid in the core of Nazi discourse. 'Perhaps writing in French rather than in his native Polish would free Rawicz from the temptation to lapse into familiar patterns of speech'¹⁶³, - asserts Langer.

Rawicz's, as well as other Holocaust writers' problems with the speech laid in the fact that the tragedy had emasculated the meaning of words, deprived them of conventional connections with the objects and subjects of social world. So deceiving language can be that it should no longer be trusted as reliable source for human interaction and, moreover, it should not be respected as a high achievement of humanism. 'How can you tell Man? By the fact that he can bark.' – Rawicz used this exchange as the epigraph to the first chapter of his novel¹⁶⁴.

This language collision to some extent was shared by other emigrants, whose distrust of the splendor of the leftists' rhetoric can be explained by experienced abuse of language in totalitarian discourse.

¹⁶¹ (Rudolf 2007, 56)

¹⁶² (cited from Rudolf 2007, 64)

¹⁶³ (Langer 2003, vii)

¹⁶⁴ Piotr Rawicz, *The Blood from the Sky* (New Haven: Yale university Press, 2003), 3

'Blood from the Skies' published in 1961 got Rivarol Prize, prestigious annual award adjudged for books in French written by foreigners. After that Rawicz was invited by Jacqueline Piatier, literary editor of *Le Monde* to be a freelance expert on Slavic writers. Rawicz reviewed the works by Adolf Rudnicki, Danilo Kis, Vladimir Maksimov, Andrej Sinyavskij, Stanislaw Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz, Slawomir Mrozek and Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. Therefore, in the process of his work he had possibility to compose a synthesized opinion, a holistic picture of émigré and dissident literature, to feel irregularities between emigrant worldview and reality of the host society.

During his years in Paris Rawicz led bohemian life, with numerous of love affairs and excessive drinking ('The first drunken Jew I have ever met', in Solzhenitsyn's words¹⁶⁵). He made friends with Elie Wiesel, Primo Levy, Danila Kis, Jerzy Kosinski, E.M.Cioran, Cheslaw Milosz, Vladimir Maksimov, Andre Shwarz-Bart and others. According to Maksimov's recollections, Rawicz was talking about suicide for years¹⁶⁶. Several weeks after his wife Anka died of cancer in 1982, Rawicz shot himself in a mouth.

In Rawicz's life story, although passing belief in some elements, one can find patterns that are connected to significant historical events and regularities and are shared by a large number of émigré intellectuals. These are factors that in Michel Winock's opinion allow associate individual's fate to the destiny of his generation¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁵ (cited from Rudolf 2007, 61)

¹⁶⁶ (Maksimov 1982, 327)

¹⁶⁷ (Winock 1996, 17)

IV. 2. Émigrés' perception of historical catastrophe

One of these common factors shared by all émigrés without exceptions was an experience of radical changes brought by war and revolutions and concomitant hardships. The notion of historical disrupt is central to both individual and collective exile narratives. Rejection of thoroughgoing shifts in society advocated by French intellectuals is a leit-motif of emigrants' perception of the May revolt. In Rawicz's book this topic gained elaborated development. The story gives a glimpse on what characteristics did émigrés induce to the notion of revolution.

X. (an author's voice in the book) informs that merely all his friends from USSR and Central Europe reacted to events in a similar way: 'The same mixture of anxiety in the face of privations and disorders. The same sadness in the face of possible limitations of liberties. The same indulgence and candor in the face of people who take part in the game. 'These children do not know what they are going to cause'. I like this similitude. It is a breach in my solitude'¹⁶⁸.

A bitter experience of revolution was almost tangible in émigré press reports. In Rawicz's book it is rendered through philosophical considerations about the nature of history that is, according to some of book's voices, just a monotonous repetition of the same set of events. The only difference from Great French revolution or 1848 uprisings was that in 1968 public opinion could be manipulated by the television, radio, telephone and 'other instrumental techniques of totalitarian domination'¹⁶⁹. Speakers in the book on several

¹⁶⁸ (Rawicz 1969, 45)

¹⁶⁹ Op. cit, 72

occasions reproach French that they are able neither to revise critically past experience of their own history, nor to learn a lesson from other nations¹⁷⁰.

Rawicz introduces 92-year old 'princess T.'. She witnessed the Russian-Japanese war of 1905, the March and October revolutions of 1917, the civil war in Ukraine, the war between Polish and Soviet army in 1920, the invasion of Germans, insurrection in Warsaw in 1944. The old lady hadn't laughed so hard in years as when she heard that her grandchildren who participate in strikes called the events 'a revolution'¹⁷¹. Other Rawicz's interlocutors are not so indulgent, as one of them asserted that revolution without cadavers is 'coitus interruptus'¹⁷².

The students are ridiculed by Rawicz for comparing the methods police used towards strikers with that of Americans' in Vietnam. 'The history of exaggeration is yet to be written'¹⁷³, tells the author in respect to parallels between manners of Republican Security Company (antiriot police) and that of S.S.

The émigré notion of revolution is, therefore, destructive to its core, for it is associated foremost with the violence and not with the possible following constructive changes. 'What is revolution? A number of arrogant and incompetent functionaries are replaced by a number of even more arrogant and incompetent functionaries. This operation is accompanied by mass murders and brigandism'¹⁷⁴, to put it in Serge D. (Polish philosopher) words.

The focus of émigré perception is therefore shifted from the explicit strikers' demands to possible underlying causes for the revolt. One of the most popular explanations is a psychological one. The students are said to be provoking

¹⁷⁰ Op.cit, 78, 82

¹⁷¹ Op.cit, 138

¹⁷² Op.cit , 22

¹⁷³ Op.cit , 37

¹⁷⁴ Op. cit , 88

deficiency in order to appreciate comfort. 'Revolution a la Sorbonne? – Biology disguised as politics. These children did not have either Auschwitz, or Stalingrad'¹⁷⁵, tells one of the speaker, explaining the students' urge for violence.

In emigrants opinion strikers do not have proper socio-economic reasons for contestation. Instead, they contest 'the order of things in society itself that is unjust by definition in communistic system as well as in democratic'¹⁷⁶. The revolution in their opinion is pointless, as their experience tells them that it is a mere process of dressing out impossible into rags of possibility'¹⁷⁷.

IV. 3. Émigré's perception of leftism

Piotr Rawicz characterized himself to be 'decisively apolitical', so the degree of intensity peculiar to émigrés reaction on French intellectuals' preoccupation with leftist ideologies is absent from writer's speculations. He was, in Anthony Rudolf's recollections, an adversary of Stalinism¹⁷⁸. But his reproaches bear rather existential than political character. He was concerned with the questions of creative liberty and peaceful concomitance more than with actual details of political organization. A visionary of individualism, he believed that a person cannot be absolutely free in any kind of society. 'This society, our society is repulsive not because it is *this* one, but because it is a *society*'¹⁷⁹, as he put it.

Nevertheless, he is consistent in developing emigrant discourse that represented Western society as 'the less evil' compared to Soviets. One of his interlocutors, Tibor D., ex-member of Central Committee of Hungarian

¹⁷⁵ Op.cit, 110

¹⁷⁶ Op. Cit, 55

¹⁷⁷ Op. cit, 83

¹⁷⁸ Elie Wiesel, 'Three suicides' <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/1299/wiesel/excerpt.html> last visited 11.05.2010

¹⁷⁹ (Rawicz 1969, 104)

Communist Party, exile since 1956, gave an elaborate opinion on why the illusion of freedom in the West is better than the absence of alternative in the East: 'Universal suffrage is an absurd triumph of arithmetic. It is majority (always situational, always manipulated) who decides. It is therefore evident that the majority is stupid, as intelligence is an apanage of minuscule minority. The liberal, capitalist regime, partly democratic, partly authoritarian, provides very important place for the third estate, those merchants, big and small, who inhabit West nowadays. This regime is rotten and corrupt. But it is less awful than the one I had unhappiness to live under'¹⁸⁰.

Rawicz does not seem concerned with the possible victory of the leftist agenda in the West as he is rather critical towards the deepness of its rooting and measure of its understanding by French intellectuals. 'I heard them talking about Mao thousand times, but I am sure nobody had actually read him'¹⁸¹, states Rawicz's insider Serge D.

Indeed, vulgar treatment of leftist ideologies and disregard of the results of its possible implications is a constant course for author's wittiness. Rawicz depicts contemporary French Marxist through an anecdote about a louse that was living in the beard of a louse that was living in the beard of Karl Marx. In his words 'French Marxists are active within the perimeter between café de Flore, la Coupole and the Sixth section of Ecole de Hautes Etudes'¹⁸².

This diminutive attitude towards contemporary Marxism does not dismiss Raiwcz's concern about the liberty of speech and creativity that was suppressed in communist countries. He is discouraged by the idea of priority of economy over other spheres of social and private life and policy of etatism with its direct

¹⁸⁰ Op.cit, 126

¹⁸¹ Op.cit , 18

¹⁸² Op.cit, 14

implication in almost unlimited power of functionaries over creative activity of citizens.

IV. 4. *Émigré's language*

‘For me, French was always a bit like an inn, sometimes hospitable, sometimes unfriendly, and sometimes uncomfortable. It was like a borrowed garment flapping about on my skin, on the skin of my soul. I am not saying it has been a completely negative phenomenon, for out of the perpetual battle with language sometimes certain values emerge, previously unpublished as it were’¹⁸³, Rawicz had written on his complicated affair with French language.

This reverent sentiment was to a large extent shared by a high percentage of exiles. For them French was on the one side, a barrier preventing them from integrating into host society, on the other – a blank sheet, permitting liberation from past experience of obtrusive authoritarian lexicon.

Rawicz was an ardent believer in necessity of *individual* language as opposed to collective one which could be easily appropriated and manipulated by dominating political group. That is why his was indignant over the rhetoric of May. Excessive usage of Marxist terminology and concepts like ‘contestation’, ‘alienation’, ‘frustration’, ‘society of consumption’, ‘working class’, ‘socialism’, ‘bourgeois society’ created the illusion of reciprocal understanding in the society. Indeed, these words were empty signifiers detached from any real signified. ‘The dialogue is impossible. Howling took revanche over articulated language’¹⁸⁴, stated he.

¹⁸³ (Rudolf 2007, 65)

¹⁸⁴ (Rawicz 1969, 68)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A group of people this thesis is dedicated to, had experienced a unique condition of exile that is characterized by disrupted spatiality, temporality and is accompanied by disintegrating national identity that was clinging to no more existing in order to preserve itself.

One could see that in the condition of Cold war emigration was made equal to exile. Trapped in between two political systems exile tried to develop self-sufficient system of self-organization. Never particularly numerous and organized differently structurally, all three, indeed, have distinct ecumenical features that enable us to regard them (when observing from a distance) as sole entities. In the post-Second World War context such features are: distinctive anticommunist character of émigrés political agenda and also an idea of forced emigration as an ultimate way to save 'true' national identity in the situation of Motherland's occupation by exterior enemy.

My claim was that the apprehension of May events, proposed by emigrants was in its nature external. For, never being completely integrated in host French society, always in a 'median state, neither completely at one with new setting, nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another"¹⁸⁵, emigrant intellectuals tended to comprehend political crisis around them with a thought about the way the same issues evolved in their home country in mind.

Émigrés' accounts of May events show their complete detachment from surrounding reality with their attention completely occupied with the political

¹⁸⁵ Edward W. Said, *Representations of the intellectual* (New York : Vintage Books, 1996), 53

processes in Motherland. The accounts show that émigré still existed into their domestic system of coordinates. One can also see that, though stiffly united under courtesy of anti-communism, exile communities lacked unity, continuing internal discussions that propelled and fasten disintegrating processes within the realm of politics of emigration. The ruptures between different groups of émigrés' could be explained generationally – one can see that for the most part the switch in political affiliations lies in a heavy dependence from the time that emigrant had to leave his country of origin.

Case study on Piotr Rawicz's book showed underlying motivations of some of the émigrés' pretensions to May '68 events. The experience of historical tragedy and the fear of communism victory have made exile rather suspicious of such adventurous events as spontaneous May revolts. Being external observers they had also noticed ambiguous, often light-minded nature of French intellectuals' fascination with leftist ideologies, especially taking into consideration the latter's authority within French society.

Rawicz's book shows that individual trajectory and opinions often coincide with collective one. This could be explained by the fact that Rawicz's biography in its main points repeats numerous history of his generations, though remains unique in details.

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