

# Szczepanik, Edward

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## Polish Economics in the World : Economics and Trade Department of London's Polish University College

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*Edward Szczepanik (U.K.)*

POLISH ECONOMICS IN THE WORLD:  
ECONOMICS AND TRADE DEPARTMENT OF LONDON'S  
POLISH UNIVERSITY COLLEGE\*

**Introduction**

Of the numerous Polish educational initiatives launched in the West during World War II and in its wake, technical studies were the most prominent ones perhaps. That was due to lobbying by a Society of Polish Technicians and a Polish Government in Exile decision on January 5, 1942, to found a Commission for Academic Technical studies in Great Britain. The commission was replaced by a Council of Academic Technical Schools (RAST). President Władysław Raczkiewicz founded in a March 7, 1944, decree. The RAST was charged with the duty „to organise technical college studies for young Poles in the United Kingdom by adapting and enlarging such studies to curricula binding at technical colleges in Poland” (Art. 3 of the presidential decree).

The Yalta accords barred many demobilised Polish servicemen from going back to Poland, so those people had to given a chance to start working in the countries where they settled. In the UK, owing to the RAST's efforts and the British Government's favourable attitude, a Polish University College (PUC) was founded in London. Apart from training engineers, the PUC took over Liverpool's Polish School of Architecture, and also started courses of economists. Teaching programmes were developed with substantial help from the Imperial College of Science and Technology and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). London University, as a body supervising these two and other colleges, admitted PUC students as extra-mural participants to take their entrance, intermediate and final examinations. In its seven years of existence (1946–53), the PUC turned out nearly one

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\* The author, formerly an economics professor, was the last Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile.

thousand engineers and architects, and nearly one hundred economists who now live all over the world. Many of those graduates and lecturers had made brilliant careers in their trades, in public life and in politics. Their position in the history of Polish economics and trade studies actually deserves a more detailed presentation than this modest discussion allows.

On September 9–11, 1992, the 50th anniversary of founding the Commission for Academic Technical Studies, the Polish Academy of Sciences sponsored a symposium in Warsaw on „The Birth and Activities of the Polish University College.” Materials of the meeting were edited by Dr. Bolesław Orłowski, the organiser of the Warsaw meeting, and published in book form under the same title. As a participant and one of the speakers at the symposium I am drawing on that book here putting in my own recollections where fitting.

One of the facts not recorded in the book is an initiative by a group of Polish economists seeking to found a Polish business and trade college in London. First efforts were made in the autumn of 1945. Professor Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, University College in London, well-known for his pioneering views on the economic development of backward countries, played a prominent part in that work (before leaving to settle in the United States). He befriended Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the Labour Party who won the post-war election, a circumstance that no doubt affected his attitude towards Polish affairs. Before the war the two men led a economic theory seminar I had a privilege to attend, next to as well-known economists as W. A. Lewis, A. P. Lerner, M. Lachman and others. Professor Rosenstein-Rodan, son of an Austrian judge in Kraków, spoke Polish and had broad knowledge of Polish literature. That perhaps explains why he had close relations with Polish economists in London at the time. They eventually succeeded in founding a separate Economics and Trade Department at the PUC in 1946. The department was situated in 9 Cadogan Gardens, London SW3, the place that also housed PUC's Architecture and later also Chemical Engineering.

### **Composition of the department**

Professor Henryk Tennenbaum, formerly reader at Warsaw's School of Economics (SGH), became the first head of the department. He specialised in industrial economics, an area he used to advise the Polish Government on before the war. Professor Tennenbaum chaired the Polish line of work that had led up to the department's eventual foundation. His early death in 1946 was a great loss to the department.

In January 1947, Dr. Jerzy Nowak, formerly head of Bank Polski in Warsaw and assistant research with the SGH, was appointed Professor Tennenbaum's successor as department head. Professor Nowak read lectures in money and banking theory and headed the department for two years till his death on January 3, 1949.

Following that fresh blow, the department was taken over by Dr. Stanisław Swianiewicz. His previous career included a spell as political economy professor at Stefan Batory University in Wilno, where he also headed an Institute of Sovietological Studies. He was a disciple and successor of Professor Władysław Zawadzki, a top government official in his time. Professor Swianiewicz read a course in general political economy and headed the department through to the PUC's liquidation. From there Professor Swianiewicz went on to take a reader's job in Indonesia. In his research work he dealt mainly with the theory of compulsory employment. Yet his most famous book was *In the Shadow of Katyń*, in which he gave his account as the only survivor of the Soviet massacre of more than four thousand Polish officers.

The teaching staff at the department included former academic teachers from Polish colleges as well as Polish and other lecturers at British universities. Shortly before its closure the department could already enlist the services of several of its own former students as lecturers.

Three teachers served as Assistant Professors:

**Stanisław Gryziewicz, M.A.** from Warsaw University (till 1950), formerly chief editor of *Gospodarka Polska* economic journal, also serving as reader in the history of economics and economic ideas. Following his PUC assignment he moved to France to become Chairman of an Institute of Research into Central European Issues in Paris, where he died.

**Zbigniew Łomnicki, M.A.**, graduate of Lwów University and lecturer in insurance mathematics at the SGH, who continued in his specialty along with general mathematics and statistics at the PUC. After giving up that job he fell ill and died in England.

**Edward Szczepanik, M.A.**, graduate and assistant to Professor Edward Lipiński at the SGH. He joined the department in the autumn of 1946, following a one-year spell at Rome University as tutor of Polish students of economics and law, former servicemen with the 2nd Polish Corps who were also moved from Italy to Britain. At the PUC he had lectures in general political economy, interest and capital theory, business cycles, public finance and commercial management including trade risk and financing and money market speculation. On his departure from the PUC he took over the position of senior lecturer and subsequently head of Economic and Trade Faculty at Hong Kong University. From there he moved to Pakistan as adviser to the Planning Commission there on behalf of Harvard University, on to take the job of agricultural economics studies at the FAO in Rome, and lastly to Sussex University in England along with a post as professor at the London-based Polish University in exile. Between 1981 and 1990, he worked in that capacity while at the same time serving as Domestic Affairs Minister and subsequently Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile. From 1982 to this day, Professor Szczepanik has chaired a Polish Scientific Society in Exile and has been active in several Polish expatriate organisations (see the appended CV and bibliography).

The following academics served as lecturers at the department:

– **Dr. Zygmunt Lehoczky** (international trade, trade techniques, current account statistics). In 1950, he went to take academic posts in Canada and the United States, where he lives in retirement to this day.

– **Dr. Zbigniew Siemieński** (money and banking, descriptive economics, modern economic development) of Warsaw University and Bank Polski. He left the PUC in 1951 to take a World Bank adviser's post in Saudi Arabia. Upon his return to England his health failed him and he died.

– **Zygmunt Sławiński** (regional geography, industrial structure, geographic factors of trade), engineer from Warsaw Technical University, enthusiastic advocate of the idea of Poland stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. He left the PUC in 1951 for a UN Commission post on Latin American affairs in Santiago, where he died.

– **Dr. Stanisław Śmierzchalski** (economic history, business administration) from Poznań University. He left the PUC to take an academic job overseas.

– **Dr. Władysław Stankiewicz** (British Constitutional law, international trade), political scientist from the London School of Economics. He left the PUC in 1952 for an academic post in Canada.

– **Krzysztof Zawadzki, M.A.** (political economy, statistical sources, international finance, public utilities economics, British economic structure), from the SGH and the LSE. From the PUC he left for an academic post in Scotland, where he died years later.

– **Jerzy Zubrzycki, B.Sc.** (Econ.), (comparative social institutions, economic history), sociologist from the LSE. Following his spell of work with the PUC and getting his PhD at the Polish University in Exile he moved to an Australian college. There he made himself a name as author of a theory of multiculturalism.

– **Władysław Zbigniew Billewicz**, a student of the SGH and one of the first EH PUC graduates, took up the post of assistant lecturer in statistics in 1949. From the PUC he moved on to a Scottish college, from there he went back to Poland.

The above standing staff were assisted, when necessary, by the following people:

– In economic studies: Anna Chądyńska M.A.; Maria Gryziecka-Goldberger M.A.; T. Matuszewski; Dr. A. M. de Neuman; S. Nędzyński; J. Poniatowski; A. Szarf; R. Turvey; and Dr. A. Zauberman.

– In commercial studies: M. Marpiński; J. K. de Somogyi; and S. Wiśniowiecki.

– In geographic studies: W. Henoeh M.A.; Dr. Zofia Pacewicz; and Professor B. Zaborski.

– In historical studies: Dr. J. Starzewski.

– In mathematics and statistics: Dr. S. Bogen and Dr. Anna Kopeć.

– In law studies: S. Benn; R. P. Colinvaux; S. R. Davis; G. Dobry M.A.; and A. Telling.

– In sociological studies: Professor T. Sulimirski.

– In foreign languages: G. F. F. Collin; G. Le Breton; J. Gazdar; R. H. C. King; L. Vogel; and E. H. Williams.

Of the Poles among the above names, Stefan Nędzyński, Maciej Karpiński and the late Janusz de Somogyi were actually graduates of the department. Stefan Nędzyński later served as Secretary General of the International Union of Postal Workers till his retirement. Tadeusz Matuszewski spent part of his student years at the department to graduate eventually from University College in London. He went for an academic career to Canada, where he was elected chairman of a Society of Economists, but regrettably died at a relatively young age. The late Dr. Andrzej Marcin de Neuman, an economist from Warsaw as well as the LSE, served as economic adviser in Indonesia, among other postings. Józef Poniatowski of the SGH, an agricultural economist and geographer, formerly head of the Council of Ministers Economics Offices in Warsaw, served as Minister for Domestic Affairs in the Polish Government in Exile; he got an honorary doctor's degree from the Polish University in Exile; he died in London. Adam Szarf graduated from the LSE, and following a brilliant career with the FAO in Rome, he retired to settle in Belgium. Dr. Alfred Zauberman, an economist from Kraków, author of studies of economic planning, was assistant professor at the LSE; he died in London. Stanisław Wiśniowiecki, a brilliant accountant, graduated from the SGH and took a job as assistant researcher at that school; following an outstanding yet brief career died in London. George Dobry (Jerzy Dobryszycki) was appointed Queen's Counsel (QC); upon retiring he founded a British-Polish Law Association and continues to work actively for it in London and Warsaw. Professor Tadeusz Sulimirski, from Lwów and Kraków Universities has made important contributions not only as an outstanding prehistorian, anthropologist and sociologist, but also as an organiser of Polish science in exile in his capacities as University Rector and President of the Scientific Society; he has died in London.

I am particularly pleased to acknowledge the excellent secretarial services to the department by Ms. Stefania Kossowska, who later served as editor of the literary journal *Wiadomości* founded by Mieczysław Grydzewski in Warsaw before the war.

### The curriculum

The department prepared Polish students to extramural studies for the B.A. (Economics) and Bachelor of Commerce of London University. The curriculum was based on the London University programme, while the lectures covering that programme were tailored to those of London School of Economics and Political Science which, then part of London University.

Since students had no English certificates opening for them possibilities to enrol at London University, the department had to start its work by launching courses preparing students to special entrance examinations to London University. On passing their entrance exams students enrolled in the first year of university studies after which they took so-called Intermediate Examinations. That opened for them the doors to the second and third years of study during which students were prepared to take their Final Examinations for the degrees of B.Sc. (Econ.) or B. Comm.

London University requirements for either of these degrees included, apart from subjects obligatory for every candidate, quite a few „alternative” subjects. Since the EH PUC was in no position to grant so many subjects to choose from, it had to settle for just a few. Students preparing for the B.Sc. (Econ.) degree were given a chance to pick any one of the following courses:

- a) Descriptive and analytical economics,
- b) Banks, money, foreign trade financing,
- c) Statistics, including demography.

Students preparing for the B. Comm. degree could choose from two special fields:

- a) Economics and geography of trade,
- b) Accounting.

As shown in the above timetable and work stages, the department organised in the first academic year (Oct. 1, 1946 to Nov. 29, 1947) the following prep courses: three for entrance exams, two for intermediate exams, one for final exams. The first year was begun with 80 students. Shortly before the end of the year the number of students had redoubled. Most students took their intermediate exams in July or November of 1947, upon passing their entrance exams.

In the second school year (Jan. 7, 1948 to June 30, 1948), three courses were continued: for the entrance, intermediate and final examinations, respectively. In the third year (Oct. 4, 1948 to Apr. 25, 1949), one course was for entrance exams, two for intermediate exams, two for final exams for second-year students and one for third-year students. For a first time at the end of the year then, London University granted academic degrees to four of the department's graduates. In the fourth year (Oct. 3, 1949 to June 24, 1950), the department offered one course for entrance exams, two each for intermediate exams and final exams, and two industrial economics courses for students of the Mechanical Faculty and the Chemical and Electrical Faculty. The fourth year was concluded with 22 EH PUC graduates winning B. Sc. (Econ.) or B. Comm. degrees from London University, including three students getting Second Class Honours Upper Division and five winning Second Class Honours Lower Class degrees. In the fifth year (Oct. 2, 1950 to June 23, 1951), as part of a gradual liquidation of the PUC, the preparatory

course for entrance examinations was lifted. However, in addition to courses for intermediate and final exams in three years covering altogether 69 subjects the department organised a study seminar on Central European issues. Professor Swianiewicz headed the seminar. In the sixth year, (1951/52) the prep course for intermediate exams was closed down, ushering in a quick-paced liquidation procedure of the department which concluded in the seventh school year (1952/53).

### **Graduates**

In its seven years of existence, approximately 100 graduates left the department with B. Sc. (Econ.) or B. Comm. degrees. All easily found jobs matching their qualifications, and soon dispersed around the world.

– Many graduates took up posts at colleges in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of South Africa, Canada or the United States to work as lecturers (W. Z. Billewicz, B. T. Brodziński, Z. M. Fallenbüchl, H. Gałązka, Z. A. Kończacki, A. Korboński, R. Kotas, B. Mieczkowski, S. J. Sawicki, J. Tomiak, S. Wiater, J. Wilczyński).

– Others went to work for the Polish press (J. M. Biliński, Z. Stermiński), public institutions (A. Jasiukowicz) or in business communities in the countries where they settled.

– Some became involved in politics, either in independence actions in exile, especially at the Institute for Watching Domestic Affairs under my direction, but also many years later in the Third Polish Republic as economic advisers (Z. M. Fallenbüchl).

Obviously the organisers, directors, lecturers and students of London's EH PUC delivered great services to their country and to Polish science.